

**COMHAIRLE CATHRACH AGUS CONTAE PHORT LÁIRGE
WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**RECONVENED ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING HELD ON 12TH DECEMBER 2019 AT 3PM, IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, THE MALL, WATERFORD.**

PRESENT

Cllr. John Pratt (Mayor)	Cllr. Joe Kelly
Cllr. Ger Barron	Cllr. Eddie Mulligan
Cllr. Donal Barry	Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Breda Brennan	Cllr. Marc Ó Cathasaigh
Cllr. Declan Clune	Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. John O'Leary
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan
Cllr. John Cummins	Cllr. Thomas Phelan
Cllr. Davy Daniels	Cllr. Jody Power
Cllr. Declan Doocey	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Matt Shanahan
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. James Tobin
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. Adam Wyse

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive
 Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
 Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment
 Mr. K. Kehoe, Director of Services, Corporate, Culture, HR & IS
 Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development & Planning
 Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance
 Mr. D. Murphy, Financial Accountant
 Mr. B. Duggan, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development.
 Ms. C. Horan, Head of IT
 Mr. J. Sullivan, Senior Executive Officer, Housing
 Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
 Ms. A. Maher, A/Senior Staff Officer

Chief Executive, M. Walsh addressed the reconvened budget meeting and provided an overview of rates based on location for the period of 2014 to 2019 along with the changes in staff numbers. He outlined that he must present a budget that will take into account the work that needs to be undertaken in the coming year. He will have a finance committee set up that will review all aspects of the budget.

The Mayor opened the meeting to the floor and looked for any proposals for the Budget.

Cllr. T. Phelan introduced the following proposal, proposing that this council adopts the budget presented by the Chief Executive, subject however to the following amendments.

A reduction of the rates increase from the Chief Executives proposed 5% to 2.5%, resulting in a net decrease in income from rates in the amount of €670,000. This rate reduction would significantly alleviate some of the burden that would otherwise have fallen on rate payers under the Chief Executives original proposal. The resulting reduction in council income will need to be offset by savings as outlined below and are aimed at minimising negative impacts on vulnerable citizens. He acknowledged and thanked B. Pollard, Head of Finance and D. Murphy, Financial Accountant and all staff in the finance section for their assistance in reviewing the budget

1. Savings on expenditure on RAS Operations in the amount of €60,000, which relates to code A0701.
This is feasible due to there being a surplus of greater scale in the recovery of administrative costs.
2. Savings on expenditure on Traffic Maintenance by €30,000, which relates to code B0602.
3. Savings on expenditure on Corporate Buildings by €60,000, which relates to code J01.
This is feasible by making less than previously estimated provision for maintenance of council office buildings.
4. Savings on expenditure on Planning Control by €50,000, which relates to code D0201.
This is feasible by making savings in relation to aerial photography.
5. Savings on expenditure on Economic Development and Promotion by €100,000, being the provision for outdoor recreation infrastructure, which relates to code D0905.
This is feasible because the outdoor recreation infrastructure scheme would partially represent an investment in assets, which could legitimately be transferred to the capital budget.
6. Increasing the projected income from Parking by €30,000, which relates to code B09.
This increased projection is based on revised analysis of the projected out-turn for 2019 and would not involve increasing parking charges.
7. An increase in income through a reduction in the vacant property relief in respect of rates from 55% to 40%. The net income allowing for bad debt provision will be €340,000.

Cllr. Kelly seconded the proposal as presented outlining that the amendments to the budget are fair and balanced.

Cllr. Cummins outlined that his party haven't had sight of the proposed cuts and savings and asked for clarification that the proposal as presented is a legitimate way to achieve these savings.

The Chief Executive and Executive reviewed each proposed amendment and verified their validity in achieving the savings as set out.

Cllr. Ó Cathasaigh complimented the new proposals referencing the difficult choices to be made while protecting frontline services.

The Mayor outlined that as no further proposals put forward he requested that the proposal as presented by Cllr. Phelan is put to a vote by means of a roll call vote, this was agreed by all.

	For	Against	Abstain
Cllr. John Pratt (Mayor)	Yes		
Cllr. Ger Barron	Yes		
Cllr. Liam Brazil		No	
Cllr. Breda Brennan		No	
Cllr. Declan Clune			Abstain
Cllr. Joe Conway	Yes		
Cllr. Tom Cronin		No	
Cllr. John Cummins		No	
Cllr. Davy Daniels	Yes		
Cllr. Declan Doocey		No	
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness		No	
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald		No	
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan		No	
Cllr. Jim Griffin		No	
Cllr. John Hearne		No	
Cllr. Joe Kelly	Yes		
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan		No	
Cllr. Jason Murphy		No	
Cllr. Pat Nugent		No	
Cllr. Marc Ó Cathasaigh	Yes		
Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell		No	
Cllr. John O'Leary		No	
Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan		No	
Cllr. Thomas Phelan	Yes		
Cllr. Jody Power	Yes		
Cllr. Seanie Power		No	
Cllr. Eamon Quinlan		No	
Cllr. Seamus Ryan	Yes		
Cllr. Matt Shanahan	Yes		
Cllr. James Tobin		No	
Cllr. Adam Wyse		No	
Total	11	20	1

Cllr. Tobin proposed adjourning for one hour to enable further discussion, this was seconded by Cllr. Mulligan and agreed by all. Meeting adjourned to 5pm.

Members returned to the Council Chambers at 5pm and after closing the scheduled plenary meeting continued with the budget meeting.

A vote of sympathy was expressed to K. Kehoe, Director of Services on the recent passing of his brother.

Cllr. Cummins acknowledged the proposal as presented by the Labour Party, Green Party and a number of Independents while noted his disappointed with the lack of support by Sinn Fein as part of the pact. He asked for clarity on when the Irish Water situation was brought to the attention of the Executive as there seems to have been a time delay in issuing to the members. Cllr. Tobin requested another adjournment to enable further discussions to agree a budget.

Cllr. D. McGuinness accepts that there are different policies and processes and while Sinn Fein have engaged with others they cannot accept this budget as presented.

Cllr. Shanahan concerned about the effect of the increase in rates on businesses coupled with increase in insurance costs.

Chief Executive provided an overview of the Irish Water charges and the global re-evaluation as carried out which resulted in the associated deficit to Waterford and a number of other Local Authorities. He confirmed that the budget as presented is a reasonable budget to tackle the deficit.

Mayor requested a show of hands for adjournment of the meeting that was by Cllr. Tobin and seconded by Cllr. Cummins.

Cllr. Kelly requested a 30 minute which was not seconded.

A majority show of hands supported additional adjournment of 1 hour.

Meeting resumed at 19.45pm.

Mayor enquired if there was any counter proposal at this stage. No further proposal was forthcoming and after a number of comments from the members the Mayor proposed a further adjournment which was seconded by Cllr. Geoghegan.

Meeting resumed at 23.38pm.

Mayor addressed the members outlining that comprehensive discussions had taken place and requested proposals from the floor.

Cllr. Cummins stated that Fine Gael want to approve a budget that will have a minimum impact on rate payers. In conjunction with the proposal as outlined by Cllr. Phelan he outlined additional amendments. The introduction of a Rate Rebate Scheme where 75% of rate payers would receive no increase in rates and would yield €540,000. An increase in collection of fire charges resulting in an additional income of €130,000, there would be no increase in charges on commercial or domestic fire charges. This proposal provides for the required €670,000 in addition to the increased income from the 2.5% increase in rates to those that it applies to. He acknowledged that Labour, Green Party and the Independents have come together with Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil to develop this proposed budget.

Cllr. Mulligan endorsed the protection of small to medium enterprises in the city and county outlining that we need to be competitive to do business and to provide the services needed. Collection rates have been poor and needs more focus and improved collection and need to look at good practice of other local authorities. He seconded the budget as proposed.

Cllr. Kelly thanked all involved in developing this proposal of a balanced and improved budget and confirmed his support of the proposal.

Cllr. Phelan thanked his colleagues and hopes that the parties can work together going forward.

Cllr. Shanahan supports that proposed rate rebate scheme and commended the work undertaken to develop the proposal.

Cllr. McGuinness asked for clarification on the rates increase and methodology on the fire charges change and a run down on the other items outlined.

Chief Executive outlined that the 2.5% rate increase will apply to 25% of the rate payers, the rate payers under the limit of €5,000 would be issued with a rebate in the form of a grant and thus they would not have any increase, subject to them paying existing rates. In relation to the fire charges there have been issues with capture so there is scope to increase the income

received from this. There have been an increase in housing units which will result in an increase in rent income that can be used towards other council expenditure.

Cllr. Griffin welcomed the explanation from the Chief Executive, highlighted his concern in relation to the delay in tackling maintenance issues and will be rejecting the proposed budget.

Cllr. Ryan confirmed his support for the proposed budget and thanked all involved for their work. He welcomed the rebate and the establishment of the new finance committee.

Cllr. Daniels acknowledged the work carried out and his concern with tackling the deficit going forward.

Cllr. O'Sullivan requested a vote to be taken.

Cllr. Conway thanked Chief Executive and team for work over the last number of weeks.

Cllr. Tobin spoke on behalf of Fianna Fail and thanked the Mayor, staff and all the councillors for the work undertaken during the budget meeting.

Cllr. Brennan outlined that she won't be supporting the budget as presented and any increase to the people of Waterford.

Roll call vote was proposed by Cllr. Cummins and seconded by Cllr. Mulligan

	Yes	No
Cllr. John Pratt (Mayor)	Yes	
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Yes	
Cllr. Breda Brennan		No
Cllr. Joe Conway	Yes	
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Yes	
Cllr. John Cummins	Yes	
Cllr. Davy Daniels	Yes	
Cllr. Declan Doocey	Yes	
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness		No
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald		No
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Yes	
Cllr. Jim Griffin		No
Cllr. John Hearne		No
Cllr. Joe Kelly	Yes	
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan	Yes	
Cllr. Jason Murphy	Yes	
Cllr. Pat Nugent	Yes	
Cllr. Marc Ó Cathasaigh	Yes	
Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell	Yes	
Cllr. John O'Leary	Yes	
Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan	Yes	
Cllr. Thomas Phelan	Yes	
Cllr. Jody Power	Yes	
Cllr. Seanie Power	Yes	
Cllr. Eamon Quinlan	Yes	
Cllr. Seamus Ryan	Yes	
Cllr. Matt Shanahan	Yes	
Cllr. James Tobin	Yes	
Cllr. Adam Wyse	Yes	
Total	24	5

24 voted for and 5 voted against. The Mayor then declared the budget passed and thanked everyone for their input and work to pass a balanced budget and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

Meeting concluded at 12.15am.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____