



MINUTES OF STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING HELD
ON FRIDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 2025 AT 3.00 P.M.

Chair: Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh.

Elected Members: *Council Chamber*

Cllrs. Tomás Breathnach, John Brennan, Jenny Catt Slattery, John Coonan, Deirdre Cullen, Michael Delaney, Fidelis Doherty, Maria Dollard, Michael Doyle, Patrick Dunphy, David Fitzgerald, Pat Fitzpatrick, Ger Frisby, Michael McCarthy, Andrew McGuinness, Eugene McGuinness, Seán Ó hArgáin & Joe Sheridan.

MS Teams

Cllrs. Brian Cleere, Joe Lyons & Maurice Shortall.

Officials: Lar Power, Martin Prendiville, Tim Butler, Fiona Deegan, Ian Gardner, Seamus Kavanagh, Michael Leahy, Gerry Tyrrell, Marian Nolan, Margo Hayes & Brenda Kelly.

Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh welcomed all Members to the Statutory Budget Meeting.

She stated that the Council will consider a Budget of €129.4m for the County of Kilkenny for the Year 2026. She invited Mr. Lar Power to present his Report.

Mr Lar Power, Chief Executive advised Members that the Report on the Budget has been circulated and he will take it as read.

He stated that the budget reflects the increased investment across all Council Services and supports the continuation of the ambitious Capital Programme.

The total estimated Revenue Expenditure for 2026 comes to €129.4m which is €8.9m (7.4%) higher than the comparable figures for 2025. It includes increases in expenditure across Housing, local Roads Maintenance, Economic Development, Tourism, Community, Climate Change, Town Regeneration, Fire Services, Libraries & Parks and Open Spaces.

He explained that a 4% increase in Commercial Rates is proposed to sustain service delivery and the Prompt Payment Incentive Scheme will continue offering an 8.3% grant (*up to €300*). Under new legislation a Rates Waiver Scheme is proposed to reduce the increase to 2% for businesses with annual invoices under €3,000 (*57% of ratepayers*). He noted that this was only the third increase in 17 years and it is deemed necessary due to the impact of inflation of 32.2% since 2010 and a 113% rise in Construction Tender Prices.

He stated that the 6 year Capital Programme with proposed expenditure exceeding €1bn, requiring €104m in matched funding from Council resources is 2.5 times larger than the previous years and aims to advance Kilkenny City and County development.

He advised Members that the Budget presented is fair and balanced, ensuring continued investment in infrastructure and community services while operating within available resources. As a Council we have to address the impact that the unprecedented level of inflation is having on our services. This Budget facilitates continued investment in key infrastructure and amenities and supports our work at community level across County Kilkenny. He recommended adoption of the draft Budget for 2026 to the Elected Members.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh thanked the Chief Executive and invited Mr. Martin Prendiville, Director 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 24th October, 2025 and Workshops have been held with Elected Members to discuss the details of the Budget. These Workshops have been invaluable in shaping the Budget for 2026. Difficult decisions had to be made in terms of spending. He stated that there were no budget cuts in the core Service Areas and the Budget maintains funding for all core services and increased funding for some. He advised that match funding has been provided for new Government initiatives such as Town Centre First and Climate Change. Draft budgetary plans have been adopted by each Municipal District for the General Municipal Allocations subject to funding being available.

Mr. Prendiville gave a Presentation to the Elected Members under the following headings:

- Budget Challenges.
- Inflation.
- Commercial Rates.

Mr. Prendiville then invited Michael Leahy, Financial Management Accountant to go through each Programme Group to 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 - € 36.9m. Increase of €6.1m. Total Income €38.5m

- Housing Maintenance – Increase of €867k.
- Estate Management - €75k, no change.
- Homeless Services – increase of €262k.
- RAS/Leasing – increase of €2.2m,
- Vacant Homes Grant – increase of €2.5m.
- Housing Loans Interest - €1.7m, no change.
- Housing Grants – increase of €443k.
- Grants and Subsidies Income – additional income of €4.8m.
- Housing Rents Income – additional income of €885k.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Maria Dollard, Tomás Breathnach, Seán Ó hArgáin and Eugene McGuinness in relation to the following:

- Housing Loans & Grants
- Voids
- Housing Allocation Grants

Mr. Michael Leahy and Mr. Ian Gardner responded to queries raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Michael Doyle 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 € 33m. Increase of €1.7m Total Income €23.8m

- Roads Maintenance – increase of €1.46m.
- Public Lighting – increase of €38k
- Car Parking Costs – increase of €207k.
- Roads Grants income – not confirmed until early 2026.
- Parking Charges – increase of €71k.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Eugene McGuinness, Seán Ó hArgáin, David Fitzgerald, John Brennan and Pat Fitzpatrick in relation to the following:

- Public Lighting Improvement and Maintenance
- Heritage Lighting
- TII

Mr. Michael Leahy and Mr. Tim Butler responded to queries raised by the Members.

On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew McGuinness seconded by Cllr. John Brennan and agreed:

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

3. Service Division C: Water Services

- Draft budget assumes full cost recovery for Uisce Éireann activities.
- Budget for maintenance of public convenience - €65k, no change.
- Administration of Group Schemes/Private Wells – increase of €145k.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Pat Dunphy, Fidelis Doherty, John Brennan & Tomás Breathnach in relation to the following:

- Level of contact with Uisce Éireann to deal with queries.
- Financial implications for Kilkenny County Council when Uisce Éireann take full control.
- Funding for local areas.

Mr. Martin Prendiville and Mr. Michael Leahy responded to queries raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Michael Doyle seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

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

4. Service Division D: Development Management

Total Expenditure €16.1m. Increase of €0.7m.

- Forward Planning – increase of €328k.
- Development Management – decrease of €60k.
- Enforcement Costs – €351k, no change.
- Festival Support –€120k, no change.
- Yulefest Kilkenny – €160k, no change.
- St. Patrick's Festival Kilkenny – increase of €5k.
- Kilkenny Tourism - €80k, no change.
- Maintenance of Woodstock – increase of €5k.
- Contribution to Castlecomer Discovery Park – €80k, no change.
- Friary Complex Callan – increase of €5k.
- PPN – increase of €8k.
- Creative Ireland – increase of €100k.
- Town Regeneration Office Salaries/Expenses – increase of €31k.
- LCD Capital Facilities Grant – increase of €30k.
- Night Time Economy Pilot – increase of €3k.
- Medieval Mile Museum Subvention – increase of €100k.
- Heritage Walls Grant – increase of €20k.
- Grants and Subsidies – increase of €300k
- Planning Fees Income – increase of €49k.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Pat Fitzpatrick, Maria Dollard, Seán Ó hArgáin and David Fitzgerald in relation to the following:

- Ratable of Evaluations
- Local Community Policing Partnership

- Medieval Mile Museum Subvention
- Planning Control & Enforcement – Derelict Sites and Buildings

Mr. Martin Prendiville, Mr. Michael Leahy and Mr. Tim Butler responded to queries raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Michael Delaney seconded by Cllr. John Brennan and agreed:

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

5. **Service Division E: Environmental Services**

Total Expenditure €20m. Increase of €1m. Total Income €7.4m

- Landfill Operations – increase of €76k.
- Recycling Centres & Bring Banks – increase of €34k.
- Anti Dumping - €257k, no change.
- Litter Management – increase of €50k.
- Street Cleaning – €1.86m, increase of €220k.
- Enforcement – decrease of €40k [*reallocation of salaries*].
- Burial Grounds Maintenance – increase of €60k.
- Civil Defence – increase of €20k.
- Fire Service – increase of €227k.
- Climate Action Team – increase of €209k.
- Fire Service Recoupment – decrease of €790k.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Fidelis Doherty, Maria Dollard, Seán Ó hArgáin, Jenny Catt Slattery and Pat Fitzpatrick in relation to the following:

- Illegal Dumping
- Regulation and Control of Quarries
- Community Climate Action Grant
- Climate Change and Flooding
- Water Quality Management
- Street Cleaning
- Use of Improved Technology

Mr. Tim Butler responded to queries raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Andrew McGuinness seconded by Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin and agreed:

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

6. **Service Division F: Recreation & Amenity**

Total Expenditure €10.2m. Increase €800k Total Income €361k

- Library Book Fund – increase of €35k.
- Parks & Open Spaces – increase of €381k.
- Operation of Arts Programme – increase of €46k.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Seán Ó hArgáin and Pat Fitzpatrick in relation to the following:

- Book Fund
- Arts Grants

Mr. Martin Prendiville responded to queries raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Pat Dunphy seconded by Cllr. Tomás Breathnach and agreed:

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

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

Total Expenditure €348k. Decrease of €6k. Total Income €197k

- Control of Dogs - €192k, no change.
- Control of Horses - €55k, decrease of €10k.

Contributions were received from Cllr. Seán Ó hArgáin in relation to the following:

- Dog Control

Mr. Tim Butler responded to query raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Ger Frisby seconded by Cllr. Maria Dollard and agreed:

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

8. Service Division H - Miscellaneous Services

Total Expenditure €6.8m. Decrease €91k. Total Income €6.8m

- Plant & Machinery Operations – increase €172k.
- Franchise Costs – increase of €154k.
- Coroner – increase of €4k.
- Local Representation/Civic Leadership – increase of €30k
- Motor Taxation Office – decrease of €60k.
- Payroll Compensation – increase of €1m.

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Pat Dunphy, Maria Dollard and David Fitzgerald in relation to the following:

- Register of Electors
- Markets and Casual Trading

Ms. Margo Hayes and Mr. Michael Leahy responded to queries raised.

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

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

9. Service Division J – Central Costs

Total Expenditure €16.9m. Increase of €600k.

- Corporate Buildings – decrease of €35k
- Corporate Affairs – decrease of €110k
- IT Department – increase of €436k.
- Print Post Room - €354k, no change.
- HR Function – increase of €290k

Contributions were received from Cllrs. Pat Dunphy and Pat Fitzpatrick in relation to the following:

- Upgrade of IT Services
- Recruitment

Mr. Martin Prendiville responded to queries raised.

On the proposal of Cllr. Pat Dunphy seconded by Cllr. Michael Delaney and agreed:

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

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh thanked Mr. Lar Power, Mr. Martin Prendiville and Mr. Michael Leahy for the detailed overview of the Budget for 2026. She stated that the Budget is seen as expansive and progressive supporting improved delivery of core Council services and welcomed the increase in local Roads funding aligning with Central Government contributions. She welcomed that the Council have acknowledged the impact the increase in Commercial Rates would have on small businesses and is delighted that the introduction of a Rates Waiver Scheme in addition to the Prompt Payment Incentive would ensure that the net increase for the majority of rate payers would be less than 2%.

On the proposal of Cllr. David Fitzgerald seconded by Cllr. Andrew McGuinness and agreed:

"That Kilkenny County Council makes a scheme for the waiver of rates due to it by liable persons, or classes of liable persons, in respect of qualifying commercial properties in accordance with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019, as amended.

Such a scheme in respect of qualifying properties with an existing annual rates demand of less than €3,000, will provide for a waiver of 50% of the rates increase applied by Kilkenny County Council to the Annual Rate on Valuation for the financial year ending 31st December 2026. This waiver is subject to the property satisfying the scheme's terms and conditions.

On the proposal of Cllr. Maria Dollard seconded by Cllr. Tomás Breathnach and agreed:

"That Kilkenny County Council makes a scheme for the abatement of rates due to it by liable persons, or classes of liable persons, in respect of vacant properties in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019, as amended.

Such a scheme in respect of vacant property will provide for an abatement of 50% of rates due to Kilkenny County Council by liable person for the financial year ending 31st December 2026. This abatement is subject to the property satisfying the scheme's terms and conditions.

On the proposal of Cllr. Michael McCarthy seconded by Cllr. Pat Dunphy and agreed:

"That for the financial year ending 31st December 2026, Kilkenny County Council will apply the existing Rates Incentive Grants Scheme to a grant of 8.3% of the 2026 rate demand (excluding arrears) up to a maximum value of €300 subject to the satisfying of the scheme's terms and conditions"

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

"That the rates set in Table A, of the Draft Budget of Kilkenny County Council for the year ending 31st December, 2026 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, without amendment".

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

"That the Budget of Kilkenny County Council for the financial year ending 31st December, 2026 as set out in Table B, be adopted without amendment".

Cllrs. Mary Hilda Cavanagh, Andrew McGuinness and Tomás Breathnach acknowledged all the work involved over the last few months in preparing the 2026 Budget in these difficult and challenging times. Budget 2026 has provided for the protection of the full range of services and grants to organisations and communities and are delighted that the Budget has been passed unanimously. It is important to retain relationship with our communities. The Members thanked their fellow Councillors for engaging fully in the preparation of the Budget and for their attendance at Workshops. They thanked the Chief Executive and Director of Finance for the time given to all the Members during the preparation of the Budget and for being available to answer their queries at all times.

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

Chief Executive, Lar Power stated that it has not been easy to present a balanced Budget but this process has been a demonstration of the excellent manner in which the Executive and Elected Members must work together to deliver for the people of Kilkenny.

He thanked his colleagues on the Management Team for their input in the preparation of the Budget. He expressed sincere gratitude to Martin Prendiville, Michael Leahy and the team in Finance for the budget preparations. They willingly made themselves available at all times to Elected Members over the last few weeks. He paid tribute to all the Finance Staff for their work in financial management over the year and thanked all the staff across the Council for all their work throughout the year.

Mr. Power thanked the Elected Members for their attendance at Workshops and their engagement, input, due diligence and careful consideration given to the budget process.

Finally, he thanked the Cathaoirleach for her support and all the Elected Members for their civic leadership throughout the year.

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh thanked Lar Power, Martin Prendiville and all staff for their preparation of the Draft Budget. She thanked all the Elected Members for engaging in the process and attending the Workshops.

That concluded the business of the meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH

DATE