

MINUTES OF ATHLONE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE COURTHOUSE, ROSCOMMON ON MONDAY THE 9TH NOVEMBER, 2015 AT 9.15A.M. TO DISCUSS THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL ALLOCATION AND DRAFT BUDGETARY PLANS FOR 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor Ivan Connaughton, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: P. Kilduff, L. Fallon, T. Ward, J. Keogh, J. Naughten

OFFICIALS: Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Diarmuid MacDonncha, Senior Executive Engineer
Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning
Fiona ní Chuinn, Meetings Administrator

Ms. Majella Hunt, Director of Services referred to letter issued to Municipal District members, which outlines that:

The Local Government Act 2001 Section 102, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, provides the legislative basis for the revised budget process. It states that "In the case of a county or city council, the Chief Executive shall consult the Municipal District Members for each Municipal District in the Local Authority's functional area in the preparation of a Draft Local Authority Budget and, for that purpose, a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District shall be prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive and submitted for consideration by the Municipal District Members for each Municipal District in the manner and in the format that may be prescribed by regulations made by the Minister."

The Draft Budgetary Plan refers to discretionary funding only. In producing the Draft Budgetary Plan the following was considered:

1. The needs of, and the resources available or likely to be made available to the Local Authority
2. Resource needs of each Municipal District, including where appropriate km of roads, population, location of facilities and the number of houses

The purpose of a Draft Budgetary Plan is to provide each Municipal District an opportunity to allocate its proportion of the General Municipal Allocation according to its priorities.

The Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 state that Members of the Municipal District must receive a copy of the Draft Budgetary Plan and notice of the meeting of Municipal District Members 7 days prior to that meeting. The meeting of Municipal District Members to consider the Draft Budgetary Plan must conclude no later than 10 days prior to the Local Authority Budget Meeting. **There is no provision for the adjournment of this meeting.**

Schedule of Municipal District Works and Service Delivery Plans

Section 103(A) (1) provides that, following the adoption of the Local Authority Budget, a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repairs to be carried out during 2016 in each Municipal District shall be prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive, having regard to the availability of resources.

The Schedule of Municipal District Works shall be considered by the Municipal District Members concerned and be adopted by resolution, with or without amendment. In making an amendment, the Municipal District Members shall have due regard to the Local Authority Budget adopted in accordance with section 103(9).

General Municipal Allocation and Municipal District Draft Budgetary Plans

The General Municipal Allocation (the total for the three Municipal Districts) totals €2,946,800. This amount contains new funding of €254,000 in relation to Economic and Community development as well

the €100,000 allocated from the Business Innovation Fund. This funding was distributed on a straight line basis with a total of €118,000 made available to each Municipal District.

The local roads contribution is €1,276,900 and has been distributed using a formula of 75% km of road and 25% population, as per discussions with the Corporate Policy Group. This figure takes account of the additional €15,000 made available for verge trimming as discussed at the September Plenary council meeting, when making a decision in relation to the Local Property Tax adjustment factor.

The General Municipal Allocation has been distributed among the Municipal Districts as follows:

- Athlone € 701,969
- Boyle €1,120,393
- Roscommon €1,124,438

The members raised the following issues:

- Matter had been discussed at CPG in the last week.
- Members stated it would have been ideal if the figures had been divided in three equal amounts.
- Figure for Athlone is reduced by €20,000.
- Query whether €15,000 for verge trimming is on top of the €30,000 allocation for the three areas.
- €25,600 is a very low amount for drains in the Athlone Municipal District.
- Would like to see the roads allocation re-examined again in 2016/17.
- Vast difference across the municipal districts for the maintenance of burial grounds.
- Economic and community development fund shows the new direction the county council is taking.
- Not enough care being taken to ensure our roads are at a safe standard.
- Query on the options presented to CPG for the allocation for roads and how the allocation of 75/25 was decided upon.
- Allocation for recreational amenities significantly lower than in other Municipal Districts.
- Issue of playgrounds in Monksland need significant investment.
- A lot of discussion at CPG with regard to the allocation.
- The 75/25 divide will gain support from other Municipal Districts.
- How was funding for burial grounds arrived at?
- Is there any funding in relation to the provision and maintenance of services for parks and amenities?
- Welcomed the community development fund.
- Update requested on the submission to the county development plan in relation to Drum Cemetery.
- Need to look at capital funds for investing in the Monksland area.
- Query why there is nothing in the Athlone area for public conveniences.
- Needs to be more discussion with church authorities in relation to lands for cemeteries.
- No allocation for property management costs.

Mr. Martin Lydon, Head of Finance & Planning responded to the issues raised:

- The population figure for roads allocation is not the panacea to fix the issue. Athlone has the lowest population and the 75/25 divide was agreed at Corporate Policy Group meeting.
- Drainage for the River Suck is contained in the main budget.
- Housing figure is based on the number of social housing units per Municipal District.
- Burial grounds revenue figure is not contained in the capital investment programme.
- Global valuations has led to a loss of funding for Roscommon County Council however, the reduction in the pension related schemes will counter balance this.
- Funding for courthouses is contained in property management costs. None are located in Athlone Municipal District.
- Allocations excluding roads are based on historical allocations.

- The big change is in the allocation to roads which was supplied.
- The information was supplied to the Corporate Policy Group on 23rd October 2015 which outlined the budget models to them and they in turn were responsible for discussion with all the members on the matter.
- Members need to recognise that this is purely discretionary funding and will come before the members in January where they will have the option of deciding where the funding is spent.
- Community and Enterprise Department are responsible for the allocation of funds under the community and economic development programme.
- Recreational and amenity accounts for Hodson Bay, Lecarrow – not just playgrounds in Loughnanane Park.
- Allocation for burial grounds is based on the number of grounds within the area and as Athlone has relatively new grounds with new capital investments, the money is not as high as allocated to other Municipal Districts. Roscommon can be considered higher as there is a full time cemetery caretaker in place.
- The TII is responsible for regional roads and they follow a more scientific approach in the allocation of funding.
- CIS Scheme is a department led scheme.
- If the members wish to itemise some allocation of their funding they may do so.
- May be an option to draw up a personnel scheme for each Municipal District.
- A letter will issue again to the department to see if a revision of the scheme is possible.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Naughten

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council review the CIS Scheme in relation to the concern where the local funding of 20% can be provided through lands from landowners.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Ward
SECONDED by Councillor Keogh

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Municipal District budget, as presented.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are
Confirmed and Signed:

Meetings Administrator

Cathaoirleach

Countersigned