



## *Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes*

### **Statutory Budget Meeting**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 1.30pm - Newgrange Hotel, Navan**

#### **Presiding**

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Nick Killian

#### **Councillors Present:**

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Tom Behan, Mike Bray, Eugene Cassidy, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Sean Drew, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Trevor Golden, Wayne Harding, Suzanne Jamal, Geraldine Keogan, Alan Lawes, Paul McCabe, Elaine McGinty, Stephen McKee, Paddy Meade, Ronan Moore, Maria Murphy, Gerry O'Connor, Damien O'Reilly, Sarah Reilly, Tommy Reilly, Amanda Smith, Niamh Souhan, Emer Tóibín, Sharon Tolan, Gillian Toole, Conor Tormey.

#### **Apologies:**

Councillors: Joe Bonner, Edward Fennessy, Deirdre Geraghty-Smith, Aisling O'Neill, Alan Tobin.

#### **Officials in attendance:**

**Chief Executive:** Jackie Maguire

**Directors of Service:** Des Foley, Fiona Lawless, Barry Lynch, Martin Murray, Dara McGowan

**Meetings Administrator:** Elaine Daly

**Finance Staff:** Sheila Harkin, Margaret Clarke, Ailie Dempsey, Ger Soady.

#### **1. To consider the draft Budget circulated herewith for the financial year ending on 31st December 2023.**

An Cathaoirleach, Councillor Nick Killian opened the meeting and called on the Chief Executive and Head of Finance to present the draft budget for 2023.

Chief Executive, Jackie Maguire, addressed the meeting and noted that the Budget for 2023 provides for expenditure of over €186 million, which is an increase of almost 15% on the 2022 budget.

The Chief Executive underlined the requirement to present a balanced budget and noted the context in which the budget process was taking place, with a certain level of uncertainty in the current economic climate. She acknowledged the critical Central Government supports received for increased energy and staffing costs. She further highlighted a number of areas where it was proposed to increase investment in 2023, without any increase in commercial rates, rents or charges.



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Ms. Fiona Lawless, Head of Finance, made a presentation on the Draft Budget for the Financial Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. The presentation included information on:

- Analysis of income and the various income sources;
- Overview of commercial rates, a profile of rate payers and the situation regarding outstanding appeals to the Valuation Office;
- Analysis of Expenditure, including operational and administrative aspects.

The presentation also outlined the Annual Budget 2023 by Service Division, with notable increases in service areas highlighted, as follows:

- Service Division A – Housing and Building
- Service Division B – Road Transport and Safety
- Service Division C – Water Services
- Service Division D – Development Management
- Service division E – Environmental Services
- Service Division F – Recreation and Amenity
- Service Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare
- Service Division H – Miscellaneous Services
- Service Division J – Central Management Charges

The Head of Finance concluded by highlighting the service areas that would see most increases – Housing Maintenance; Roads; Community Grants; Development Management and Climate Change but stated that all Departments would see an increase in expenditure and that this would be achieved without any increases in rates, rents or charges.

An Cathaoirleach opened the floor to the Elected Members for questions and comments, with the following members making interventions: **Councillors Gerry O'Connor; Damien O'Reilly; Brian Fitzgerald; Michael Gallagher; Ronan Moore; Joe Fox; Gillian Toole; Tommy Reilly; Mike Bray; Elaine McGinty; David Gilroy; Alan Lawes; Wayne Harding; Sharon Tolan; Eugene Cassidy; Maria Murphy; Yemi Adenuga; Sean Drew; Emer Tóibín and An Cathaoirleach.**

The budget was broadly welcomed by the Elected Members, though some reservations relating to National Housing Policy were raised by **Councillors Michael Gallagher and Alan Lawes**. Many contributors considered the Budget to be positive and progressive, and there were expressions of appreciation for the manner in which the Budget was compiled and how the Council's budget is managed generally. Particular tributes were paid to the Chief Executive on her excellent leadership over the past 10 years.

Members raised a number of issues as follows:

- Economic Regeneration Scheme;
- Energy Retrofit Schemes;
- Funding for Homelessness and Emergency Accommodation;
- Meath County Council's per capita expenditure;
- Funding levels for Roads;
- Age Friendly Energy Assessments;



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- Local Authority Housing Stock;
- Housing payments to AHBs;
- Affordable Housing;
- Historical Graveyards;
- Meath County Council's Staffing numbers;
- Greenways;
- Sports and Recreation;
- Funding for the Ukrainian Community.

Responses and clarifications were provided by the Head of Finance, Ms. Fiona Lawless, Mr. Martin Murray, Director of Services, Mr. Dara McGowan, Director of services, Mr. Barry Lynch, Director of Services, Mr. Des Foley, Director of Services and the Chief Executive, Ms. Jackie Maguire.

### **2. That Meath County Council adopts for the financial year ending 31st December 2023 the Annual Budget set out in Tables A – F.**

It was proposed to adopt the Annual Budget on the proposal of **Councillor Damien O'Reilly** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**.

A vote on the proposal to adopt the Budget was called as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
<b>ADENUGA, Yemi</b>	✓			
<b>BEHAN, Tom</b>	✓			
<b>BONNER, Joseph</b>				✓
<b>BRAY, Mike</b>	✓			
<b>CASSIDY, Eugene</b>	✓			
<b>DEANE, Francis</b>	✓			
<b>DEMPSEY, Aisling</b>	✓			
<b>DREW, Sean</b>	✓			
<b>FENNESSY, Eddie</b>				✓
<b>FITZGERALD, Brian</b>	✓			
<b>FITZSIMONS, Pdraig</b>	✓			
<b>FOX, Joe</b>	✓			
<b>FRENCH, Noel</b>	✓			
<b>GALLAGHER, Michael</b>		✓		
<b>GERAGHTY-SMITH, Deirdre</b>				✓
<b>GILROY, David</b>	✓			
<b>GOLDEN, Trevor</b>	✓			
<b>HARDING, Wayne</b>	✓			
<b>JAMAL, Suzanne</b>	✓			
<b>KEOGAN, Geraldine</b>	✓			
<b>KILLIAN, Nick</b>	✓			



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	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
LAWES, Alan		✓		
MC CABE, Paul	✓			
MC GINTY, Elaine	✓			
MC KEE, Stephen	✓			
MEADE, Paddy	✓			
MOORE, Ronan	✓			
MURPHY, Maria	✓			
O'CONNOR, Gerry	✓			
O'NEILL, Aisling				✓
O'REILLY, Damien	✓			
REILLY, Sarah	✓			
REILLY, Tommy	✓			
SMITH, Amanda	✓			
SOUHAN, Niamh	✓			
TOBIN, Alan				✓
TÓIBÍN, Emer	✓			
TOLAN, Sharon	✓			
TOOLE, Gillian	✓			
TORMEY, Conor	✓			

Votes For = 33 members, Against = 2, Abstain = 0, Absent = 5. In accordance with this decision, Meath County Council Budget 2023 was adopted.

- 3. That Meath County Council determines in accordance with the Budget as adopted the rate as set out in Table A and Table C to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the financial year ending 31st December 2023 for the purposes set out in Table A and Table C.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Tommy Reilly**.

- 4. Formal determination of the Rates Vacancy Refund Rate**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Trevor Golden** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**.

- 5. That Meath County Council approves of the transfer to capital account of the sums provided for various capital purposes in the Annual Budget for 2023 as adopted.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Gerry O'Connor**.



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**6. That Meath County Council approves the estimated over expenditure for financial year 31st December 2022 as set out in Table A – F and outturn details.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Paul McCabe** and seconded by **Councillor Suzanne Jamal**.

**7. To adopt the Business Support Scheme, 2023 in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor David Gilroy** and seconded by **Councillor Yemi Adenuga**.

The Chief Executive concluded by thanking the Elected Members for their support in preparing and adopting Budget 2023. She stressed that focus would now switch to implementing it over the next 12 months. She acknowledged the Head of Finance and her staff for their work in compiling the Draft Budget. She also thanked the Management Team for its support in preparing the Budget.

An Cathaoirleach also thanked members for their support for the Budget and thanked the Head of Finance and the Finance Team for their work. He reminded members that the December monthly meeting would take place on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the EU Building in Kiltale.

This concluded the business of the meeting. The meeting concluded at 3.15pm.