

MIONTUAIRISÍ AN CHRUINNITHE BHUISÉADAIGH REACHTÚIL
A TIONÓLADH DÉ HAOINE, 26 SAMHAIN, 2021 AG 3.00 P.M.
TRÍ MS TEAMS



MINUTES OF STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING HELD
ON FRIDAY, 26TH NOVEMBER, 2021 AT 3.00 P.M. VIA MS TEAMS

Chair: Cllr. Fidelis Doherty.

Cllrs. Tomás Breathnach, John Brennan, Martin Brett, Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Peter Cleere, John Coonan, Deirdre Cullen, Michael Delaney, Maria Dollard, Matt Doran, Michael Doyle, Pat Dunphy, David Fitzgerald, Pat Fitzpatrick, Ger Frisby, Joe Lyons, Joe Malone, Michael McCarthy, Andrew McGuinness & Eugene McGuinness.

Officials: Colette Byrne, Martin Prendiville, Sean McKeown, Mary Mulholland, Tim Butler, Declan McDonnell, Seamus McGuire, Mary Cashin, Gerry Tyrrell, Fiona Deegan & Anne Maria Walsh

Apologies: Cllrs. Eamonn Aylward & Patrick O'Neill

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Fidelis Doherty welcomed all Members to the Statutory Budget Meeting. She stated that the Council will consider a Budget of €93.9m for the County of Kilkenny for the Year 2022. She invited Ms. Colette Byrne to present her Report.

Ms. Colette Byrne, Chief Executive advised Members that the Report on the Budget has been circulated and she will take it as read.

She advised that there are serious challenges facing the Budget for 2022. Our income sources are very limited and under pressure. Cost on all utilities are increasing and this will impact on all services across the Council. With the onset of the new Covid variant we expect Covid to be still a major issue for us going forward. Government support for the Local Government is acknowledged for the years 2020 and 2021 and it will also be required for 2022.

Ms. Byrne acknowledged the decision of the Elected Members in July 2021 on the Local Property Tax. This has enabled us to continue to support local communities, organisations and provide funding to sustain many third party projects/services. The Council will have many challenges to meet in 2022 such as Housing, Climate Change and Town Centre First. The Budget for 2022 has made provision for matched funding for Capital Projects including projects under Town & Village Renewal, ORIS etc. We would like to be in a position to do more but we need to live within what resources are available to us.

Ms. Byrne recommended to the Members adoption of Budget 2022 as presented and circulated.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty thanked the Chief Executive and invited Mr. Martin Prendiville, Head of Finance to give an overview of the Budget and present details of each Service Division.

Mr. Prendiville advised that the Budget Book was issued to Members on 16th November, 2021. The Budget process commenced in July 2021 with the decision on the Local Property Tax which provides additional income of €1.1m. He advised that discussions are ongoing with Irish Water in relation to finalising a budget for 2022 for Water Services.

We await Road Grant Allocations for 2022 but this does not materially affect the Budget presented.

The Year 2022 will be challenging particularly for the Business Sector. A lot of rate payers are impacted by Covid. There is no indication yet if Government support will continue into 2022. Car park income in 2021 is down by approximately €700k. The Budget figure for 2022 for car parking income is based on 2019 income figure of €2.3m. Up to 20% of this total could be at risk in 2022 due to Covid-19.

Discussions on RAS recoupment are ongoing with the Department. €700k of the total RAS income included in the Draft Budget for 2022 may be at risk depending on the negotiations with the Department.

An increased budget provision has been included for investment in IT security and match funding for Capital Projects.

There has been no change to the ARV for commercial rates. This has not changed since 2008 and this is a Reserved Function of the Members. Appeals to the Valuation Tribunal have resulted in a loss of €836k in annual rates income. This may increase to a loss of €1m when all appeals are decided. The total rate demand is €120k down on the 2021 demand.

The prompt payment incentive on commercial rates is being maintained at 3% subject to a maximum of amount of €250 per rate account and the rate strike off remains at 90%.

Loan repayments have been provided for non-mortgage loans of €23.5m. €18.5m has been drawn down to-date, with a further €5.0m to be drawn down in 2022 and €3.5m in 2023 for the public lighting upgrade.

The total value of Housing Mortgage Loans advanced to date is €38.9m. This amount has increased significantly over the last six years.

In drafting the Budget for 2022 only one additional staff member is provided for and this is in the Library Service. With the development of the new Librarys at the Mayfair and Thomastown there is a need to provide for additional staff in 2023. Additional staff in other areas have not been included in Budget 2022 unless a funding stream had been identified to cover the additional cost.

Mr. Prendiville referred Members to the Report which outlines the key provisions in the 2022 Budget. He advised that due to uncertainty it will be necessary to defer committing expenditure for a number of months on discretionary items until greater clarity is available regarding the level of income for 2022.

In summary, Mr. Prendiville advised the following:

Total Draft Expenditure.....	€93.872m
Income from Goods & Services	€61.134m
Local Property Tax	€11.809m
Commercial Rates Income.....	€20.929m

At this stage, Mr. Prendiville advised that he will highlight some of the significant items in each Service Division and referred Members to the first Service Area.

1. Service Division A: Housing & Building

Total Expenditure € 22.10m. Total Income € 23.63m.

- Maintenance Budget up by €100k.
- Housing Grants reduced to €1.65m down €400k from 2021.
- RAS Expenditure - €6m - Recoupment of RAS administrative costs at risk.
- Income from Rents on Social Units up by €280k.

On the proposal of Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That the expenditure and income in Service Division A was considered and noted."

2. Service Division B: Road Transportation Safety

Total Expenditure € 26.59m. Total Income € 19.34m.

- Road Grant Allocation to be notified in early 2022.
- Increased provision for Smarter Travel Initiatives and salaries which are fully funded.
- Provision for replacement on street parking machines - €100k.
- Municipal District Allocation maintained at €200k.
- Car Parking Income - €2.3m, up to 20% of this income could be at risk in 2022.

On the proposal of Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That expenditure and income in Service Division B was considered and noted."

3. Service Division C: Water Services

Total Expenditure € 7.26m. Total Income € 7.08m.

- Assumed full recovery of costs from Irish Water.
- Recoupment of CMC in discussion with Irish Water.

On the proposal of Cllr. John Brennan, seconded by Cllr. Joe Lyons and agreed:

"That the expenditure and income in Service Division C was considered and noted."

4. Service Division D: Development Management

Total Expenditure € 10.50m. Total Income € 4.33m.

- Enforcement Legal Fees – additional €30k.
- Provision for Yulefest down €30k.
- Re-allocation of loan charges for Capital Projects between Service Divisions.
- Maintenance of Woodstock Gardens – up €10k.
- Re-allocation of salaries costs across the Service Division.
- Kilkenny Archives maintained at €12k.
- Planning Income increased by €107k to €653k.
- Community Salaries up €24k – fully recoupable.

On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett and agreed:

"That expenditure and income in Service Division D was considered and noted."

5. Service Division E: Environmental Services

Total Expenditure € 12.18m Total Income € 3.71m.

- Landfill operations up €9k – additional Income included.
- Bring Banks up €20k – increased contract charges.
- Re-allocation of salaries cost across the Service Division.
- Fire Services – increase required for CAMP, maintenance of buildings/equipment etc.
- Water Framework – LAWPRO – fully recouped.

On the proposal of Cllr. Pat Dunphy, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That the expenditure and income in Service Division E was considered and noted."

6. Service Division F: Recreation & Amenity

Total Expenditure € 7.17m. Total Income € 196,590.

- Libraries – Increase in Salaries - €100k.
- Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations – increase of €191k for Payroll costs, maintenance, inspections etc.
- Contributions to Sport & Development up €5k.
- Contribution to Cultural/ Arts Bodies – no change.
- Amenity Grants – Provision of €140k maintained.

On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh and agreed:

"That expenditure and income in Service Division F was considered and noted."

7. Service Division G: Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

Total Expenditure € 680,461. Total Income € 473,825.

- Veterinary Services up €5k.
- Dog/Horse Control – budgets maintained.
- School Meals – slight reduction.

On the proposal of Cllr. Fidelis Doherty, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That expenditure and income in Service Division G was considered and noted."

8. Service Division H - Miscellaneous Services

Total Expenditure € 7.39m. Total Income € 2.38m.

- Re-allocation of salaries costs across the Service Division.
- Provision for irrecoverable rates down €350k.
- Rates compensation down €30k.
- Coroners Expenses up €5k.
- Members Salary and Expenses up €296k, €240k will be funded by Department.
- Motor Taxation – salaries up €20k.
- NPPR income down €25k.

On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew McGuinness, seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed:

"That expenditure and income in Service Division G was considered and noted."

It was proposed by Cllr. Michael Delaney, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That for the financial year ending 31st December, 2022, in accordance with Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and SI 226 of the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014, the owners of vacant premises in all local electoral areas within the Council's administrative area shall be entitled to avail of a strike off up to a maximum of 90% of the total rates due (less arrears) for 2022."

It was proposed by Cllr. Matt Doran, seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett and agreed:

"That for the financial year ending 31st December, 2022, Kilkenny County Council revises the Rates Incentive Grants Scheme to a grant of 3% of the 2022 rate demand (excluding arrears) up to a maximum value of €250 subject to the satisfying of existing terms and conditions"

It was proposed by Cllr. Martin Brett, seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That the Budget of Kilkenny County Council for the financial year ending 31st December, 2022 as set out in Table B, be adopted".

It was proposed by Cllr. Tomás Breathnach, seconded by Cllr. Martin Brett and agreed:

"That the rates set in Table A, of the Draft Budget of Kilkenny County Council for the year ending 31st December, 2022 be determined in accordance with the said Budget to the Annual Rate on Valuation to be levied for that year for the purposes set out in Table A."

Mr. Martin Prendiville thanked all involved in the Budget process especially the Elected Members for their contribution and discussions on the various issues during the Workshops. He also thanked the Management Team, Anne Maria Walsh, Declan McDonnell, the Finance staff and all staff involved in preparing Budgets and Reports.

He advised that this year and next year will continue to be challenging for the Council.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fidelis Doherty thanked Ms. Colette Byrne, Mr. Martin Prendiville and all staff for their preparation of the Draft Budget. She thanked them for facilitating Workshops for Elected Members and for dealing with all queries from the Members in preparing for Budget 2022.

Cllrs. Andrew McGuinness, Martin Brett and Tomás Breathnach acknowledged all the work involved in preparing the 2022 Budget in these difficult and challenging times. Budget 2022 has provided for the same level of services and grants to organisations and communities. The Members thanked their fellow Councillors for engaging fully in the preparation of the Budget. They thanked the Chief Executive and Head of Finance for the time given to the Members during the preparation of the Budget and for being available to answer these queries.

Chief Executive, Colette Byrne thanked the Members for adopting the Draft Budget as presented. She thanked the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Fidelis Doherty and her predecessor Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and all Members for their support during the year.

She thanked Mr. Martin Prendiville, Anne Maria Walsh, Declan McDonnell and Finance Team and all Directors and staff for all their work in bringing this Budget together.

She thanked all staff for all the efforts made in delivering essential services and normal day to day operations during this difficult time throughout the year. It has been difficult to present a balanced Budget. It has been critical to our cashflow to continue to be prudent during 2021. Cash flow is very important in maintaining our operations and continuing to deliver the many capital projects.

Ms. Byrne thanked the Elected Members for all their work. It has been a challenging time also for Members to continue with their role representing the public. She thanked them for their resilience, adaptability and their patience with remote meetings.

She also thanked the Mayor and the Chairs of the Municipal Districts for their support and help throughout the year. She stated that they continue to show civic leadership and this is really appreciated by all.

Cllr. Fidelis Doherty concluded the meeting by thanking again all the Council staff, frontline workers and outdoor workers for all their work during the year. She thanked the Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael McCarthy for his support and help.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE