

**MINUTES OF BUDGET MEETING OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, ROSCOMMON  
ON WEDNESDAY, 4th December, 2024 AT 10.30 am.**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor Paschal Fitzmaurice	<b>PRESIDED</b>
<b>MEMBERS:</b>	Cllr L. Brennan, Cllr V. Byrne, Cllr L. Callaghan, Cllr D. Connolly, Cllr. T. Crosby, Cllr L. Cull, Cllr N. Dineen, Cllr M. Frain, Cllr E. Kelly, Cllr J. Keogh, Cllr M. McDermott, Cllr S. Moylan, Cllr G. Scahill, Cllr A. Waldron and Cllr T. Ward.	
<b>OFFICIALS:</b>	Caitlín Conneely, Director of Services Mark Keaveney, Director of Services Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services Greg O'Donnell, A/Director of Services Shane Tiernan, Chief Executive Karen Hanley, Meetings Administrator Claudette Collins, Staff Officer Orla Cleary, Assistant Staff Officer	

**176.21 DRAFT BUDGET OF ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL 2025**

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

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Chief Executive Mr. Shane Tiernan 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.
- The decision to an increase of 5% in LPT has resulted in the sum of €590,000 and will allow for €300,000 to be distributed for Community and Enterprise projects, €191,000 for street cleaning, and €75,000 for voluntary graveyards, and will also support tidy towns grants and match funding for additional investment in the county.
- The ability to increase revenue funding mechanisms is limited and therefore there is a need to work with ratepayers in 2025 to ensure a high collection rate, to deliver over 1100 services in Roscommon.
- Commercial Rates in County Roscommon are the most important source of income and this draft budget contains a 5% increase to balance it. Commercial Rates have not been increased in Roscommon in several years. There is a need to secure the rate increase in order to drive forward with plans for the County, in particular, an ambitious capital delivery programme.
- A map was circulated showing €145 million between complete, progressing, and planning projects for the county. This investment programme requires €28 million in match funding. The small investment locally from ratepayers and LPT payers leads to a huge return and endorsement by

Central Government in providing funding to progress the ambitious plans for County Roscommon.

- In Housing, there are ambitious plans to deliver over 250 new social housing over the current programme.
- The successful scheme Croí Cónaithe of bringing old properties back into use to be occupied is in excess of 300 properties for Roscommon.
- The N5 Ballaghaderreen Road project now commenced.
- Public lighting upgrades are being carried out.
- The construction of the new Civil Defence Building is progressing.
- Projects are progressing on Greenways and enhancing attractions in the County such as the Rathcroghan Royal site and the National Famine Strokestown. There are plans to connect these attractions through the Dublin-Galway Greenway to the Royal Canal Greenway at Cloondra and Tarmonbarry up through the county through a network of Greenways.
- Integration is important for new residents in County Roscommon to enable them to contribute economically and socially, and be inclusively involved.
- Climate Action is a very significant area of focus over the coming years.
- There is heavy investment in IT infrastructure to prevent against cyber threats and ensure we can continue to modernise the digitalisation of our online services.

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

The Cathaoirleach proposed that the meeting would be concluded by 1.00pm, to allow each Director to speak about their areas of responsibility, and that each Member would be afforded four minutes to speak on the Budget.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fitzmaurice

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh

It was **AGREED** that the meeting would be concluded by 1.00pm, each Director speak about their areas of responsibility, and that each Member would be afforded four minutes to speak on the Budget.

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

Sean Mullarkey, Director of Finance, summarised the main provisions of the Budget as follows:

<b>Total Expenditure Budget</b>	€79,662,100
<b>Housing &amp; Building</b>	€10,930,300
<b>Road Transportation and Safety</b>	€30,699,200
<b>Water Services</b>	€5,797,400
<b>Development Management</b>	€11,733,700
<b>Environmental Services</b>	€7,930,700
<b>Recreation and Amenity</b>	€6,096,400
<b>Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare</b>	€757,500
<b>Miscellaneous Services</b>	€5,716,900

#### **Income Highlights**

- Increase of 6% in income/expenditure or €3.4m from €75.4m in 2024 to €79.7m in 2025
- Rates income increase of 5% equates to €600k

- ARV changes from 0.224 to 0.236
- No rates increase in over 15 years and during that time the CPI Index has increased by over 30%
- Maintaining 15% LPT equates to €600k
- Building Momentum Agreement (Lansdowne Rd) increase in income is offset by salaries and pensions.
- IPB Dividend increase by €24k to €122k

Local Property Tax maintained at 15% equalling €590k allocated to following headings:

- €300k: General Municipal Allocation (GMA)
- €190k: General Roads
- €75k: Graveyard Voluntary Grants
- €25k: Tidy Towns & Amenity Grants

#### **Rates Increase**

- The €600k increase in income is ring-fenced for funding loan repayment required in order to obtain match funding for capital projects.
- ARV will increase from 0.225 to 0.236 as a result which is lower than other counties in the Region.

#### **Divisional Expenditure Highlights**

##### **Housing and Building**

- €560k: Increase in housing spend for social house needs
- €640k: Increase in housing spend for long-term housing

##### **Road Transportation and Safety**

- €250k: Increase in maintenance and improvement of regional and local roads
- Public Lighting operating costs increase from €1.13m to €1.21m due to upgrading and maintenance costs

##### **Water Services**

- €500k reduction in Service Level Agreement

##### **Development Management**

- €812k: Loan repayments on €212k and €600k (new rate increase)
- €200k: Social inclusion
- €100k: Community projects
- €100k: Tourism promotion and festival and events scheme
- €100k: Biodiversity Action Fund

##### **Recreation and Amenity**

- €220k: Recreational development
- €265k: Parks, pitches and open spaces
- €130k: Leisure facilities (increase subvention in Roscommon Leisure Centre and Castlerea Pool)

##### **Central Management Charge (CMC)**

- €450k: Increased pension costs for staff/members
- €120k: IT security and hardware maintenance

- €95k: Training fees for new staff

### **Capital Programme 2025 – 2027**

3 year Programme with a value of €530m to be funded as follows:

- €502.5m: State grants and subsidies
- €6.6m: Borrowings
- €1.0m: Development Contributions
- €20.2m: Other

Proposed Capital Expenditure Highlights:

- €8m for social houses
- €4.9m for Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans
- €11m Croí Conaithe Grant
- €3.8m for Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting
- €307m for Road Projects
- €291m remaining on N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge. Total cost €450m.
- €2.8m for Hodson Bay Waterfront Park and Lough Key Strategic Plan
- €18m iRos Sport Complex in Roscommon Town. Grant funding of €12.5m, RCC funding of €5.5m
- €1m left to spend on Civil Defence Building (Funded by RCC – total cost will be €3.3m)
- €6.5m for Boyle Library – Grant funding of €5.2m, RCC funding of €1.3m
- €44m for public realm projects funded via Town and Village Renewal, Urban and Rural Regeneration and Outdoor Recreation including the following projects:
  - Monksland Community Hub
  - Strokestown public realm
  - Spokes in the Wheel in Roscommon
  - The development of Hodson Bay, Lough Key Forest Park and Tarmonbarry Amenity Park
- €1m for An Bealach project in Ballaghaderreen.

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

Fiona Ni Chuinn, A/Director of Services presented the Budget for her areas of responsibility to the Members:

Housing:

- Housing Budget increase of €1.6m to €10.93m
- Maintenance increased by €124,800 to include stock condition surveys and increasing cost of repairs
- Housing assessment, allocation and transfer - significant increase as result of new homes recently delivered by AHBs via Capital Advance Leasing Facility.
- Supports increase for technical and administration salaries
- RAS and leasing programme increase by €647,800 for the new RAS type leases in place to support people who were on HAP but is no longer sustainable for them due to a change in financial circumstances or are of pension age
- Roscommon County Council continue the acquisition of houses under the Tenant in Situ programme with 10 to be completed by end of 2024 at a cost of €1.8m fully recoupable from the Department
- Expected appointment of Tenancy Sustainment and Homeless Prevention Office in 2025
- Croí Cónaithe grants ongoing:

- 362 applications received to date
- 202 grants approved/approved in principle to date
- 39 grants paid in excess of €2.2m
- Housing Aid for Older People, Housing Adaptation/Mobility Aid expected to be the same as 2024 funding at €1.6m, reduction in Match Funding from 20% to 15%
- Disability grants will increase by 30-33%
- The income limits for grants to increase by 25% from €60,000 annual income to €75,000
- Application received prior to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024 will be dealt with under the old scheme

#### **Local Authority Housing (€86M):**

- 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. Funding may increase based on the new Government in 2025. In 2024, 29 houses completed and tenanted, 12 additional to be complete by end of 2024, and the 2025 target is €23.6m.

#### **Traveller Accommodation (€3.3M):**

The Traveller Accommodation Programme (2025-2029) commits to the following projects:

- Torpan Bed, Ballyforan – Construction of 3 extensions, to commence on site 2025
- Killerney, Roscommon – Revised design proceeding for 5 houses – works expected to commence in 2025

#### **Local Authority Home Loans (€4.9M):**

Projections for 2025 are based on approved loans for 2024.

#### **Croí Cónaithe Fund (€11M):**

This fund will see an investment in excess of €10.5m over 3 years for private and rented vacant properties.

362 applications received to date: 202 applications approved or approved in principle.

#### **Assistance to Persons Improving Houses (€4.8M):**

Roscommon County Council Contribution is listed in Revenue Budget and DHLGH Contribution is reflected in Capital Budget.

#### **Energy Improvement Works to LA Dwellings (€3.76M):**

In 2024 from a target of 38 units, 31 units are complete and the final 7 complete in early 2025. The average cost per unit is €34k. In 2025, the target is 38/40 units are currently under selection for design.

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

- An increase of €219k towards the provision of frontline library services including Branch Library, Mobile Unit, Outreach Programme, and HQ building in Roscommon Town.
- New library facility, My Open Library, will be coming on stream in Ballaghaderreen in January 2025
- Digital services will continue to be delivered to support people literacy needs and dyslexia.
- Delivery of events locally and nationally, including Right to Read, Healthy Ireland, Skills for Life, book clubs, computer classes, and local history programmes
- Plan to secure funding in 2025 for the Sense and Sensibility service for a sensory pod in Ballaghaderreen
- Capital Funding of €50k for accessibility works at Library HQ

- Allocation of €75k match funding for the purchase of a new mobile library unit
- RRDF funding secured for the construction of the new Public Library in Boyle €6.5m

#### **Arts and Culture:**

- Arts expenditure in 2025 will be €1.43m will income from Arts Council of €24k that will be supplemented by an additional €255k 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 2025
- Allocation of €15k to acknowledge the opening of King House in Boyle 30 years in 1995

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

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

#### **Roads Budget:**

- Roads Total Budget €30,699,200, an increase of 1.3% on 2024.
- The sum of €23,106,500 (75%) will be income generated as grants from DoT and TII.
- Expenditure for 2025 includes:
  - National Primary Maintenance and Improvement €741,500
  - National Secondary Maintenance and Improvement €730,100
  - Regional Road Maintenance and Improvement €5.8m
  - Local Road Maintenance and Improvement €19.621m
  - Traffic Management Improvement €20,000
  - Road Safety engineering Improvement €610,900
  - Road Safety Promotion and Education €65,400
  - Support to Roads Capital Programme €86,100
  - Agency and Recoupable Services €1.675m

#### **Planning:**

- The budget proposed for the provision of Planning Services (Development Management Programme) is €3.265m
- Forward Planning €519,800
- Development Management in excess of 700 in 2024 €1.688m
- Enforcement including debt collection €616,500
- Unfinished Housing Estates €441,100

#### **Capital Budget:**

#### **Roads Projects:**

- N4 Carrick to Dromod Road – Phases 3 and 4 € 4.5m
- N5 Ballaghaderreen to Scramoge – €291m
- N61 Tulsk to Clashaganny – JR new planning in 2025 €470,000
- N61 Safety Schemes (St John's and St Brigid's) - Budget of €350,000

- N61 Tulsk to Gortnacranagh – Phase 2 €1.8m to progress

#### **Greenways:**

There are 3 major greenways in planning and the following have been budget for 2025:

- Athlone to Ballyleague/Lanesborough €600k
- Mid Shannon Greenway – Ballyleague/Lanesborough, Strokestown, Rooskey, Tarmonbarry €500k
- Lough Key to Carrick on Shannon Greenway €400k

#### **Active Travel Projects:**

N5 related Active Travel projects

- Bellanagare €550k
- Frenchpark €280k
- Strokestown €110k
- Tulsk € 230k
- Tulsk to Rathcroghan €575k (heritage-led scheme)
- Safe Routes To School(SRTS) Project at Carrick NS, Ballinlough – Pilot Scheme recently completed

#### **NTA Active Travel Projects:**

- SRTS pipeline
- L7055 Golf Links Road €1.5m
- R362 Monksland €1.5m
- Pedestrian Cycle Bridge Roscommon Town €2.25m

#### **Other Capital Works:**

- Footpath upgrades/maintenance €1.2m
- Bridge rehabilitation works €600k
- Burial Grounds €300k
  - Land Acquisition for extension at Four Roads
  - Completion works at Caldra
- OPW flood relief works for Carrick
- OPW flood relief works at Bogginfin
- OPW flood relief works at Lough Funshinagh

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

Mark Keaveney, Director of Services, presented the Budget for his areas of responsibility to the Members:

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

- New Age Friendly Strategy is being finalised.
- Public Participation Network (PPN) – an increase of €15k to €135k including Department of Rural and Community Development contribution.
- Empowering Communities Programme - €140k per annum for 3 years.
- Community Recognition Fund 2023 allocation of €690k – projects now completed.
- Community Recognition Fund 2024 allocation of €1.002m – 3 projects have been allocated funding to date – next round of applications will open in December 2024.

- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
  - Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024 €940k – similar amount expected in 2025.
  - Healthy Ireland Programme 2023-2025 €447k including €228k for projects
  - LEP 2025 allocation of €132k for capital projects and €22k for operating costs
- LEADER Programme 2023-2027 €5.1m.
- Sport Development Officers –€75k- an increase of €15k.

#### **Tourism:**

- Budget €423k – increase of €99k.
- Supporting major festivals and events - including Night and Day, National Hot Air Ballooning Competition, and Roscommon Christmas Trail.
- Festivals and Events €50k – increase of €10k.
- Tourism Activator is working with community and SMEs (FI Just Transition) - €30k to support Just Transition approved Community Projects.

#### **Heritage:**

- Budget increase of €185k with support from the Heritage Council.
- Provision for Biodiversity Officer appointed in 2024.
- Support to the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- County Heritage Plan in preparation.
- Biodiversity Action Plan in preparation.
- Progress Rathcroghan as part of the Royal Site of Ireland UNESCO World Heritage Bid.

#### **Enterprise and Economic Development:**

- Substantial Capital Programme being implemented and developed.
- Broad spread of projects throughout the county in almost every town and village and many other rural areas.
- Provision for Capital Loan Repayments of €812k.
- Town Centre First (TCF) Officer.
- Castlerea is the next TCF Town and work has commenced.

#### **Capital Budget:**

#### **Completed Projects €24.4m (112 projects)**

#### **Current Projects €56.3 (70 Projects)**

- Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) €14m
  - Spokes in the Wheel
  - Vacancy and Regeneration Acquisition
- Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) €30m
  - Boyle and King House
  - Boyle Library
  - Putting the Heart into Monksland including Monksland Community Hub
  - Ballaghaderreen Public Realm
  - Revitalising Strokestown

#### **Economic Development:**



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

- Town and Village €2.5m
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) €2.6m
- CLAR Projects €1.7m
- Just Transition €3.4m
- LSSIF €0.9m

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

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

#### **Human Resources:**

- Oversees staff recruitment, management, support, training, and extending to superannuation upon retirement.
- Current primary focus is on the development of a Strategic Workforce Plan to be delivered in early 2025.
- Ongoing recruitment efforts – high rate of staff movement within the Council and across the sector.
- Delivery of over 1,000 services.
- Support the adoption of new working methods and adaptation to new business areas as additional responsibilities from Central Government.
- Operate a comprehensive Health and Safety Management System across all functional areas.

#### **Corporate Services:**

- Oversees Corporate Governance including risk management, FOI, and GDPR.
- Handle Franchise and provide support for Elected Members and Civic Leadership Activities.
- Dog Warden Service.

#### **IS & Digital Transformation:**

- Manages internal and external IT infrastructure and digital services.
- Working to maintain high security standards in service delivery around risk management and cyber security.
- Committed to upskilling staff to ensure awareness of cyber risks.
- Digital Transformation Unit is working to deliver enhanced online and digital services with a target on 90% of digital services online by 2030.
- Development of a new more intuitive website underway.

#### **Assets and Energy:**

- Actively managing Council's land bank across the county.
- Focus on strategic acquisitions
  - Recent planned purchase in Monksland to development new community facilities.
- Disposals of land through leases and sales to promote economic investment and support community initiatives.
  - Sale of land for GAA Centre of Excellence
  - Community lease for project in Ballyforan
- Oversee network of Council owned business and facilities.
- Prioritise energy upgrades – currently leveraging SEAI Pathfinder funding for these upgrades –

Dillion House Ballaghaderreen near completion with €145,000 SEAI Pathfinder funding.

- Upcoming projects include energy upgrades for Aras an Chontae and Leisure Centre

#### **Public Lighting:**

- Emissions and Energy Programme is progressing well.
- 80% of public lights upgraded to LED to date.
- Approximately 1500 public lights pending upgrade.
- Initiative is expected to yield both emissions reduction and energy cost savings.
- Survey of public lighting infrastructure expected in 2025 to better plan for future management and maintenance.

#### **Environmental Services:**

- Overall Budget increase in 2025 of over €2.8m for Waste & Water Quality Management
- In 2024, 2 pivotal policy documents have been launched which outline vital functions for the Council to lead in Waste and Water quality, management, and enforcement activities:
  - Water Action Plan 2024
  - Waste Management Plan for the Circular Economy
- Additional funding will enable the Council to be more proactive in managing closed landfills, network of Civic Amenity sites, and bring-bank network.
- Strengthen enforcement and awareness activities to maintain a green and clean environment.

#### **Rural Water Programme:**

- Allocation of €300k to complete the 2019-2021 programme.
- Allocation of €1.2m has been set aside to fund the Rural Water Programme 2024-2026.
- Subsidies of €900k paid annually to group water schemes.

#### **Climate Action:**

- Roscommon Climate Action Plan 2024 adopted.
- Allocation of €100k for climate positive initiatives.
- Manage community climate actions fund to support community groups in delivering climate actions.
- Roscommon Town has been designated as a Decarbonisation Zone.

The Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fitzmaurice welcomed the budget, noting housing, energy improvements, arts and culture programme, roads, unfinished estates and safe routes to school and footpath. He also welcomed funding for Castlerea pool, support for An Chistin and RRDF and URDF projects. He acknowledged TVR and ORIS funding and the overall funding across the whole of County Roscommon for capital projects. He noted that the upgrade of LED lighting will be a positive development and the funding for Climate Action Plan is very important.

Members debated the budget and raised the following points:

- The budget was welcomed and the executive team were complimented on their work to deliver the draft budget.
- It was acknowledged that there has been huge investment across various grant projects nationally, with match funding required from council resources, which requires income from rates, property tax etc.

- The fact that Roscommon does not have parking charges is a huge bonus to businesses across the County.
- It was acknowledged that it is a difficult time for businesses and an increase in rates is a challenge, however it is understood that the Council needs funding to deliver the planned projects for the County.
- The increase in grants for older people to remain in their homes was welcomed.
- The housing grants and funding for unfinished estates was welcomed. A question was raised on whether people living in unfinished estates paid property tax.
- It was proposed to put an extra €100,000 into the Municipal Districts Fund.
- Concerns from businesses on the proposed rates increase have been raised to members.
- It was enquired whether there can be a staged draw down of the Croí Cónaithe Grant.
- It was enquired whether more money could be allocated to Active Travel, as this should be a priority for every town and village.
- The funding for festivals and events was welcomed.
- The new library in Boyle was welcomed, it was stated that Elphin needs a library.
- The roads funding was welcomed, and the request was placed whether funding could be sought for funding to resurface the N61 while closed.
- The allocation of funding to Rathcroghan for the UNESCO bid was welcomed. It was queried whether Rathcroghan visitor centre gets an annual allocation of funding.
- The provision of new housing was welcomed.
- Safety around schools needs to be considered for all schools.
- Rates increases are a challenge for small businesses, many of which are struggling. It needs to be clear where the money is going, but it was acknowledged that costs are also increasing for the Council.
- The work on public realm has been very positive, but the road closures during works can be detrimental to businesses.
- Tourism for fisheries should be promoted more.
- The funding for the footpath in Roscommon town from Golf Links Road to Hannons hotel was welcomed.
- It was enquired whether Galway County Council could make any contribution to the works on the River Suck.
- It was enquired whether there can be any rates waiver during public realm or roadworks.
- A question was raised on the €1m funding for An Bealach, and whether this is additional to the €1m allocated in 2024 budget.
- It was questioned in considering a waiver scheme, how much discretion do elected members have in setting this.
- Cllr. Ward advised that he could not support the proposed rates increase.
- Cllr. Ward proposed that a 30% discount is given to the lower level 90% of rate payers. This was seconded by Cllr. Dineen.
- Cllr. Moylan proposed a waiver scheme and rebate scheme for small businesses during big roadworks projects. This was seconded by Cllr. Byrne.
- Cllr. Scahill proposed a rates waiver scheme is considered for 2026, to be dealt with by the SPC from January 2025, in line with statutory provisions. This was seconded by Cllr. McDermott.
- Cllr. Waldron proposed funding is sought from online shopping providers to fund rates. This was seconded by Cllr. Ward.
- Cllr. Waldron proposed a letter should go to the Minister regarding the licence fee, to seek

allocation of some of that to local media. This was seconded by Cllr. Dineen.

It was **AGREED** by members to extend the meeting to 2pm.

- Cllr. Fallon proposed that the SPC reviews the MD funds and administration of same. This was seconded by Cllr. Keogh.
- Cllr. Cull stated she would not be supporting the proposed rates increase.

Director of Services, Sean Mullarkey clarified the following:

- The Revenue Commissioners determine who pays the Local Property Tax, not Roscommon County Council.
- Rathcroghan Visitor Centre was subvented by €5,000 in 2024, this can be looked at on-going if it is proposed and agreed.
- There is already an early payment scheme for rates with 5% discount, if paid by 30<sup>th</sup> June.
- Any waiver of rates for the year 2025 would have had to have been brought in by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, pursuant to 349 of Local Government Waiver of Regulations 2024.
- A targeted rates waiver scheme can be brought in by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 for Rates 2026, this must go through SPC, public consultation and Chief Executive report and brought to the full Council meeting. No waiver can be done in advance of that.
- There can be one rates waiver scheme, there can not be different schemes for different scenarios.
- If the members are seeking an extra €100,000 funding for the Municipal Districts, they must advise where this funding is coming from.
- The €1m allocated for An Bealach is the same €1m allocated in 2024. It will continue to be reported in Budget if it is not spent.
- The Elected Members do have the discretion to set the waiver on the rates. Once a waiver is set on rates, it must be noted that this will impact the ability to fund projects in the Council.
- Cllr. Callaghan proposed to continue to fund Rathcroghan Visitor Centre by €5,000 annually. This was seconded by Cllr. Moylan.

The meeting was adjourned to allow members to consult and advise on recommendations and proposals brought forward, principally the opposing of 5% rates increase and seeking additional €100,000 fund for municipal district fund.

The meeting restarted.

- Cllr. Cull clarified that she was opposing the 5% rates increase and supporting Cllr. Wards proposal.
- Cllr. Ward recognised Cllr. Culls support. He then noted he understood that there was no opportunity to accommodate a 30% reduction in rates for some ratepayers at this time.
- Cllr. Dineen suggested that multinationals could pay the €600,000 needed from the 5% rates increase.

Director of Finance, Sean Mullarkey advised that there is no mechanism to seek funding from multinationals to pay this. He also clarified that the Budget book was on public display seven days before the Budget meeting, the proposed 5% rates increase was clearly stated in the Budget book.

It was **AGREED** by members to extend the meeting to 2.30pm.

- Cllr. Ward withdrew his proposal. He noted he continued to oppose the 5% increase, but withdrew his proposal, on the condition that it can be proposed in May or June 2025.
- Cllr. Moylan withdrew his proposal in favour of Cllr. Scahill's proposal for the waiver scheme.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill

**SECONDED** by Cllr. McDermott

It was **AGREED** to consider a rates waiver scheme for 2026 to be dealt with by the SPC from January 2025 in line with statutory provisions.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Fallon

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

It was **AGREED** to allocate an extra €100,000 is allocated to the Municipal District GMA Fund  
Cllr. Fallon clarified that the funding would come out of the rates increase.

Caitlín Conneely advised that as the terms and conditions of the fund are being changed, this would need to be reviewed by the SPC regarding allocation of funds.

The Director of Finance confirmed this will result in each MD being allocated €133,000 for 2025. This will be for the 12 months to December 2025.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Moylan

It was **AGREED** to continue to fund Rathcroghan Visitor Centre by €5,000 annually, and that the funding will be taken from the Boyle MD GMA.

The Chief Executive Shane Tiernan accepted resolutions and noted that the €100,000 does restrict the plan for delivery of projects. He advised that the overall requirement is €1,000,000 to progress projects, €500,000 has been achieved today and projects will be progressed on that basis. This should be a good basis to develop a scheme that will support more vulnerable rate payers while continuing with an ambitious delivery programme.

The Meetings Administrator read the following resolutions for adoption:

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Callaghan

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Scahill

It was **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 2025 to the Cathaoirleach and Leas-Cathaoirleach of the County Council respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions.

#### **ANNUAL ALLOWANCE – CATHAOIRLEACH OF EACH MUNICIPAL DISTRICT**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. McDermott

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Kelly

It was **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 2025 to the Cathaoirleach of the Athlone, Boyle and Roscommon Municipal Districts respectively to cover the reasonable expenses incurred in respect of attendance at functions.

### **ANNUAL ALLOWANCE – CHAIRPERSON OF EACH STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Keogh

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Fallon

It was **AGREED** that pursuant to Local Government Reform Act 2014 that Roscommon County Council pay an Annual Allowance of €6,000 in 2025 to each Chairperson of the four designated Strategic Policy Committees.

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Scahill

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Keogh

It was **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 2025.

### **ADOPTION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION**

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Connolly

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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, for the purposes set out in those tables, as amended.

A counter motion was **PROPOSED** by Cllr. Ward

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Dineen

That there is no increase in rates for 2025 in Roscommon.

The Cathaoirleach read out the following:

“A vote will be taken on the counter motion and if it passes it will defeat the original proposal. If it is defeated, it will be deemed that the original proposal is passed.”

The Meetings Administrator advised that a vote was to be taken, and requested members to clearly state whether they were for or against the counter proposal.

The members voted as follows in relation to the counter proposal:

		<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>
Cllr.	Brennan		x
Cllr.	Byrne		x
Cllr.	Callaghan		x
Cllr.	Connolly		x
Cllr.	Crosby		x
Cllr.	Cull	x	
Cllr.	Dineen	x	
Cllr.	Fallon		x

Cllr.	Fitzmaurice		x
Cllr.	Frain		x
Cllr.	Kelly		x
Cllr.	Keogh		x
Cllr.	McDermott		x
Cllr.	Moylan		x
Cllr.	Scahill		x
Cllr.	Waldron	x	
Cllr.	Ward	x	

The Meetings Administrator confirmed that that the result of the vote was 13 against the counter proposal and 4 for the counter proposal.

The Meetings Administrator stated that the counter proposal is defeated, and the original proposal is deemed as passed.

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council determine in accordance with the Budget, the rates set out in Tables A and C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, for the purposes set out in those tables, as amended.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET 2024**

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Connolly

It was **AGREED** that Roscommon County Council by resolution adopt for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, the Budget as set out in Tables A, B, C, D, E & F.

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

On the **PROPOSAL** of Cllr. Crosby

**SECONDED** by Cllr. Connolly

It was **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.

#### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025-2027**

The Capital Program as set out in the Budget is for noting.

That was **AGREED** by members.

The Chief Executive thanked the members for endorsing the Budget for 2025.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

The foregoing Minutes are  
Confirmed and Signed:



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Meetings Administrator



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Cathaoirleach



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Countersigned