

**Minutes Of The Local Authority Pre Budget Meeting Of Carlow  
County Council For The Financial Year 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2014 to the  
31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014 Held In Committee In The Council  
Chamber, County Offices, Athy Road, Carlow On Friday 10th  
January, 2014 At 11.00 a.m.**

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Present: Councillor D Hurley, Cathaoirleach  
Councillor F. Browne  
Councillor M. Doran  
Councillor W. Fennell,  
Councillor T. Kinsella  
Councillor J. Murnane-O'Connor,  
Councillor J. Murphy  
Councillor T. O'Neill  
Councillor P. O'Toole  
Councillor W. Paton  
Councillor J. Pender,  
Councillor W. Quinn.  
Councillor J. Townsend,

Apologies: Councillor A. Ahern (Nee Long)  
Councillor D. Foley  
Councillor F. Hunter  
Councillor W. Lacey  
Councillor A. McDonald  
Councillor C. Murphy  
Councillor C. Townsend

In Attendance: Mr. Tom Barry, County Manager.  
Mr. Pat Delaney, Head of Finance  
Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services Environment,  
Water Services, Health & Safety.  
Ms. B. O'Brien, Director of Services Community &  
Enterprise & Economic Development & Corporate  
Services.  
Mr. D. McInerney, Director of Services  
Transportation & Safety & Emergency Services.  
Mr. Ronan Fitzgerald, Financial Accountant.  
Mr. T. Butler, Housing Officer

Mr. E. Brophy, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services.  
Ms. B. Whelan, Assistant Staff Officer.

The Cathaoirleach welcomed Members to the Pre-Budget Meeting.

Members suggested that issues discussed and clarified at the Pre-Budget meeting should not be revisited at the Budget meeting.

## **DRAFT BUDGET**

Mr. Pat Delaney, Head of Finance gave an overview of the Draft Local Authority Budget for the 2014 financial year. Mr. Delaney advised that the period for the consideration of the draft budget is from 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013 to 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The 2014 Budget must be adopted on or before 31st January 2014.

Mr. Delaney outlined for Members the major reform of the structures, functions and funding of Local Government.

The funding model for Local Government will alter in 2014 with the establishment of Irish Water and the Local Property Tax, both of which will part-fund local government operations.

Mr. Delaney outlined the principal objectives of the reform programme as follows:-

- Reduction in Local Authorities from 114 to 31
- Reduction in elected Members from 1627 to 949
- Local Electoral Areas being replaced by Municipal Districts
- One single County Development Plan
- Rates harmonisation
- Local Property Tax –
- Shared Services between Local Authorities
- Local Enterprise Offices
- Community Development
- Establishment of Irish Water

Mr. Delaney advised that post 2014 local elections the new configuration for County Carlow will be;-

Local Electoral Area Carlow 10 Members

Local Electoral Area Muinebheag 8 Members.

Following the 2014 Local Elections both Town and County Budgets will be merged and from 2015 a single County wide budget will be prepared annually. From 2015 it is expected that in each annual budget provision will be made for a general municipal allocation and members at municipal district level will have discretion over spending. Mr. Delaney advised that the Local Government Fund amounting to €5,352,469 was notified on the 18th December with one single allocation received to include both Carlow County and Town. Members welcomed a net increase in funding of €311,000. Mr Delaney advised of the establishment of Irish Water from 1st January 2014 with Local Authorities acting as agents for Irish Water through service level agreements. Mr. Delaney advised that it is not proposed to increase the annual rate of valuation in 2014. He set out the distribution of commercial rate customers and advised of global revision of valuations in Carlow in 2014. He also advised of rates harmonisation to commence 2016 and full harmonisation to be achieved over a maximum period of ten years. Members welcomed proposals to introduce an incentive in 2014 for prompt payment of rates which will benefit smaller business by up to 5% (to a maximum of €250 and subject to terms and conditions). Mr Delaney advised that people paying by monthly instalments will benefit from this discount if their account is paid by 31st October. Mr Delaney advised of the setting up of Local Enterprise Office (LEO) to support micro and small businesses in the County. Community Development will also be prioritised. A Local Community Development Committee will be established and will lead on all community development in the County.

Mr. Delaney advised that expenditure included in the Draft 2014 Budget amounts to €44.016 million an increase of €1.1 million on the 2013 adopted Budget.

Mr Delaney outlined the principal service costs included in the 2014 Draft Budget.

## **HOUSING**

- Provision of €624,000 is included for the housing maintenance programme. €270,000 is provided to meet 20% local funding

requirement for disability, mobility and aid for the elderly grants. This provision will fund a €1.2million programme of works subject to 80% matching funding from Central Government. Additional areas of expenditure in 2013 includes the Local Property Tax in respect of housing stock €82,000 and loans on land bank of €132,000. Provision is also made for Housing Loan Charges, Voluntary Housing Loans Charges and RAS and Social /Voluntary leasing.

**Total provision €9.5 million.**

Members raised issue in relation to land bank at Rathvilly, Tullow and Bagenalstown and the Council's position regarding servicing the loans.

Mr Delaney advised of the requirement to reopen the Land Aggregation Scheme which is currently under review by the Department and have the loans transferred.

**ROADS**

- The Council's internal funding is €950,000 for the general maintenance of local roads. An additional €40,000 has been provided to reflect increased public lighting charges. A comprehensive programme of works will be brought to Council when the actual road grants notification is received.

**Total Provision €7.6 million.**

Members raised the following issues:-

- Funding Class 3 roads. Mr. McInerney advised of funding under Community Involvement Scheme. The 2014 allocation has not yet been confirmed.
- Eastern Relief Road. Mr. Delaney advised that €6.1m has been provided for in Budget as €1.9m of the €8m loan will transfer to Irish Water as it relates to water issue at Pembroke.
- Allocation for bridges. Mr McInerney advised that as a special case funding will be sought from the Department for Newtown Bridge.
- Public Lighting not switched on in Ballinabranna.

- Land adjacent to Boys National School, Tullow between the Shillelagh Road and The Shroughaun Tullow. Members requested that this land be used to benefit the educational facilities at the boys and girls national schools in Tullow. T. Butler advised that the land was bought in 2006 in conjunction with Respond and will discuss the issue with Respond.  
The County Manager requested that representatives of the two schools meet with the Council to discuss the matter.

### **Public Water Production and Waste Water Treatment**

- Costs include the operation and maintenance of water and waste water infrastructure under the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water and funded by Irish Water.  
**Total provision €7.8 million.**

### **Physical Planning and Community Promotion**

- Support for planning services, economic development and community initiatives. Provision has also been made for the costs arising from integration of the County Enterprise Board and the Local Enterprise Office on a self financing basis.  
**Total provision €3.1 million**

### **Environmental Protection, Waste Disposal, Recycling, Litter Control, Emergency Services and Pollution Control**

- Planning permission has been granted to operate Powerstown facility until 2018. A biodegradable municipal waste limit of 15% will apply from July 2016. It is planned to fill the facility by 2016. The increased budget reflects an anticipated intake of 25,500 tonnes in 2014. The expenditure includes provision for a sinking fund towards after care and remediation costs currently estimated at circa €5million.
- Increased provision for Emergency Services includes the filling of three vacant positions.  
**Total provision €7.3 million**

- Members raised issue of opening of part of Landfill post 2016 for disposal of Council's own waste. Mr. Carley advised of issue with investment and license and to achieve this would not be value of money.
- Ardristan Landfill Site. Mr. Carley advised that the site is subject to a judgement.

### **Recreation and Amenity**

- €280,000 has been included as an operating subvention towards VISUAL and the George Bernard Shaw Theatre. Provision has been made for the continued upkeep of Oak Park and Ducketts Grove, and maintenance of parks and open spaces. Provision has been made for the Library services in Carlow, Tullow, Bagenalstown and Borris. €90,000 has been included for the library book fund.

**Total provision of €2.6 million.**

### **Agriculture, Education and Health**

- Provision is made for Animal Welfare and remaining Higher Education Grants.

**Total provision of €1.0 million.**

### **Miscellaneous Services**

- Includes Council plant, local elections, members retirement gratuities, agency services, members' expenses and motor taxation.

**Total provision of €5.0 million.**

### **Central Management**

- Includes office accommodation, management services, financial management, staff training and recruitment, health and safety and information technology. Internal audit and audit committees.

**Total provision of €5.4 million** (apportioned over programmes)

**Voluntary and Community Contributions**

- Community based programmes.

**Total provision of €620,700**

**Capital Investment Programme 2014**

- It is envisaged that €17.7 million will be spent on various projects with €14.78 million coming from state funding.

Housing	€6,220,000
Amenities	€500,000
Roads	€800,000
Fire Service	€1,060,000
Water Services	€7,200,000
Waste Management	€1,250,000
Development Plans	€200,000
Unfinished Estates	€400,000
Information Technology	€70,000

The Leas Cathaoirleach took over the Chair as the Cathaoirleach was temporarily absent from the Chamber.

The County Manager advised of communication from Leinster Rugby seeking Local Authority contribution of €9,225 towards the salary of the Development Officer. Currently Carlow County Council contributes €8,000 annually to FAI Development Officer.

Councillor Paton proposed that this contribution be provided to Leinster Rugby on condition that €10,000 in matching funding is provided for communities, mainly Tidy Towns.

Following discussion it was agreed that the matter be discussed by Party Whips and decision made at the Statutory Budget meeting.

Members proposed that the service and sub- service divisions of the Draft Local Authority Budget 2014 be discussed in detail at the

Statutory Budget Meeting to be held at 2.00 p.m. on Friday, 10th January, 2014.

**This concluded the business of the pre budget meeting.**