

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

**ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING HELD ON 27th NOVEMBER, 2018 at 5.00pm
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, THE MALL, WATERFORD**

PRESENT

Cllr. Declan Doocey, Mayor	Cllr. Eddie Mulligan
Cllr. Breda Brennan	Cllr. Jason Murphy
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. Ray Murphy
Cllr. Sharon Carey	Cllr. Pat Nugent
Cllr. Declan Clune	Cllr. John O'Leary
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. Cha O'Neill
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Cllr. Michael J O'Ryan
Cllr. John Cummins	Cllr. Lola O'Sullivan
Cllr. Davy Daniels	Cllr. Seanie Power
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. John Pratt
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. Seán Reinhardt
Cllr. Blaise Hannigan	Cllr. Mary Roche
Cllr. John Hearne	Cllr. James Tobin
Cllr. Joe Kelly	Cllr. Siobhan Whelan
	Cllr. Adam Wyse

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive
Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Economic Development & Planning
Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment
Mr. F. Reidy, A/Director of Services, Corporate, Culture, HR & IS
Mr. D. Murphy, Financial Accountant
Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
Ms. S. Walsh, Senior Staff Officer

The Chief Executive acknowledged the work of the Corporate Policy Group, Councillors workshop on the budget, Management Team & staff, in particular Bryan O'Kane, A/Head of Finance, in the preparation of the budget. He said it was a like for like budget year on year and there is no recommendation for increased charges in the budget. He outlined a number of areas of change in expenditure and the large scale changes were reflected in his written report to the Council. He said whilst there is increased economic activity, equally costs have remained stable and once off costs, lump sums and pensions are negating these costs so to achieve a balanced budget payroll costs and some overhead costs had to be reduced. He said that delivery of service on the ground is important and there are no additional charges to householders, commercial rates payers and other commercial payers. He recommended adoption of the budget and said a recommendation that also includes the adoption of the existing rate of refund of vacant properties which is 55%, as this has to be done on an annual basis.

Cllr. Geoghegan proposed to adopt the budget as presented and welcomes that there is no increase in commercial rates or development charges. Cllr. Tobin seconded the proposal and said it was a fair and balanced budget and the commercial ratepayers will be happy.

Cllr. Kelly supported the budget and wished to highlight to the public that statutory areas like payroll increases, lump sums, insurance increases are all out of the Council's control and is not recompensed by the Government for this expenditure. Cllr. Daniels asked for a breakdown of spending for roads and environment for all the Districts but especially the Metropolitan District and asked how is the shortfall of funding for the storm damage of €655k going to be funded. He commented on the funding received for the North Quays, Michael Street project and he wanted to know the number of staff lost in the 5 years of this Council, what income was received regarding Waterside carpark and what is the cost of litter collection in 2018. Cllr. O'Ryan is supporting the budget and said there are many positives based on the figures presented, road transportation increased and road maintenance increased and this Council is spending more than other local authorities per head of population but he has concerns about targeted reductions in staff and asked for money to be set aside for rural community groups regarding upkeep of burial grounds and community broadband. He would however caution targeted reductions.

F. Galvin, DOS said that each District will get the detail of the budget in January as they do each year. The shortfall regarding the funding for the long term damage to the roads after the storm was not forthcoming but increases were given in other areas. We got the funding for the storm damage but not the long term damage claim. The Waterside carpark income is approximately €165,000 to date but is offset against costs to Gas Networks Ireland and approximately €3.5m is spent on street cleaning and waste disposal costs in the current year.

Chief Executive stated that the reduction in staff refers to the indoor staff only and does not relate to the outdoor staff and there is a workforce plan in place since 2014 and he is committed to maintaining those numbers. He referenced the North Quays funding to clarify that the grant received is for the inception of the scheme and he is happy that further resources will be forthcoming in the next round in the New Year and the key issue is to see the funding for the future years.

Cllr. Pratt supports the budget but is concerned there is no extra funding for footpaths. Cllr. Clune said that Sinn Fein will not support the budget as it includes an increase in the Local Property Tax. He said that the central management charge could be reduced and rates refunds on vacant properties reduced to 45% which would provide extra money and also if a transfer

was made from the capital account to the revenue account the Local Property Tax would not need to be increased. Cllr. Geoghegan said, on a point of order, that the Local Property Tax increase was agreed by all at the Local Property Tax meeting.

Cllr. Quinlan welcomed the budget but stated he was concerned that Festival funding was reduced. He said that money is being spent daily on delivering the North Quays but the Council needs a reciprocal arrangement from the Government. Cllr. Conway addressed the income expectation in the budget for the NPPR (Non Principal Private Residence) Charge and asked if the information can be used to track where these properties are ending up, and said he will be supporting the budget. Cllr. O'Neill said he is supporting the budget and he noticed that there was a high percentage of vacant /derelict houses and the banks should inform the Council if they own these properties. He praised the Council outdoor staff for their work under extreme circumstances and also the indoor staff for their commitment. Cllr. Cummins clarified that at the Property Tax meeting it was agreed to hold the rate the same as 2018 and this was agreed by all. Cllr. Cronin welcomed the budget as it is balanced and fair and queried the non allocation of grants from the Department for the Gaeltacht and for the coastline.

Chief Executive said that the NPPR could not be used to track owners, as they only come to us at the point of sale and don't know the origin so a detailed analysis would be difficult especially with GDPR. He welcomes the vacant properties coming back into the market and the Council's Vacant Homes Officer is targeting vacant and derelict properties.

F. Galvin, DOS said that grants were received for the coastline, Ardmore, Boatstrand, Annestown but these are under Capital schemes.

F. Reidy, A/DOS said that grants were received for the Gaeltacht for Arts programmes but not necessarily for Irish.

Cllr. Cronin enquired if an application could be made for grants for the Gaeltacht.

F. Reidy, A/DOS said an application can be made.

Cllr. Roche welcomed the balanced budget and said that the Council staff response to the floods, the snow, is never found wanting regardless of the cost. Cllr. Hearne said he commends the budget but he would not be supporting it as it has an increase in the Local Property Tax. Cllr. O'Leary queried the non allocation of funding to the Healthy Waterford Forum, he said more grant should be given to communities, and he commends the budget. Cllr. Geoghegan wished to clarify regarding the Local Property Tax meeting and confirmed that all members agreed to keeping the tax at the same rate for 2018. Cllr. Brazil welcomed the budget and said it is very balanced. Cllr. Fitzgerald requested a roll-call vote on the budget.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Cllr. L. Brazil	Cllr. B. Brennan	
Cllr. S. Carey	Cllr. D. Clune	
Cllr. J. Conway	Cllr. D. Daniels	
Cllr. T. Cronin	Cllr. P. Fitzgerald	
Cllr. J. Cummins	Cllr. J. Griffin	
Cllr. D. Doocey (Mayor)	Cllr. J. Hearne	
Cllr. D. Geoghegan	Cllr. S. Whelan	
Cllr. B. Hannigan		
Cllr. J. Kelly		
Cllr. E. Mulligan		
Cllr. J. Murphy		
Cllr. R. Murphy		
Cllr. P. Nugent		
Cllr. J. O'Leary		
Cllr. C. O'Neill		
Cllr. M.J. O'Ryan		
Cllr. L. O'Sullivan		
Cllr. S. Power		
Cllr. J. Pratt		
Cllr. E. Quinlan		
Cllr. S. Reinhardt		
Cllr. M. Roche		
Cllr. J. Tobin		
Cllr. A. Wyse		

24 voted for – 7 voted against therefore motion carried

Meeting concluded.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____