

**MINUTES OF BUDGET MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON THURSDAY, 24th November, 2022 AT 10.30 amAM.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor Tom Crosby	<b>PRESIDED</b>
<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Cllr L. Callaghan, Cllr J. Cummins, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr P. Fitzmaurice, Cllr D. Kilduff, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr O. Leyden, Cllr J. Naughten, Cllr K. Shanagher, Cllr T. Ward, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr A. Waldron and Cllr J. Murphy.	
<b>OFFICIALS:</b>	Shane Tieman, Chief Executive Majella Hunt, Director of Services Sean Mullarkey, Acting Head of Finance Caitlín Conneely, A/Director of Services Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services Patricia Bohan, Meetings Administrator Claudette Collins, Asst. Staff Officer	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr V. Byrne and Cllr M. Mulligan	

**163.22 INTRODUCTION BY CATHAOIRLEACH**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Elected Members, Chief Executive and staff to the Draft Budget meeting for 2023.

He outlined the main highlights of the budget and welcomed the increase of €5.1m expenditure on services from the 2022 budget. There is an overall increase in goods and services of €2.3m.

The maintenance of the LPT at the same rate as 2022 will provide an extra €540k that includes the ongoing support match funding projects, when completed, will transform towns and villages and we already see that in projects completed to date,

He thanked the Head of Finance, Chief Executive and staff for their work in 2022 and the preparation and presentation of a balanced budget in difficult economic times and an energy crisis, and without recourse to a proposed rate increase, which will be welcomed by our smaller ratepayers who are the backbone of the county's economy.

**164.22 CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive. Mr. Shane Tieman presented the Draft Budget to the elected members for consideration:

- The draft budget has been prepared in accordance with S102 of the Local Government Act and involves a number of stages including consideration by the Corporate Policy Group and the LPT variation decision of the members in September.
- There are new pressures on the Budget for 2023 with the current energy crisis and the war in

Ukraine. Our ability to increase funding mechanisms is limited and we will continue to work with our ratepayers in 2023 to ensure the collection rate remains high.

- The €540k from the LPT allows an increase to the GMA - €255k to be distributed for C&E projects and an additional €177k for street cleaning. Also €65k has been allocated for a new voluntary Graveyard grant and tidy towns will continue to be supported.
- The new County Development Plan came into effect in April 2022 and has been prepared against the critical need to address climate change as well as placemaking, regeneration, the creation of sustainable communities and green infrastructure provision.
- Unfortunately the construction of the N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge came to a standstill in March but new tenders have been issued and it is hoped to recommence construction in Q3 2023.
- Housing for All is a comprehensive Plan and we will continue to facilitate the variety of schemes that are available.
- Roscommon County Council has played a key role in assisting with the provision of accommodation for Ukrainian refugees and will continue to do so in collaboration with the community forum.
- To date Roscommon has received €40m investment in the various rural redevelopment funds – in 2023 the redevelopment of the former Royal Hotel in Boyle, Castlerea Food Hub and Boyle Town Centre and King House projects will be completed. Construction of the Monksland Innovation Hub and Roscommon Covered civic space in Market Square will commence. Detailed design on RRDF and URDR projects in Monksland, Roscommon Town and Strokestown will continue while we will also progress approved Town and Village, Outdoor recreation and Streetscape Enhancement Schemes. We must continue to develop and design projects to ensure there is a pipeline of projects and provide matched funding to leverage the maximum amount of funding available.
- The Council will continue with the rollout of the Climate Change Adaptation strategy and bring forward the implementation of climate resilient actions and ensure such actions are integrated into all functions of the Council's operation.
- Due to Covid the Council had to adapt and evolve how it provides its services to the public without disruption to services in the remote working environment. We continue to provide an increasing number of services online through the 'My Online Services' Portal.
- The move to more sustainable, flexible and innovative ways of working will continue during 2023 as we incorporate blended working to ensure the most appropriate and effective delivery of service.
- The level of capital funding brings an increased workload into the organisation that has already lost a significant number of employees through retirement and promotion and recruitment will continue to be a priority in 2023. Our staff are our most valuable resource and we will continue to invest in recruitments, training and support to deliver services in the most effective, efficient and resourceful manner.

In conclusion the Chief Executive thanked the Acting Head of Finance, the Management Team and Corporate Policy Group for their input to the Budget and recommended it to the Elected Members for adoption.

## **165.22 A/HEAD OF FINANCE REPORT**

Mr. Sean Mullarkey, A/Head of Finance summarised the main provisions of the Budget as follows:

Headlines on Income:

- Increase of 8% in income/expenditure or €5.4m from €66.6m in 2022 to €72m in 2023
- Maintaining 15% in LPT equates to €540k. Reduction of 69k from 2022

- No Rates increase for customers. Rates figure up €13k. No rates waiver in 2023
- IPB Dividend reduced by €115k
- Building Momentum Agreement (Lansdowne Rd) increased by €1.1m to €4.1m in 2023. Covers salaries, pensions etc.
- Energy Support of €988k from Dept. of Housing
- Rental from Houses increase from €5.2m to €5.9m
- Ukrainian expenditure of 750k matched by income from Dept. of €750k in 2023
- NPPR income for 2023 remains at €126k

#### Local Property Tax:

- LPT maintained at 15% equalling €540k allocated to following headings:
  - €225k: General Municipal Allocation (GMA)
  - €120K: General Roads
  - €65k: Graveyard Voluntary Grants
  - €60k: Tidy Towns & Amenity Grants
  - €45k: Town Teams Funding
  - €23k: Illegal Dumping

#### Divisional Expenditure:

- Housing and Building
  - €214k: Increase in housing maintenance in MD's
  - €61k: Increase Vacant Homes
  - €69k: Increase in Intensified Inspections
- Road Transportation and Safety
  - €2.3m: Increase in road grants (compared to 2022)
  - €120k: Public Lighting Maintenance & Repairs Increase from €173k to €293k
- Water Services
  - Service Level Agreement CMC broadly in line with 2023
- Development Management
  - €30k: Increase C&E Plans
  - €40K: An Bealach Project. Ballagaderreen Creative Hub
  - €30k: Increase Rathcroghan UNESCO bid
  - €750k: Emergency Ukrainian Crisis (Recoup)
- Environmental Services
  - €70k: Climate Action Change Increase
  - €38K: Emergency Burial Ground Repairs Increase for MD's
- Recreation and Amenity
  - €47k: Library Maintenance Increase
  - €5k: New Band Fund
  - €43k: Energy running King House
- Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare
  - € 100k: Lough Funshinagh Legal Fees (2022: 150K)
- Miscellaneous Services

- Energy Increase of €309k

#### Central Management Charge (CMC)

- €305k: Increased pension costs
- €553k: Council buildings Climate Adaptation Measures

#### Capital Programme Highlights:

- 3 year Programme with a value of €294m
- To be funded as follows:
  - €280m: State grants and subsidies
  - €8m: Borrowings
  - €2.5m: Development Contributions
  - €3.5m: Other
- €31m for social houses
- €5.5m for Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans
- €1m Croi Conaithe Grant
- €4m for Housing Adaptation Grant
- €3.75m for Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting
- €204m for Road Projects
  - €187m for N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge
- €9m over Enterprise projects. Completion of Royal Hotel Boyle in Q1 23. Construction in 2023 of Castlerea Food Hub and Monksland Remote Working Hub
- €2.1m for Civil Defence Building (Funded by RCC)
- €20m for public realm projects funded via Town and Village Renewal, Urban and Rural Regeneration and Outdoor Recreation
- €450k for Graveyard – Kilbegley extension & water supply

#### **166.22 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES REPORT - FIONA NI CHUINN**

Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services provided a report to the Members on the Service Divisions applicable to her Directorate:

##### **Housing & Building:**

- Maintenance expenditure budget has increased by €214K to €1.447m.
- Maintenance of traveller accommodation units has increased.
- Increase of LPT for additional houses coming on stream
- Budget for housing estate management has increased by €69k with 2 fulltime staff employed. A total of 600 inspections were carried out in 2022.
- The budget for housing aid for older people has increased by €15k to €210k in 2023 and for housing adaptation/mobility aid scheme has increased by €25k to €90k. This represents 20% matched funding to the Departments €1.5m allocation.
- A full time Place Finder staff member for the Housing Assistance Payment has been appointed for a 3-year term and works with the homeless to secure private rented accommodation. The winter eviction ban is now in place from 30<sup>th</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

##### **Development Management – Ukrainian Humanitarian Response:**

The Council, in collaboration with the Community Response Forum continue to coordinate the delivery of services to Ukrainians in the County;

- 2023 Budget provision €750,000 for accommodation supports (€900,000 spent to date)
- Staffing resources have been allocated to the unit and up to €250,000 may be recouped
- 11 Service Providers in the County (3 in direct contract with RCC)
- RCC continue to work in identifying beds (166 available)
- IRC Pledges to date
- Emergency Refurbishment Programme
- National Call for Vacant Homes:
- Recognition payment ↑ to €800 /Month, Tax Free;

#### Community Development

- Public Participation Network:
  - Increased Funding for PPN support worker
  - Link to Register: [www.roscommonppn.ie](http://www.roscommonppn.ie)
- Healthy Ireland Round 4:
  - Dedicated HI Officer appointed under a 3 year contract
  - Annual allocation from Pobal to support the outcomes of strategy
- Grant Funding Schemes:
  - Administration of new Community Support Fund launched on the 18<sup>th</sup> November €280,000
  - Increase of €30,000 to support the Development of plans in 2023 including Local Economic Community plan and consultation for Arts, Tourism, Age Friendly, Heritage

#### Recreation and Amenity:

- Community Support & Recreational Development:
  - Provision in the Budget of €60,000 – Sports Development Officers

#### Housing and Building Capital Programme:

##### **Local Authority Housing (€31M):**

All projects progressing under the Housing Capital Programme continue to be dependent on Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) for project and funding approval.

On target with adequate land holdings to deliver programme in full - 2022 = € 1.2m.

##### **Traveller Accommodation (€2M):**

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (2019-2024) was adopted in 2019 and reviewed in 2022 and has committed to the following projects: Torpan Beg, Ballyforan - As of Q4 2022 project is at tender stage for the construction of 3 extensions. Killeeney, Roscommon; Project has Part 8 planning in place. Works expected to commence in 2023. Harristown, Castlerea – Works completed in Q3 2022.

##### **Local Authority Home Loans (€5.5M):**

Projections for 2023 are based on approved loans for 2022.

##### **Croí Cónaithe Fund (€1M):**

23 Applications received to date:- 2 applications approved, 2 applications rejected.

**Assistance to Persons Improving Houses (€4M):**

RCC Contribution is listed in Revenue Budget and DHLGH Contribution is reflected in Capital Budget.

**Energy Improvement Works to LA Dwellings (€3.75M):**

52 units currently being retrofitted County wide in 2022. It is expected that all units will be carried out within the grant funding provided by the DHLGH. Average cost per unit circa €33k. Majority of units with storage heaters now retrofitted with approx. 30 remaining. Works include window and door replacement, Insulation, installation of heat pump and ventilation.

**167.22 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES REPORT - GREG O'DONNELL**

Mr. Greg O'Donnell presented the Budget highlights in relation to Roads Division:

<b>Network</b>	<b>2023 Estimate</b>	<b>2022 Adopted</b>	<b>Km</b>
National Primary Roads -NP	€ 715,800	€ 704,500	79
National Secondary Roads- NS	€ 708,700	€ 664,500	146
Regional Roads - R	€ 6,761,600	€ 6,306,800	376
Local Roads - L	€ 17,332,500	€ 16,565,500	3,417
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 25,518,600</b>	<b>€ 24,241,300</b>	<b>4,018</b>

Pavement Surface Restoration/Overlay/Reconstruction – All € 11.1m

General Maintenance – All € 6.8m (L € 5.6m)

Surface Dressing – L € 3m

Winter Maintenance – NP, NS and R € 529k

Bridge Maintenance – R € 447k (as identified)

Public Lighting (operation) €1,045,500 (€895,500 2022)

Road Safety Works €532,800 (€441,800 2022)

Road Safety Promotion €65,000 (€59,700 2022)

LPT increase has facilitated allocation of:

€ 180,000 Street cleaning

€ 120,000 General Roads Maintenance

€ 42,000 Assist Tidy Towns and address illegal dumping

Capital Programme:

N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge € 187m

N61 Tulsk to Gortnacranagh € 1.75m

N61 Tulsk to Clashaganny € 4m

Active Travel € 2.5m (NTA) projects:

R362 Monksland, Athlone

L1812 Golf Links Road, Roscommon

Greenway Projects € 1.5m (TII Phase 0/1)

- Athlone to Ballyleague
- Mid-Shannon (Ballyleague to Tarmonbarry, Strokestown, Roosky)
- Lough Key to Carrick on Shannon

## 168.22 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES REPORT - CAITLÍN CONNEELY

Ms. Caitlín Conneely, presented the budget allocations for services within her Directorate:

### Climate Action

- Increased budget by €70k to €210k
- Bridge funding for SECs - €60k
- Midlands Energy Agency

### Climate Action Unit 2023:

- Climate Action Co Ordinator
- Climate Action Officer

Develop Climate Action Plan for County Roscommon in 2023

Climate Community Action Officer – fund of €402k has been confirmed by the Department.

### Energy Management:

- Costs have increased substantially – 240% increase anticipated.
- Working with OPW and national campaigns to reduce energy use across Council buildings and activities.
- Appointing staff member to drive energy projects.

### Human Resources

- Recruitment:
  - Increasing workloads and expanding work areas
  - Replacement of staff lost to retirement and promotion
  - Staffing requirements
  - Staff training, supports & well being prioritised
- Introduction of Blended Working:
  - 200+ working on blended pattern
  - Focus on delivery of high quality services
  - Prioritised IT, digital transformation and communication
  - Flexibility - new ways of working – innovation

<b>Roads Transportation and Safety Revenue</b>	
Public Lighting	€1.045m
<b>Roads Transportation and Safety Capital</b>	
5.8 National Public Lighting Upgrade Project	€2.1m (loan)
5.8 Public Lighting Infill Projects	€300k
6.1 Castlerea Swimming Pool	€50k

<b>Water Supply Revenue</b>	<b>€3.929m</b>
Waste Water Treatment	€1.488m
Public Conveniences	€34.1k
Support to Water Capital Programme	€1.157m
LA Water & Sanitary Services	€261k
<b>Water Supply Capital</b>	
3.1 & 3.2 Water Supply & Sewerage Programme	IW
3.3 Rural Water Programme	€2.9m
Group Water Schemes operational subsidies	€900k
Grants – private water supplies & domestic lead remediation	Demand led
<b>Environmental Services - Revenue</b>	
Landfills – EPA licenced & historic	€350.6k
Recycling facilities	€808.1k
Provision of Waste to Collection Services	€25.2k
Litter Management	€420.8k
Waste Regs, Monitoring & Enforcement	€414.8k
Water Quality Management	€416.8k
Climate Change & Flooding	€210k
<b>Agriculture, Education, Health &amp; Welfare - Revenue</b>	
Veterinary Service	€489.9k
<b>Miscellaneous Services -Revenue</b>	
Franchise Costs	€97.9k
Coroners Expenses	€156.2k
Operation of Markets & Casual Trading	€35k
Local Representation & Civic Leadership	€1.23m

## **169.22 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES REPORT - MAJELLA HUNT**

Ms. Majella Hunt presented the budget for services in her directorate:

### **Development Management & Capital Programme**

Regeneration unit focus is on Rural & Urban regeneration across our towns and villages.

Schemes include URDF, RRDF, Town & Village, Outdoor Recreation, Streetscape and Just Transition Fund Strategic Projects for 2023.

- a) Royal Hotel Refurbishment, Castlerea Food Hub - Complete 2023  
Monksland Innovation Centre, Roscommon Town Market Square Covered Space – Construction 2023



#### King House Public Realm Enhancement Project Construction 2023

- b) Public Realm Wheel & Spokes project Roscommon Town, Strokestown Town Centre, Boyle Open Library Project – Detail Design & Part 8 in 2023
- c) Town & Village, Outdoor Recreation Projects 2021-2022, CLÁR – Delivery of Schemes within Department timeframe.
- d) Preparation of applications under all schemes for 2023.
- e) Support Town Teams
  - **Budget €40m, Match funding €370K Revenue & Capital Loan**
- e) Local Enterprise Office will continue to fund, mentor and support job creation, SME businesses and development of new and innovative enterprise in the county

#### **Heritage and Conservation Programme 2023 -Budget €248k**

- a) Conservation programme under the Built Heritage & Monument Scheme 2023 -Budget €70K
- b) Support Farming Rathcroghan EIP Community Archaeology Programme
- c) Application under National Biodiversity Action Plan & Invasive Alien Species scheme
- d) The Royal Sites of Ireland - UNESCO bid to World Heritage Council. €30k 5 year programme
- e) Preparation of Heritage Plan in 2023.

#### **Arts Programme 2023 – Budget €1.4m**

Partnership with the Arts Council and Creative Ireland will continue to support arts in the county through programmes, workshops and arts events.

- a) Budget includes funding for awards, bursaries, residencies, training & mentoring for artists.
- b) Public programmes- Culture Night, Bealtaine Festival, Literary Development Programme, Creative Ageing and Youth Programme.
- c) King House and Douglas Hyde Centre will continue to provide event space and cultural events.
- d) Delivery of Creative Ireland Programme and development of Creative Ireland Strategy

#### **Tourism Development and Promotion Budget €310K**

Tourism promotion of the county for domestic and international market will include:

- a) Online, print, TV, and social media platforms
- b) Participation in trade shows and video programmes
- c) Networking and Training for tourist trade
- d) Partnership with Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Bord na Móna and Trade
- e) Progress UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for Lough Ree
- f) Promote Festival & Events, Amenity & Tidy Towns and Pride of Place Schemes
- g) Delivery of actions of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Tourism Strategy 2023-2

#### **Emergency Services & Building Control Budget €3.1m**

- a) Deliver emergency services for the county in partnership with neighboring councils of Leitrim,

- Longford, Westmeath, Galway and Mayo.
- b) Provide fire safety advice, enforcement and management services including training, fire safety certification and building control
  - c) Continue membership of Regional Control Centre Service and implement the National Control and Command platform in 2023
  - d) Provide Civil Defence Services for Emergency and Community events.
  - e) Civil Defence Headquarters construction capital project will commence in 2023 €2.1m

## **170.22 ELECTED MEMBERS DEBATE ON DRAFT BUDGET 2023**

The Elected Members welcomed the Budget and discussed as follows:

- Welcome the housing grants support and the schemes that allow us to address the housing crisis.
- There has been a lot of work completed in the past number of years including issue of storage heaters, many improvements in the roads infrastructure.
- We need to prioritise investment in public lighting and convert to LED as soon as possible.
- There has been great investment in projects in Castlerea including Somers Park, the swimming pool and the Hub while the arts has also been supported with Local and Live funding.
- It was proposed by Cllr. Fitzmaurice and Seconded by Cllr Dineen that the sum of €50,000 be allocated to start the process of reopening Castlerea Fire Station.
- It was proposed by Cllr Fitzmaurice and seconded by Cllr. Leyden that the sum of €5,000 be allocated to support Council Business networking for staff and councillors to connect with SME's.
- €72m is a sizeable budget and will create economic activity. Next year will be a difficult one for small businesses with inflation currently at almost 10% and they need to be facilitated with the payment of rates over a period of time.
- Welcome the roads allocation – there are a significant number of local roads and can the same surface be brought to these roads as is the regional roads.
- The extra funding for disability grant is welcome – it will also generate more work.
- Propose to support International Womens day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 with some
- Over 1,000 houses need retrofitting and the Government need to increase the Grants to allow more houses to be completed
- Welcome the completion of the Royal Hotel project and King House in Boyle and the library
- Last year we were adapting to Covid and now we have a war to contend with with regard to helping refugees and energy inflation.
- Our staff have shown themselves to be very adaptable and resilient and we are proud to have such staff.
- Welcome climate and energy initiatives for communities
- The continued enhancement of Roscommon Town with public realm works is welcome.
- Welcome a new Civil Defence building in Roscommon Town.
- Roscommon County Council continues to support the leisure centre and the proposed active travel scheme on the Golf Links Road is welcome
- While there is an 8% increase in the budget, we will be challenged in 2023 with inflation. We should note that only one third of funding is raised locally but nevertheless this is an excellent budget.
- It is very welcome that a balanced budget has been presented without the necessity to increase rates.
- Thanks to the Council for supporting Lough Funshinagh

- Welcome investment in rural regenerating including Rahara and a new community group was established because of this.
- Thanks to the Council for their work with the Ukrainian refugees.
- Welcome the continued support of tidy towns
- It is important that the service providers and Roscommon County Council are recouped costs associated with the refugees before the year end.
- Is the allocation to Rathcroghan €50k or €30k – it is unclear as a total of €50k was proposed to be allocated?
- The housing Croí Conaithe scheme is a good scheme that will bring benefits all across the county
- Where is the Active Travel Scheme in Roscommon town? The golf links road?
- People who have rent increases in private homes and are finding it difficult should contact Threshold
- Maintaining the LPT increase has allowed us to continue to invest in projects across the county .
- Cemetery funding is welcome but the council must provide water supplies in all cemeteries.
- There has been no rates increase since 2015 and this will continue in 2023.
- There has been a 20% increase in the budget spend since 2013 and the indications are that we will not go into recession so we must look at the positives going into 2023.
- Investment in public lighting is necessary to accelerate.
- Welcome active travel project in Monksland – Part 8 agreed at the Athlone MD yesterday.
- Welcome greenway projects and capital allocation for Kilbegley cemetery and look forward to the work there being completed.
- While we have an increased budget, inflation will affect it.
- We are able to maintain the local roads network.
- Can we support additional funding allocation for disability grant works?
- There is considerable work carried out by the Regeneration team to secure funding for projects
- Is the Croí Conaithe scheme only for primary residences?
- What is the status of the Bogganfin Flood relief scheme?
- Welcome new fund for Capital works for cemeteries.
- The impact and demand for disability grant schemes is enormous for these people.
- The €554k allocated to adapt council buildings for climate initiatives should be spent wisely.
- Welcome dedicated staff to work on Climate adaptation and plan. The consequences of climate change is having huge effect on the economy and people.
- The Regeneration unit has amazing effect on the communities.
- With regard to the distribution of funding, Athlone Municipal District is allocated the least amount of funding again and as the District with the largest population, this should not be so.
- Full time Directors of Services should be immediately appointed
- There is great support in rural area from the Council although the delay in the N5 is disappointing.
- There is a need to make applicants aware of what work can be done with regard to LIS as some people applied and expected roads to be resurfaced and they were not.
- There is a need to get the OPW involved in the development works at Rathcroghan.
- How many Graveyards do not as yet have a water supply?
- How many grant applications are received for disability grants?
- It is to be welcomed that we do not propose a rate increase as this would have a huge effect on small business people. The fact that Roscommon has free parking is always a boost to businesses.
- Welcome Capital funding for the Cloonakilla project, however request that the footpath be extended to St Josephs football pitch to facilitate road safety..

- All of the councillors in South Roscommon have worked for many years on behalf of the upgrade of kilbegley cemetery.
- Tidy towns funding, while small is appreciated by everyone involved in their towns and villages.
- Still concern about road safety on the N61 – more needs to be done to upgrade this road.
- The reopening of fire station in Castlerea should be fast tracked.
- Need to find a way to tax companies working online such as shopping
- What is the Lough Ree project?
- More funding for verge trimming would be desirable
- Is there an emergency fund for salting and gritting roads if it is needed?
- Despite no rates increase, small businesses will struggle in 2023
- Welcome the open library in Boyle and the completion of the Royal Hotel Project next year. Many of the projects started a number of years ago are now coming to completion and it's great to see.
- Does the TII provide any funding for cleaning up dumping on National roads?
- All funding for arts and heritage is welcome.

In reply to the queries raised, Mr. Greg O'Donnell replied:

- The active travel project in Roscommon town is from Hannons hotel to the golf club.
- There is no update regarding timeframe on the Bogganfin flood relief scheme.
- It would make sense to extend the footpath to St. Josephs GAA pitch in Monksland but land is required.
- There is no emergency fund for winter maintenance but a requirement to have advance supplies. The current routes will not be extended but the routes may have to be done 24/7.
- There is no TII funding for anti dumping initiatives

Mr. Sean Mullarkey, A/Head of Finance added that:

- The funding of the Municipal districts is calculated on length of roads and population in a formulas agreed by CPG.
- The Croí Conaithe scheme does not include rental properties
- With regard to a business plan for the swimming pool, the council provide substantial funding each year but it does not have the square footage of gym space to make a profit.
- The Rathcroghan project includes €30k in a new job code and hope to add to this annually.
- The Council will support International Women's day projects
- With regard to the proposal of allocating €50k to the reopening of the Castlerea fire station, Mr. Mullarkey stated that this money will have to be found by decreasing expenditure in some other function.

The Chief Executive advised the Members of the following:

- Regardless of the perception, the Council is meeting its obligations with regard to providing fire services throughout the county, including in the Castlerea area.
- A fully manned fire station will require an estimated cost of €250k per annum but the reopening of the Castlerea station would cost €300k per year for the next 3 years when training of a new crew is factored in.
- It is becoming very difficult to employ retained fire staff across the country and this is the experience of a number of counties. Staff need to be available 24/7 and live within a 3km radius of the station.
- A review of all retained fire stations is ongoing and is due to be completed soon –this may see a

number of changes recommended not just nationally but locally. It would be premature to make a decision on Castlerea until the consequences of this report is analysed.

- As we have presented a balanced budget, a rate increase will be necessary to fund the proposed €50k unless it is found from some other discretionary spending.

The Chief Executive confirmed to Cllr. Leyden that €50k is not currently included in the budget and if not Cllr. Leyden suggested the meeting should be suspended.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice stated that the motion has been proposed and seconded and the cost should be absorbed by the six engineering areas as it benefits the whole county. He realised this is only the start of the process and all of the Roscommon MD members are behind this proposal. He cited the fact that there has been no rates increase since 2015 and we had a fire service in Castlerea at that time. We are spending €1m on energy costs and there will be a significant reduction in energy costs over time when LED lights are all installed.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the desire to reopen the fire station but the Council provides a fire service for the whole county but reiterated that the members must fund this from discretionary spend.

The A/Head of finance stated that if the six operational areas absorb this cost it will mean a reduction in their roads maintenance budget of €7,500 each or the GMA allocation - €16,500 from each MD allocation.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** that the sum of €50,000 be included in the budget to commence the process of reopening Castlerea Fire Station, to be funded by the discretionary roads maintenance budget of the Municipal Districts across all of the six operational areas.

Cllr. Fitzmaurice thanked the Chief Executive

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Leyden

It was **AGREED** that the sum of €5,000 be provided to set up a Council Business Network and be funded from the General Municipal Allocation of the three Municipal Districts.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Murphy

It was **AGREED** that the Towns Teams allocation for the three towns in the Boyle MD should be increased by €15,000 and that this be funded from illegal dumping funding in the sum of €5,000 and graveyard allocation in the sum of €10,000

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Leyden

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon Council support the International Womens Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 in conjunction with the Regional Caucus events.

## **171.22 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE - CATHAOIRLEACH AND LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

And **AGREED** that pursuant to Section 143(a) & 143(b) of the Local Government Act, 2001, that Roscommon County Council pay an Annual Allowance of €20,000 and €4,000 in 2023 to the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach of the County Council respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions.

#### **172.22 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE - CATHAOIRLEACH OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Murphy

**SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh

And **AGREED** that pursuant to the Local Government Act, 2001, and the Local Government Reform Act 2014 that Roscommon County Council pay an Annual Allowance of €6,000 in 2023 to the Cathaoirleach of the Athlone, Boyle and Roscommon Municipal Districts respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions.

#### **173.22 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE - STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEES**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Shanagher

**SECONDED** by Councillor Fallon

And **AGREED** that pursuant to Local Government Reform Act 2014 that Roscommon County Council pay an Annual Allowance of €6,000 in 2023 to each Chairperson of the four designated Strategic Policy Committees.

#### **174.22 SECTION 76 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2021 - ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSES**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor McDermott

**SECONDED** by Councillor Shanagher

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council authorise the incurring of reasonable expenditure in connection with receptions, entertainment and the making of presentations to distinguished persons and in connection with the holding of special events relevant to its functions during 2023.

#### **175.22 ADOPTION OF BUDGET 2023**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Keogh

**SECONDED** by Councillor Fitzmaurice

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council by resolution adopt for the financial year ending 31st December, 2023, the Budget as set out in Tables A, B, C, D, E & F subject to the amendments agreed by the resolutions of the elected members.

#### **176.22 ADOPTION OF ANNUAL RATE OF VALUATION**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor McDermott

**SECONDED** by Councillor Keogh

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council determine in accordance with the Budget, as adopted the rates set out in Tables A and C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the financial year ending 31st December, 2023, for the purposes set out in those tables, as amended.

**177.22 ADOPTION OF RATE OF REFUND ON VACANT PROPERTIES**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Keogh

**SECONDED** by Councillor Callaghan

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council set the rate of refund in relation to vacant properties at 100% as per Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and The Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014.

**178.22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023-2025**

The capital programme 2023-2025 was noted by the Members.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

*Petrizis Bohan*

Meetings Administrator

*Tom Body*

Cathaoirleach

*Petrizis Bohan*

Countersigned