

MINUTES OF THE INISHOWEN MUNICIPAL DISTRICT BUDGET 2018 MEETING HELD IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES CENTRE, CARNDONAGH ON TUESDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2017 AT 2.00PM

Councillors Present:

Cllrs Rena Donaghey, Paul Canning, Albert Doherty, Nicholas Crossan, Martin McDermott, Martin Farren, Bernard McGuinness, Jack Murray and Cllr John Ryan

Officials Present:

Aideen Doherty, Area Manager Housing & Corporate Services, Garry Martin, Director of Finance and Seamus Hopkins, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads and Transportation

Apologies

John G McLaughlin, Director of Roads and Transportation

An Cathaoirleach, Cllr Jack Murray opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Director of Finance, Garry Martin advised that this is a statutory budget meeting to discuss the draft budgetary plan for 2018 and provided the following information.

Background

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 and associated regulations require the allocation of a general municipal allocation to each Municipal District as part of the annual revenue budget process.

In respect of 2016 and 2017, a preliminary allocation of €100,000 per Municipal District was made with this subsequently being increased, proportionate to the number of members in each Municipal District, at the plenary budget meeting held respectively in November of 2015 and 2016.

The rationale behind this approach was that it was not practical to allocate a global and final figure as part of the General Municipal Allocation, prior to the final and full plenary budget being adopted, at which point in time it could only be known with certainty as to what capacity existed within the Council resources to allocate such funding.

2018 General Municipal Allocation

Discussions with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government have outlined the challenges associated with the timing required under the current regulations with regard to the allocation of the GMA. The Department have acknowledged the challenges associated with this and are continuing to review the current approach.

However, this approach will not be amended in time for the 2018 revenue budget considerations and as such it is envisaged that it may only come into effect for future years.

Given the specific budgetary challenges currently presenting for 2018, it is not possible to adopt a similar approach to previous years when the full development fund initiative was allocated to each Municipal District as it will only become apparent later in the budgetary planning process as to the Council's discretionary expenditure capacity for 2018.

On that basis it is now proposed to allocate an amount equivalent to €2,000 per member, at this juncture, to the general municipal allocation and that any final and conclusive decision be made as part of the plenary budget meeting in November 2017, at which point in time the members can conclude and determine the final amount to be made available to the general municipal allocations.

This could, if the members wished, affirm the allocation proportionate to the number of members in respect of each of the individual Municipal Districts or suggest an alternative allocation methodology.

Following on from the recent Budget 2018 Workshop, further discussion took place in relation to the budget 2018. Points listed below were noted and discussed.

- Plenary Budget Meeting to be held on Friday 3rd November which is to be preceded by Plenary Budget Workshop
- In previous years the Development Fund Initiative was allocated to the Municipal Districts
- Statutory and Legal Obligations have to be met.
- Challenges faced in preparing Budget for 2018
- Options to be explored
- Expenditure adjustments being considered by Departments and Sections of DCC
- Options of adopt, adopt with amendments, or fail to adopt
- Increase in staff costs
- Travel and subsistence costs
- Issue of Inishowen MD funding ferries – so local community groups lost out
- Ferries are line item in Budget
- Previous suggestion of LPT being raised
- Options for savings limited
- Reserves
- Increased costs for DCC such as insurance
- Consultancy Fees
- Wind farms - high source of commercial rates income
- Commercial Rates increase and implications for businesses
- Local Property Tax

Garry Martin acknowledged the issues raised by the members and stated that he would engage positively with the members to find a resolution.

Recommendation

On the proposal of Cllr Jack Murray and seconded by Cllr Nicholas Crossan it was agreed that the Inishowen Municipal District reject the Budget in its present format. All members were in agreement.

Certified:


Cathaoirleach

Date:

12/12/17