

COMHAIRLE CATHRACH AGUS CONTAE PHORT LÁIRGE
WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL

Meeting of the Metropolitan District Budgetary Plan held on 17th October 2022 @ 3:30pm

Present:

Cllr. Joanne Bailey	Cllr. Cristiona Kiely
Cllr. Donal Barry	Cllr. Lola O’Sullivan
Cllr. Joe Conway	Cllr. Jody Power
Cllr. Davy Daniels	Cllr. Adam Wyse
Cllr. Pat Fitzgerald	Cllr. Frank Quinlan
Cllr. Jim Griffin	Cllr. Mary Roche
Cllr. Jason Murphy (Mayor)	Cllr. Seamus Ryan
Cllr. Stephanie Keating	

Apologies:

Cllr. Joe Kelly, Cllr. John Hearne, Cllr. Eamon Quinlan

Officials in attendance:

Mr. M. Walsh, CE,
Mr. M. Quinn, DoS, Economic Development
Ms. H. Dunphy, Meetings Administrator
Mr. B. Pollard, Head of Finance
Ms. M. Nolan Reade, Corporate Department

Mayor Kelly welcomed Cllr. Stephanie Keating to her first Metropolitan District Meeting noting that meeting was called to consider the draft Budgetary Plan for the Metropolitan District for 2023 financial Year.

B. Pollard, HoF, outlined details noting that it is identifying the discretionary budget for the district, 59.3% discretionary costs are allocated to Metropolitan as against population of 58.4%. Noted the meeting is limited in terms of function, members can decide to vary the parking charges up or down.

Cllr. Daniels asked for clarification if businesses are back to paying full rates or are waivers still applied, suggested introducing equal parking charges throughout the City & County.

Cllr. Barry requested full breakdown of each item, noted big comparison between Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences and Tourism Promotion, requested a detailed breakdown of Administration of the Arts Programme.

Cllr. Bailey noted small budget of 29.8% for Local Roads General Maintenance Works to cover large areas such as Dunmore and Tramore, requested a calculation of rates and breakdown for each discretionary category.

B. Pollard, HoF, outlined waivers applied for first quarter 2022 for hospitality sector only, Covid waivers are closed and no longer apply. Noted the difference between item C0401 and D0501 outlining these are not full figures they are discretionary figures, will issue full detailed breakdown of items. Outlined 28.7% is for Local Roads General Maintenance Works and not full Roads Maintenance budget.

Michael Walsh, CE, outlined that it is at the discretion of the Municipal Districts to set the parking charges, since 2014 districts can vary charges up or down, suggested in his opinion parking charges should be

different based on demand between different centres. Outlined discretionary element noting purpose of the meeting is limited in terms of function and is a frustrating exercise. He would not recommend lowering parking charges as a solid stable finance base is needed for budget. Proposed budget will be put to the member in four weeks, members should take opportunity to indicate priorities in budgetary areas prior to preparation.

Cllr. F. Quinlan agrees equal parking across board suggested reducing parking charges or offering first half hour free.

Cllr. O' Sullivan requested comparison of income raised from parking charges between Tramore and Dungarvan.

Cllr. Fitzgerald asked if there is a difference between other municipal districts as he feels budget is spent differently in Metropolitan District as opposed to other districts 1/3 allocated in Roads compared to 2/3 in Tourism Promotion.

B. Pollard, HoF, outlined parking income to date in Tramore of €65,000 raised and €192,000 in Dungarvan, €100,000 budget for Tramore and €200,00 for Dungarvan, almost full budget received for Dungarvan.

Michael Walsh, CE, outlined with Festival and Tourism there are flag ship events that take place in the City which serve both City and County and Regionally to an extent, outlined road's budget is based on historical allocations of the three districts, there are longer lengths of roads in Comeragh and Lismore districts, roads funding is not adequate.

Cllr. Roche asked how much would be lost if there was a provision for free parking on Friday evenings, agreed parking is more expensive in city, enquired if assessment was carried out to see how much budget would be affected if first 20 minutes free parking was introduced. Proposed to abolish Friday evening park charges.

Cllr. Power noted €142,726 allocated to Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences asked if that includes Passage East, Checkpoint and Woodstown, enquired if there will be additional money available with relocation of the Tourism Office, asked for clarification on where the Ukraine crisis expenses comes into the budget.

Cllr. Wyse asked if could quantify the cost for providing 30-minute free parking that is in place in Dungarvan, agreed and seconded Cllr Roche proposal to provide free parking on Friday evening as feels would not be at the loss of too much revenue.

Michael Walsh, CE, outlined there are limited spaces in the City, external car parks such as Bolton Street, Miller Marsh, Waterside have significantly reduced rates compared to core city centre which have approximately 150 spaces, noting limited spaces on the Quay and off O' Connell Street and Ballybricken which has separate charging fee, unless these spaces are managed on a reasonable demand verses cost scenario there would be no turnover for businesses in the areas, there is a good variation of charges and reducing charges could devalue the city. Clarified the relocation of Tourist Office will not provide additional funding as previous office was free gratis but it will help with costs in Waterford Treasurer as they can share the associated workload. All cost incurred regarding Ukraine crisis are fully recovered from Government.

Cllr. Roche withdrew proposal until received full report.

Cllr. Griffin enquired regarding generating additional income with building and construction sites increasing, noting contractors have to apply to local authorities for licencing for clearing sites/construction waste asked if more income be generated from this type of activity.

Cllr. Kiely asked where de-carbonisation fits into this budget, understands the public conveniences is for maintaining the existing amenities enquired if it includes extending the opening hours particularly Guillamene/Newtown Cove for year-round sea swimming, requested comparison of Tourism and Economic Development promotion figures from last year.

Michael Walsh, CE, noted waste permit issue there is no provision to carry out what Cllr. Griffin has suggested and would not be in best interest as not enough available land further charges in that area could feed back into housing costs, outlined decarbonisation will continue with the hope of expanding significantly in coming year, Tourism Promotion figures remained the same as last year. Outlined extended opening hours of public toilets/amenities will depend on provisions allowed for in full budget, beach lifeguards cover summer period and service the blue flag beaches.

Cllr. Daniels requested clarification if the footpath programme comes from road's budget or is there a specific allocation, feels strongly there is a shortfall in this area.

Michael Walsh, CE, outlined footpath programme was spent throughout City & County combined with Active Travel programme adding committed to spending over the next 4/5years in overall area of footpath construction, stretched in terms of our own resource's difficulty obtaining outside contractors to complete work and costs have increased significantly.

Cllr. Roche feels full overall of road markings in City is required.
Michael Walsh, CE, will discuss with Engineers

Budget as presented proposed by Cllr. O' Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. Power and agreed by all.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____