

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

ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING HELD on 20th November, 2014

**Item No.
1**

PRESENT:

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

APOLOGIES:

None

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive
Mr. J. Murphy, Head of Finance
Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Service Housing, Community & Culture
Mr. P. Daly, A/Director of Service Roads HR & Emergency Services
Mr. L. Power, Director of Service Economic Development
Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Service Environment and Water
Mr. B. White, Director of Service Planning & Corporate
Mr. B. Duggan, SEO, Economic Development
Mr. R. Walsh, SEO, Planning and Corporate
Ms. C. Morrissey, Internal Auditor
Ms. J. Cantwell, City and County Librarian
Mr. J. O'Mahony, Senior Planner, Planning and Corporate
Mr. E. Ruane, Meetings Administrator

At the outset of the meeting the Mayor informed the members that the December meeting of the Council scheduled to take place in Dungarvan was changed to Waterford City to facilitate works being carried out in the Council Chamber. The Mayor also proposed a vote of sympathy to the family of the late Kay Barron, wife of former County Councillor Ger Barron. Cllr Geoghegan expressed condolences on behalf of Fine Gael, Cllr O'Ryan on behalf of Fianna Fail, Cllr O'Neill on behalf of the Independents, Cllr Pratt on behalf of the Labour Party and Cllr Fitzgerald on behalf of Sinn Féin. Cllr O'Leary (brother of Kay) responded on behalf of the family and thanked the Council for its attendance and condolences. The CE joined in the condolences on behalf of himself and the staff.

BUDGET 2015

The Mayor in introducing the budget noted that this was a historic day for the Council being the first budget of the newly formed Waterford City and County Council. The CE presented the budget, highlighting extra provision in areas and savings to be achieved as a result of amalgamation. He advised that there was no increase proposed in the rate on valuation. He referred to exiting the refuse service and the reasons for same. He said that this was a positive budget designed to deliver core activity very well and he was privileged to recommend its adoption.

Cllr O’Ryan commended the budget but expressed regret at the exit of the refuse collection. Cllr Brazil welcomed the CE’s presentation, was disappointed about the refuse collection decision and asked if social housing could be provided for. Cllr Butler referred to this historic day and asked that the budget be looked at in a fair and open way. She expressed regret for the decision on refuse collection. Cllr Doocey welcomed all aspects of the budget and again expressed regret on the refuse collection decision. Cllr O’Neill welcomed all the good elements except for the exit from the refuse service, he appealed for the return of the waiver and stated that he would not be supporting the budget. Cllr Nugent supported the budget, regretted the refuse decision and asked what provision had been made for coastal erosion. Cllr Pratt expressed disappointed with the decision on refuse and asked that the waiver decision be reconsidered, he also enquired about funding for Comhairle na n’Óg. Cllr Murphy said it was a fair budget in difficult times and consideration should be given for a waiver. Cllr Hearne stated he had two issues with the budget, the refuse collection and the waiver. Cllr Conway generally supported the budget noting good provision for pavements, tourist amenities, derelict sites and the arts programme. He expressed concern about town twinning provision. Cllr Fitzgerald expressed serious misgivings about the budget including concern for provision for rural and local roads. Cllr O’Sullivan welcoming the many positive things in the budget was disappointed about the refuse decision. Cllr Whelan expressed regret on the refuse and waiver decisions. Cllr Kelly while stating that it was a good attempt at a budget he would not be supporting on the basis of the refuse collection decision. He also raised the question of loss of earnings of refuse collection staff. Cllr Brennan was disappointed at the removal of the waiver and the non provision for social housing. Cllr Cummins noted that this was a historic budget and stated that it was the prerogative of any councillor to propose an alternative. Cllr O’Leary stated it was a good budget which ensured that the burden was spread fairly. He referred to the main problem in the county was lack of jobs. Cllr Reinhardt expressed concern about the removal of the waiver. Cllr Roche pointed out that the budget was a council decision and not an executive decision. She stated that the problems were created as a direct consequence of amalgamation and cannot support the budget. Cllr Hannigan stated he had 3 problems, LPT, refuse and waiver and fire service reduction. Cllr Power welcomed provision made for roads and asked that consideration be given to some form of refuse collection. Cllr O’Donnell expressed disappointment at the decision on the refuse collection and asked that it be deferred to the end of 2015. Cllr Clune asked what percentage of LPT goes back to the local area. Cllr Wyse stated that the loss of waiver was a serious issue and he asked the CE to confirm that there would be no job losses. Cllr Carey stated he was disappointed at the refuse collection decision. Cllr Geoghegan stated that the refuse service was not supported by the majority of the population in the county and that the collapse of the waste strategy for the south east was a big blow to the county. Cllr Geoghegan then proposed adoption of the budget as presented, seconded by Cllr O’Ryan. Cllr Daniels thanked all staff for input into the budget stating that he had always supported the budget but now had a concern about the removal of the waiver and he proposed the following amendment – that the proposed savings of 4 million pa highlighted on page 5 of the refinancing of the City and County under

amalgamated savings. This will translate into cash savings of 3 million in 2015, 50% 1.5 million already achieved and up to 5 million in future years. As specifically recommended by the Implementation Committee, that any savings derived from the amalgamation should be left with the Council. Annual savings to be used directly to fund and continue the waiver scheme in Waterford City and County. Seconded by Cllr Roche. Cllr Quinlan referred to recent developments in Waterford and welcomed the budget. He said that Fianna Fail would seek to ensure that no areas would be left without service. Cllr Mulligan stated that an opportunity had been given to propose alternatives and that jobs must be a priority. The CE responded, no job losses will be suffered as a result of the exit from refuse, dialogue will begin with the unions regarding loss of earnings. The fire service vacancy in Tramore will be filled. Comhairle na n'Óg is provided for in the budget. He will revert with proposals on town twinning, social housing is a capital issue. The retention of the waiver would cost €1.5 million which is not sustainable. Slight reduction in rates is reflected in the income, there will be no increase in charges and rates remain unchanged.

He stated that the proposed amendment to the budget was not valid as it did not present an alternative.

The Mayor ruled the proposal of Cllr Daniels out of order and put the original proposal to the meeting. A recorded vote was called for, the result was as follows

For (19)

Cllrs Brazil, Butler, Carey, Conway, Cronin, Cummins, Doocey, Geoghegan, Mulligan, Murphy, Nugent, O'Leary, O'Ryan, O'Sullivan, Power, Pratt, Quinlan, Tobin, Wyse.

Against (13)

Cllrs Brennan, Clune, Daniels, Fitzgerald, Griffin, Hannigan, Hearne, Kelly, O'Donnell, O'Neill, Reinhardt, Roche, Whelan.

The Mayor declared the budget and the rate on valuation for 2015 was adopted by a vote of 19 for and 13 against.

Signed: _____
Mayor

Dated: _____