

MINUTES OF ATHLONE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING HELD IN THE LOUGHNANEANE SUITE, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON ON FRIDAY THE 27TH OCTOBER, 2017 AT 3.00P.M. TO DISCUSS THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL ALLOCATION AND DRAFT BUDGETARY PLANS FOR 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Tony Ward, Cathaoirleach **PRESIDED**

MEMBERS: Cllr I. Connaughton, Cllr L. Fallon, Cllr P. Kilduff and Cllr J. Naughten.

OFFICIALS: Majella Hunt, Director of Services
Cait Kenny, Assistant Staff Officer

Apologies: Diarmuid MacDonncha

41. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR ATHLONE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 17 ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2018.

Derek Caldbeck, A/Head of Finance informed all members that the budgetary process for 2018 is well underway and that the prescribed period is 16/10/2017 to 17/11/2017 with the Plenary Budget Meeting to be held on 22nd November 2017. He outlined that the Local Property Tax Report was circulated to members in September and a resolution not to vary the local property adjustment factor for the coming year was passed by the members at the September Plenary Meeting. This means that there is no additional income for distribution.

Derek advised Members that the rates revaluation exercise is still at appeal stage at the moment. He was hoping to have all details in relation to rates income for 2018 but due to the high volume of appeals, this information wasn't available but will have it before Plenary Budget.

Derek then highlighted the main items to be considered as part of the plenary draft budget process and includes:

- 2% pay restoration in 2018
- Rates revaluations
- Recruitment and pension bill is a big factor
- Innovation Centres
- Investment in Housing Stock

The Draft Budgetary Plan refers to discretionary funding only.

In producing the Draft Budgetary Plan the following was considered:

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

The Corporate Policy Group considered the basis for apportionment for Roads expenditure on 25th September 2017 and it was agreed to continue with the current basis of apportionment of 75% km of road and 25% population. Derek advised members that he is aware that Members feel this is an unfair way of allocating funds. He said that this is a contentious issue which Cllr. Naughten raised at the CPG, which is the reason for having the CPG before today's meeting.

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.

- Total General Municipal Allocation (GMA) for 2018 is €2,315,100 to be distributed as follows:
 - **Athlone €576**
 - Boyle €878.6k
 - Roscommon €860.5k

The main reason for the slight reduction on last year's figure is due to the fact that €180k (€60k per MD) was diverted for county wide initiatives such as marketing, coderdojo, rhode island trade centre etc.

A detailed breakdown of each element of the Draft Budgetary Plan 2017 for the **Athlone MD Area** was presented, highlighting the following:

- The Athlone Municipal District will retain €315,600 for Local Roads General Maintenance Works in 2018
- The taking in charge figure for each Municipal District for 2018 has been reduced from €20,000 to €10,000
- The €20,000 taking in charge amount included as part of the 2017 budget will be transferred to capital and set aside for use in 2018 for that purpose.
- The discretionary Municipal District Fund of €85,000 has been maintained as has the €17,000 funding for each of the town teams.
- The increase in the Recreation & Amenity Figure of €20,000 relates to funding for Tidy Towns Groups. It is part of a total overall fund of €60,000 split now over the 3 Municipal Districts.

All members expressed their dissatisfaction with the unequal apportionment between Municipal District Areas.

Cllr. Naughten informed the meeting that a long discussion took place at CPG outlining the differences in the allocations of the three Municipal Districts. He noted that this information would be beneficial to other Members and requested that it be an agenda item at the next Athlone MD Meeting.

The members noted the following:

- Unequal apportionment between MD areas, Boyle MD getting €878.6k, Athlone €576k.
- The three municipal districts are virtually the same size, can't rely on CPG to change this.
- The CE and Executive should have a greater input in rebalancing the allocations for each Municipal District as six Councillors will never outvote twelve.
- Huge traffic on roads in South Roscommon and expectation that motorists can travel on roads free of potholes.
- Review allocations based on population.
- 60k should be maintained going forward as it is positive and creating employment.
- Town Team Funding is working well and good work being done in Monksland with development of playground and outdoor gym.
- We are about to go into another serious flooding situation, have we enough staff to operate MD given that hedge cutting machine idled for two weeks as no driver available.
- Discrepancy in Cemetery Maintenance.
- Huge need for Housing in Monksland.

A discussion took place regarding hedge cutting and

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Connaughton

SECONDED by Councillor Fallon

It was **AGREED** to make €10,000 of the Local Roads General Maintenance fund available for a pilot community hedge cutting grant scheme in the Athlone Municipal District. Details of the scheme shall be agreed with the Roads Department.

Derek responded to members as follows:

- Traditionally allocation of funds was always on KM of road. An exercise was done when Municipal Districts were formed and decision was taken to lessen this apportionment so 25% population was considered as this levered more for Athlone MD.
- No form other than Plenary at moment to make changes to allocations.
- Mathematically a 60/40 split does not make a huge difference, Derek advised that he would share this

information with the members which may inform them more.

- Full time caretaker employed in Roscommon Cemetery.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Councillor Naughten

SECONDED by Councillor Ward

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Athlone Municipal District budget as presented subject to the allocations agreed by the members at the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 23rd November, 2017.

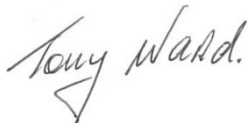
This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are

Confirmed and Signed:



Meetings Administrator



Cathaoirleach



Countersigned