

**MINUTES OF BUDGET MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON THURSDAY, 30th November, 2023 AT 10.30 am.**

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

**160.23 DRAFT BUDGET OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL 2024**

The Cathaoirleach welcomed the Members to the Budget Meeting and invited the Chief Executive and Directors to present the Draft Budget to the Members.

**161.23 CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive Mr. Shane Tiernan presented the Draft Budget to the Elected Members for consideration:

- He outlined the process in preparing the Budget including the input of the Corporate Policy Group and budget holders.
- As ability to increase revenue is limited, need to work with ratepayers in 2024 to ensure collection rate remains high while ensuring efficiencies across the organisation.
- The prospect of a rates increase will have to be soon considered in light of increased service delivery costs. It is nearly 20 years since the last rates increase.
- The LPT has increased by €1.77m to €12.5m (new baseline funding from Government). The maintenance of the 15% increase has resulted in the sum of €540k available for GMA and will allow €255k for C&E projects, an additional €187k for street cleaning and €75k for the graveyard grants and will also support tidy towns grants and matched funding for additional investment in the county.
- Housing continues to be a key issue and Housing for All provides a plan to deliver houses where they are needed in the county through various schemes including capital delivery, buy and renew,

Croí Cónaithe and LA loans.

- Croí Cónaithe has been a great success so far with in excess of 180 applications received to date.
- The approval of the N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge received Cabinet approval to proceed to construction in 2024. When completed it will deliver a major economic boost to the region, providing 34km of high quality road and encourage tourism, investment and employment in County Roscommon and the West and North West.
- Public Lighting costs are budgeted to increase in 2024 and there is a capital project in place to upgrade 2900 lights at an estimated cost of €3.4m to Roscommon County Council.
- Our Rural Future 2021-2025 continues to provide funding through various schemes including RRDF, Town and Village Renewal and Outdoor Recreation Schemes. The redevelopment of An Rioga was completed in 2023 with the Castlerea Hub and the Monksland Innovation Hub due to be completed in 2024 and should result in increased employment.
- Detailed design and construction will continue on Monksland, Roscommon Town and Strokestown projects subject to Part 8 and government funding as well as a number of other projects including a town park in Ballaghaderreen. The Council must continue to develop projects to be considered in the coming years subject to matched funding and government approval. This will enable the generation of jobs in our local economy.
- A priority of the Council is to continue to develop on tourism potential. Working with our partners we will seek to maximise funding opportunities such as Just Transition, EI, Greenway, Active Travel and the rural and urban schemes to deliver key projects such as Hodson Bay, Lough Key Forest Park, and plans for a key greenway infrastructure to link towns and villages.
- The level of capital funding is welcome but brings an increased workload and we have increased staff numbers in 2023 and plan to maintain that level in 2024. We will continue to invest in training and supports to enable staff to deliver services in most efficient and resourceful manner.
- All staff in Water Services are under operational direction of Uisce Eireann since July 2023- all costs will be reimbursed to the Council and the costs will decrease annually until 2026 when a full transition of staff will complete
- Negotiations are ongoing to finalise the new retained fire services pay and conditions agreement. The increased cost of the fire services in 2024 has been budgeted on a cost neutral basis as there is no firm agreement as yet.
- Roscommon County Council continues to respond to Ukrainian refugee crisis and going forward will provide further wrap around services and will be putting in place a Local Authority Integration team in 2024 of four to work with international protection in Ireland.
- The Climate Action Plan will be adopted in 2024 translating international and national legislation into local climate actions and adaptation considerations integrated into all functions of the Council operations.
- The development and promotion of our online portal My Online Services will continue in 2024 and will allow customers to access better services. This underpins the national digital services framework.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive thanked Head of Finance, Mr. Mullarkey and his team for the preparation of the Draft Budget and to the Cathaoirleach and Elected Members for their support during the year.

The Cathaoirleach proposed that each member would be afforded four minutes to speak on the Budget and this was agreed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Cummins

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Byrne

It was **AGREED** to adopt the Budget at 1.00pm.

### **162.23 HEAD OF FINANCE REPORT**

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

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Total Expenditure Budget                   | €75,431,200 |
| Housing & Building                         | €9,259,100  |
| Road Transportation and Safety             | €30,288,300 |
| Water Services                             | €6,235,900  |
| Development Management                     | €9,938,300  |
| Environmental Services                     | €8,105,000  |
| Recreation and Amenity                     | €5,228,800  |
| Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare | €774,800    |
| Miscellaneous Services                     | €5,601,000  |

#### **Income Highlights**

- Increase of 5% in income/expenditure or €3.4m from €72m in 2023 to €75.4m in 2024
- Maintaining 15% increase in LPT equates to €540k
- €1.77m increase in LPT from Exchequer
- No Rates income increase is proposed
- IPB Dividend reduced by €99k to €98k
- Building Momentum Agreement (Lansdowne Rd) increased by €376k to €4.5m in 2024. Covers salaries, pensions etc.
- €1m expenditure for Fire Service Salary increases matched by income from the Department
- Income from Uisce Eireann is reduced by €700k as staff transfer from RCC to UE. There is a contra entry expenditure match.
- NPPR income for 2024 will be reduced by €100k to €26k

Local Property Tax maintained at 15% equalling €540k allocated to following headings:

- €255k: General Municipal Allocation (GMA)
- €120K: General Roads
- €75k: Graveyard Voluntary Grants
- €60k: Tidy Towns & Amenity Grants
- €75k: Town Teams Funding

#### **Divisional Expenditure Highlights:**

Housing and Building

- €100k: Unspent from 2023 carried forward to 2024 in Emergency Repairs in Housing

Road Transportation and Safety

- €1,100k: Increase in road grants (compared to 2023)
- €220k: Public Lighting Operating cost Increase from €911k to €1,131k due to energy costs

#### Water Services

- €700k reduction in Service Level Agreement

#### Development Management

- €525k: Loan Repayment on €5.9m Regen project
- €71k: Town Regeneration Officer
- €91k: Tourism Promotion – Connacht Fleadh €30k, Night & Day Festival  
€15k

#### Environmental Services

- €1000k: Fire Salary Increase (matched by Income) (estimated)
- €298K: Climate Change Salary Increase

#### Recreation and Amenity

- €330k: Parks & Open Space Increase for Public Realm Team

#### Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

- € 50k: Lough Funshinagh Legal Fees (2023: 100K)

#### Miscellaneous Services

- €330k: Increased Local Election Cost/Gratuities

#### Central Management Charge (CMC)

- €500k: Increased pension costs
- €176k: Increased support for Innovation Centres

#### Capital Programme 2024 – 2026

- 3 year Programme with a value of €406m to be funded as follows:
  - €387m: State grants and subsidies
  - €9.3m: Borrowings
  - €825k: Development Contributions
  - €8.1m: Other

#### Proposed Capital Expenditure Highlights:

- €61m for social houses
- €5.5m for Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans
- €11m Croi Conaithe Grant
- €4.5m for Housing Adaptation Grant
- €4.5m for Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting
- €269m for Road Projects
  - €249m for N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge
- €2.5m for completion in 2024 of Castlerea Food Hub and Monksland Remote Working Hub
- €1m Aras Energy & Ergonomic Building Efficiency upgrade
- €3m for Civil Defence Building (Funded by RCC)
- €6.5m for Boyle Library
- €20m for public realm projects funded via Town and Village Renewal, Urban and Rural Regeneration and Outdoor Recreation

- €300k for Graveyard – Four Roads priority
- €1m for An Bealach project in Ballaghaderreen

### **163.23 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES - HOUSING, CULTURE AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION**

Acting Director of Services, Fiona Ni Chuinn presented the proposed budget for her service areas of responsibilities:

#### **Housing:**

- Housing Budget increase of €311,600 to €9,259,100
- Maintenance decreased by €100k, new condition surveys of housing stock will result in separate targeted funded maintenance
- Tenant administration has increased as legal fees for debt management and conveyancing increase
- Homeless services increase as presentations increase and additional supports required, 90% funded by DHLGH
- RAS and leasing programme up €271,000 as new homes are completed and tenanted in conjunction with AHB's and private market
- Tenant in Situ acquisitions ongoing. In 2023 18 houses at a cost of €3,050,000 acquired/agreed, DHLGH funded
- Appointment of Healthy Age Friendly Homes Coordinator
- Croí Cónaithe grants approved/approved in principle - €5.2million
- Housing Aid for Older People, Housing Adaptation/Mobility Aid increased, 20% Match Funding based on Department Allocation of €1.5m

#### **Ukraine Humanitarian Response**

- 2024 Budget provision included in D0601 for accommodation supports (€900,000 spent to date)
- Staffing resources have been allocated to the unit and are fully recoupable.
- 14 Service Providers in the County (Two in direct contract with RCC)
- Offer a Home - Payment of €800 tax free per month. 178 offers of houses received with 118 allocations for 375 persons received (38 offers subsequently withdrawn)
- Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) to be established in 2024 with the objective to enable applicants to live independently in the community

#### **Library Services:**

- Operation of Library Archival Services €2,486,300 an increase of €217,900
- Specific measures include opening of temporary Ballaghaderreen Library at unit adjacent to Duffy's Supervalu while renovations and energy upgrades at Dillon House are completed.
- Preparation of Library Development Plan 2024
- Programmes under Healthy Ireland, Creative Ireland, Right to Read, Skills for Life and Children and Schools programmes
- Digital Services development and Book Fund
- Sense-Ability services increased with launch of 'The Happiness Programme' via new Magic Table at Boyle Library, King House – grant from DRCD Dormant Accounts Fund.
- Provision of Sensory Garden to rear of Castlereagh Library under Community Recognition Fund grant.

## **Culture:**

- Arts Expenditure in 2024 will be €1.392m with income from Arts Council of €144.5k that will be supplemented by an additional €191k from Creative Ireland plus income generated from the Arts Centre and King House.
- Funding provided for awards, bursaries, residencies, training and mentoring for artists and arts organisations;
- Public programmes will include Culture Night, Bealtaine Festival, Literary Development, Creative Ageing, Arts Participation, Youth Programmes, Public Art
- Roscommon Arts Centre provides Theatre, Gallery, Outreach & Engagement & Artist Supports
- Delivery of Creative Ireland Programme will continue in 2024
- A Creative Communities Engagement Officer was appointed in 2023 on a 5 year fixed term.
- King House & Douglas Hyde Centre will continue to provide event space and cultural events in addition to the new Exhibition Space in An Ríoga in Boyle.

## **Capital Programme – Housing and Building:**

### **Local Authority Housing (€61.1M):**

Housing Capital Programme continues to ramp up as Housing for All impacts on delivery. Projects are dependent on Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) funding approval. In 2023, 44 houses complete and tenanted, additional 27 to complete by year end. The 2024 target expenditure is €10.6m.

Adequate zoned land holdings will impact on delivery over the coming 3 year programme

### **Traveller Accommodation (€3M):**

The Traveller Accommodation Programme commits to the following projects to commence in 2024: Construction of 3 extensions in Torpan Beg, Ballyforan and design proceeding for 5 houses at Killerney, Roscommon.

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

Projections for 2024 are based on approved loans for 2023.

### **Croí Cónaithe Fund (€11M):**

Over 3 years this fund will see an investment of €11 million for private and rented vacant properties. There are currently 214 applications, 93 are approved or approved in principle, valued in excess of €5.2m

### **Assistance to Persons Improving Houses (€4.56M) & Local Authority Housing Grants (€1.08m)**

#### **Energy Improvement Works to LA Dwellings (€4.5M):**

In 2023 from a target of 45 units, 40 units are complete and the final 5 complete in early 2024. The average cost per unit circa €34k. In 2024 the target is 45/50 units and units are currently under selection for design.

#### **Library Services Capital Budget:**

- Capital Funding of €150k for upgrade works at Roscommon and Ballaghaderreen Libraries
- Allocation of €50k for the replacement of the Library van at Library HQ
- RRDF funding secured for the construction of the new Public Library in Boyle €6.5m

## **164.23 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES - ROADS, ACTIVE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING**

Mr. Greg O'Donnell Acting Director Services, presented the Budget for his areas of responsibility to the Members:

### **Roads Budget:**

- Roads Total Budget €30,288,300, an increase of 5% on 2023.
- The sum of €23,103,400 (76%) will be income generated as grants from DoT and TII.
- Expenditure for 2024 includes:
  - National Primary Maintenance and Improvement €690.8K
  - National Secondary Maintenance and Improvement €728.1K
  - Regional Road Maintenance and Improvement €5.658m
  - Local Road Maintenance and Improvement €19.5523m
  - Traffic Management Improvement €20k
  - Road Safety engineering Improvement €585.6k
  - Road Safety Promotion and Education €54.6k
  - Support to Roads Capital Programme €84.7k
  - Agency and Recoupable Services €1.660m
- An allocation of €330k is proposed for the new initiative to build a Public Realm Maintenance Team.

### **Planning:**

- The budget proposed for the provision of Planning Services (Development Management Programme) is €2.9839m
- Forward Planning – 4 plans €506.3k
- Development Management €1.527m
- Enforcement including debt collection €521k
- Unfinished Housing Estates €428.9k. The number of unfinished estates has decreased from 200 in 2015 to 80 in 2023.

### **Capital Budget:**

#### **Roads Projects:**

- N4 Carrick to Dromod Road – Phase 3 € 5.05m
- N5 Ballagherreen to Scramoge – contract awarded € 249m
- N61 Tulsk to Chlashaganny – JR new planning application required
- N61 Ballymurray to Knockcroghery – draft report with priority locations (TII suspended in 2021)
- N60 at Oran – complete
- N61 Tulsk to Gortnacranagh – Phase 3, 4 €1.75m to progress

### **Greenways:**

There are 3 major greenways in planning and the following have been budget for 2024:

- Athlone to Ballyleague/Lanesborough €700k
- Mid Shannon Greenway – Ballyleague/Lanesborough, Strokestown, Rooskey, Tarmonbarry €500k
- Lough Key to Carrick on Shannon Greenway €300k

### **Active Travel Projects**

N5 related Active Travel projects

- Bellanagare €550k
- Frenchpark € 280k
- Strokestown € 110k
- Tulsk € 230k
- Tulsk to Rathcroghan €575k
- NTA projects
  - R362 Monksland € 1.5m
  - L7055 (Golf Links Road) € 1.5m

### **Other Capital Works:**

- Footpath upgrades/maintenance € 1.2m
- Bridge rehabilitation works € 600k
- Upgrade Council HGV fleet € 1.2m
- OPW flood relief works for Carrick
- OPW flood relief works at Bogginfin
- Graveyards € 300k (Four Roads Extension)

## **165.23 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES - CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES, PEOPLE AND GOVERNANCE**

Ms. Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services provided an overview of the Budget for her areas of responsibility:

- **Public Lighting**
  - Operating Costs ↑ 220k
  - Procurement: Existing OGP Contract for the provision of Unmetered Electricity to the Public Sector expires on 31st October 2024
  - Unit rate for electricity will increase
  - LED's - 45% in 2021 to 63% today
  - Number of public lights has increased from 6,500 in 2021 to 7,883 today
  - Annual usage has increased from 2,550,000 kWhr in 2021 to 2,800,000 kWhr in 2023
- **Water Services**
  - Transition to Uisce Éireann - 19th July 2023;
  - Water Services staff - transferring to UE or being reassigned back to RCC;
  - All expenditure in relation to water and waste water services will be recouped from UE.
  - Rural Water Programme 2024 – 2026 to be launched Q1 2024
  - Subsidies GWS to continue
  - Grants for private water supplies to a house to continue
- **Environmental Services**
  - Overall Budget increase in 2024 of €172.4k for Waste & Water Quality Management
  - Enforcement Team in place



- Increased legal obligations on Local Authority
- **Climate Action**
  - Climate Change & Flooding - €421k:
    - Climate Action Team in place
    - LA Climate Action Plan to be adopted Q1 2024
    - Deliver Actions in LACAP
    - DECC funding Climate Action Unit
    - SEAI funding SECs Energy Master Plans
- **Franchise Costs - €287k**
  - Local Elections 2024
  - Maintenance of Electoral Register
- **Local Representation & Civic Leadership - €1.4m**
  - Payments to Elected Members
  - Gratuity Scheme for Councillors in 2024
- **Recruitment:**
  - Increasing workloads and expanding work areas
  - Replacement of staff lost to retirement and promotion
  - Staff turnover & succession planning
  - Staffing requirements intensive
  - Staff training, supports & wellbeing prioritized
  - 44 number recruitment competitions completed to date in 2023
- **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

## Capital Budget

- **Development Incentives and Controls**
  - Energy & ergonomic upgrade to Áras and Chontae incl. Solar PV panels, lighting to LED, better use of space within building & upgrade to BMS - €1m  
This Project will contribute towards reaching our 2030 Targets by reducing our Carbon Emissions
  - RCC 2030 Targets:
    - 51% reduction in energy related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
    - 51% reduction in thermal (heating and transport) related greenhouse gas emissions
    - 50% improvement in energy efficiency
    - All buildings to be net zero emissions by 2050
- **Environmental Protection**
  - Upgrades to Civic Amenity Sites – Draft Waste Management Plan for Circular Economy - €95k
  - Landfill licencing requirements - €100k

- Climate Action Plan - €100k
- 
- **Administration and Miscellaneous**
  - Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP) - €3.4m
    - North West Region managed by Mayo County Council (7LA's)
    - Unbundling Costs
    - Procurement electricity for public lights during 2024
    - Cut energy use and reduce CO2 emissions
  - Public Lighting Infill Projects - €300k

## **166.23 DIRECTOR OF SERVICES - REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY, TOURISM AND, HERITAGE**

### **Community Development and Sport and Recreation**

- Support Communities throughout the County
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
  - LECP – for consideration at Jan 2024 Meeting
  - LEADER – New Programme – LDS 2023-2027 approved – €5.1m
  - Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) – Tender being awarded – €705k per year + €106k for Ukraine Support in 2024
  - Healthy Ireland Programme 2023-2025 – €155k
- Support Age Friendly Strategy/ Alliance
- Support Public Participation Network (PPN) – €100k
- Grants
  - Community Recognition Fund €690k – Projects progressing
  - Community Support Fund – awaiting Gov. announcement
- Sport and Recreation Officers – €60k

### **Tourism**

- Budget increase €90k
- Working closely with Fáilte Ireland and other partners
- Support to County Fleadh €30k
- Appointment of Tourism Activator shortly (FI Just Transition)
- Marketing of Roscommon Tourism
- Festivals and Events €40k
- Fáilte Ireland Just Transitions - Potential Projects
  - Lough Key Forest and Activity Park
  - Hodson Bay
  - Termonbarry

(Linkin the Dublin Galway EuroVelo Route at Athlone through Roscommon to Ballyleague, Termonbarry, Rooskey, Strokestown via the Lough Ree and Mid Shannon Greenway projects)

### **Heritage**

- Budget increase €10k
- County Heritage Plan in 2024
- Progress Rathcroghan as part of the Royal Sites of Ireland UNESCO World Heritage Bid

- Secure Funding under the Built Heritage Grant streams

### **Enterprise and Economic Development**

- Town Centre First (TCF) Officer appointed
- TCF plan for Strokestown and awaiting call for next TCF Town
- Match Funding for Projects €205k increase of €35k
- Town Team funding increased by €2.5k each – total €75k for all six town teams
- RRDF/URDF Match Funding Loan charges €525k
- Castlerea Food Hub subvention €70k

### **Capital Budget**

#### **Current Projects – €48.6m**

- URDF – €20.1m
  - Roscommon Market Square
  - Spokes in the Wheel
  - Vacancy and Regeneration Acquisition
- RRDF – €22.5m
  - Royal Hotel Boyle (completed)
  - Boyle and King House
  - Boyle Library
  - Monksland Innovation Hub
  - Putting the Heart into Monksland
  - Ballaghaderreen Public Realm
  - Revitalising Strokestown
  - Castlerea Hub

### **Economic Development:**

#### **Current Projects – €48.6m - (cont.)**

- Town and Village – €2.4m
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) – €3.1m
- CLAR Projects – €0.5m
- **Proposed Rural Support Schemes Projects:**
  - Town and Village – 5 apps – €1.5m
  - ORIS – 9 apps – €1m
- **RRDF Call 5 – Feb 2024 – Potential projects (90% grant for Counties in NW Region)**
  - Strokestown Public Realm – circa €6m
  - An Bealach, Ballaghaderreen – circa €22m

(Project owner An Bealach CLG is responsible for delivery of the project. RRDF requires applicant for funding to be a Public Body – RCC to make application and manage grant. RCC to provide portion of match funding – up to €1m. RCC is a member of An Bealach CLG board)

- **Just Transition**
  - LECP Measure – 5 Concept Papers and 1 Application
  - Fáilte Ireland Economic Diversification: 3 potential projects - Lough Key Forest and Activity park, Hodson Bay Master Plan and Termonbarry Tourism project
- **Smart Regions (EI)**

- Local Infrastructure – 1 potential project

### **167.23 ELECTED MEMBERS DEBATE ON DRAFT BUDGET 2024**

The Cathaoirleach invited the members to consider the Draft Budget and raise any queries they had for discussion:

The Members commented as follows:

- This is a positive Budget that is presented to the Members
- Climate Action requirements will be onerous in future years
- It is clear Roscommon County Council is largely dependent on outside funding
- 20% matched funding is a challenge to meet to avail of future funding opportunities. It is a must that this figure is reduced to 10% to afford to take these opportunities.
- Welcome capital funding for Four Roads Cemetery and bridge rehabilitation including Castlestrange Bridge.
- Welcome the Hodson Bay Master Plan
- The €75m expenditure for 2024 is welcome as it will benefit everyone in the county including businesses
- There has been no rates increase since the revaluation in 2018 and some adjacent counties have seen a 10% increase in recent years.
- The €250m investment in the upgrade of the N5 will bring much welcome employment to the area
- In relation to proposed capital projects such as public realm works, all stakeholders should be consulted before any plan is finalised
- The quality of housing being provided in the county is second to none
- The Budget will be more difficult in the future and after next year's Local Elections, the Council will need to be prudent on how it invests in projects
- Welcome the 5% increase in the budget with no rates increase.
- The ongoing investment in Public Realm works and projects across the county is welcome
- The investment in the leisure centre is welcome as is the continued investment in library services
- While welcoming the N5 project, the N60 has been neglected and progress is warranted here.
- There are very few complaints regarding our roads but increased expenditure on hedgecutting and salting of roads in winter is necessary
- The investment in the Castlerea Food Hub will provide jobs and looking forward to it being opened in early 2024
- The upgrade of the public lighting network infrastructure to LED needs to be completed as soon as possible in order to start seeing the operational costs start to decrease
- The Croí Cónaithe Housing Scheme is proving a great success and a positive development
- Welcome the increased grant funding in the Arts including festivals
- It may be necessary to increase staff resources in Planning, Active Travel and CCTV services.
- Welcome the expenditure of €1.3m on footpaths
- Thanks to community groups for their engagement with grant funding and all of the work they do
- Welcome ongoing expenditure on recreational facilities
- Thanks to the volunteers who work at all events and festivals across the county and those who look after the graveyards in the county
- Need more staff to deal with Croí Cónaithe grants applications
- The Golf Links Road Active Travel Scheme should be progressed as soon as possible.

- Welcome the investment in solar panels for Áras an Chontae and this should be replicated in all public buildings
- The Council fleet should be upgraded to EV as soon as possible
- The projects being delivered at present will transform the county and Croí Cónaithe will reduce dereliction.
- Welcome the start of the Just Transition Funding stream
- Greenways will be a game-changer in terms of tourism and boost the local economy
- Increased expenditure on tourism is important and just transition funding will be welcome
- If the Government is serious about climate action there will have to be increased investment in every county for adaptation measures
- Roscommon County Council investment in a new Civil Defence building will provide great facilities to a very important service for the people of the county
- Consideration in the future to fund town teams in more towns and villages as more needs to be done for our villages
- The 178 houses for Offer a Home for Ukrainians is a positive development
- Looking forward to the investment in the library in Ballaghaderreen.
- The value of money has decreased despite the increase in the expenditure budget for 2024.
- Well done to the staff of the Council in the various departments involved in preparing schemes that are successful in securing substantial funding.
- Looking forward to the completion of the greenways that will transform the county.
- The income limits for housing loans are too low now
- The Croí Cónaithe scheme needs to be amended to include preserving the structures of old houses
- The funding for LIS schemes should be increased and the homeowner get priority in the allocation of the scheme funding
- Consensus with all interested parties is a desirable outcome for both the Strokestown and Ballaghaderreen public realm projects
- The Council need to engage with Local Link regarding difficulties in getting bus stops.

It was then proposed by the Cathaoirleach to extend the time to vote on the budget to 1.45pm and this was agreed by the members.

- Thanks to all of the services involved in the clean up in the aftermath of recent Storm Debi
- Can the Council revisit the policy on resurfacing done from the edge of the road to the boundary of the house.
- There are issues on the N61 at Ganleys roundabout that need addressing
- Thanks to the housing staff for all of their work in 2013
- Welcome the news that the 'old N5' road will be designated for cycling, walking initiatives.
- There are public lighting issues in some housing estates in Styrokestown to be addressed
- Welcome funding for Connacht Fleadh in Strokestown next summer – a big boost for the town
- The funding of a team for public realm maintenance is very welcome
- Lights are required on the N5 Scramoge cross
- Would prefer that water services were not transitioned to Uisce Eireann
- Welcome all investment in Heritage projects
- The fire station in Castlerea must be reopened
- The provision of housing should transition from AHB's back to local authorities
- There is a meeting with MD members on Monday next with regard to the N61 update report from

the TII.

The following queries were raised by the Members:

- There is a lot of lands frozen in the Knockcroghery Ballymurray area as the By-Pass is now suspended – can this be addressed?
- Can the Director of Housing provide more clarity on Homeless services fee in the county?
- Is there not a demand for more 1 and 2 bedroom houses in the county?
- How many local authority housing loans were approved?
- Has the Town Regeneration post been filled?
- Will bottle bank facilities be upgraded as part of Civic Amenity upgrades?
- Many people are relying on Croí Cónaithe grant to complete their project and the payments should be more timely. Can the properties now be inspected at builders finish?
- Dis the council buy houses for people evicted this year?
- Has a budget been allocated for the development of Rathcroghan
- Can the executive have another look at the proposed public realm works in Ballaghaderreen?
- When will the N61 road upgrade be revisited? Landowners need to be met.
- When is the Blueway feasibility study due to start?
- Do the Council build houses on sites provided privately – affordable sites?

In conclusion the Cathaoirleach welcomed the fact that the budget is welcomed by all of the members and thanked the Chief Executive, Head of Finance, Directors and all of the Members for their input onto the budget process and invited the Directors to respond to questions raised:

- The Council introduced a fee of €39 for single person and €60 for a couple per week for the provision of homeless accommodation – no fee for children
- The Council are aware of the need for 1 and 2 bedroom houses and this is being taken into account when planning housing provision there are 6 such units due to be completed in Castlerea next year.
- 35 home loans have been received to date – this is a demand led service
- Roscommon youth orchestra are funded by the Council through music generation project
- Houses for 18 tenants in situ were bought this year when the eviction ban ended.
- Affordable sites – this is under discussion with the Department. Applicants must fall within the income threshold to be eligible but there was small takeup in the last scheme.
- Croí Cónaithe – The Council are only in a position under the terms of the scheme to pay out on vouched expenditure done not under builders finish. There are 214 applications and two final claims have been received to date, with one due for payment tomorrow. It is acknowledged there was some lag at the beginning of the scheme but there are also legalities to be completed as a charge has to be put on the property.
- There is a requirement to use AHBs for provision of 40% of housing.
- Bottle Banks are not included in the proposed upgrade of civic amenity sites, mainly H&S matters. These are looked at as part of annual work programme.
- Infill of public lighting in estates are ongoing where they have been reported. The council continue to upgrade lights and the regional project will commence in due course.

The Cathaoirleach then asked the meetings administrator to read the resolutions for adoption.

#### **168.23 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE 2024- CATHAOIRLEACH AND LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Murphy  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Callaghan

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 2024 to the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach of the County Council respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions.

#### **169.23 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE 2024 - CATHAOIRLEACH OF MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Dineen  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Shanagher

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 2024 to the Cathaoirleach of the Athlone, Boyle and Roscommon Municipal Districts respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions.

#### **170.23 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE 2024 - STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Cummins  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Naughten

And **AGREED** that pursuant to Local Government Reform Act 2014 that Roscommon County Council pay an Annual Allowance of €6,000 in 2024 to each Chairperson of the four designated Strategic Policy Committees

#### **171.23 SECTION 76 OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001 - ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSES 2024**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Dineen  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

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 2024.

#### **172.23 ADOPTION OF BUDGET 2024**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Cummins  
**SECONDED** by Councillor Ward

And **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council by resolution adopt for the financial year ending 31st December, 2024, the Budget as set out in Tables A, B, C, D, E & F.

#### **173.23 ADOPTION OF ANNUAL RATE OF VALUATION 2024**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Byrne

**SECONDED** by Councillor Mulligan

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, 2024, for the purposes set out in those tables, as amended.

**174.23 ADOPTION OF RATE OF REFUND ON VACANT PROPERTIES 2024**

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Cummins

**SECONDED** by Councillor Murphy

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.

**175.23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024- 2026**

The Capital Programme 2024-2026 was noted by the Members.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:

*Petrizis Bohan*

Meetings Administrator

*John D Keogh*

Cathaoirleach

*Petrizis Bohan*

Countersigned