

**COMHAIRLE CATHRACH AGUS CONTAE PHORT LÁIRGE
WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL****ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING HELD ON 29th NOVEMBER, 2016****Council Chamber, City Hall, The Mall, Waterford****PRESENT:**

Cllr. Adam Wyse Mayor	Cllr. Seamus O'Donnell
Cllr. Liam Brazil	Cllr. John O'Leary
Cllr. Breda Brennan	Cllr. Cha O'Neill
Cllr. John Cummins	Cllr. Michael J O'Ryan
Cllr. John Carey	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. Blaise Hannigan	Cllr. James Tobin
Cllr. Joe Kelly	Cllr. Siobhán Whelan
Cllr. Eddie Mulligan	Cllr. Declan Clune
Cllr. Jason Murphy	Cllr. John Hearne
Cllr. Pat Nugent	Cllr. Jim Griffin
Cllr. Damien Geoghegan	Cllr. Ray Murphy

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. M. Walsh, Chief Executive
Mr. M. Quinn, Director of Services, Corporate, Arts, HR & IS
Mr. L. Power, Director of Services, Economic Development & Planning
Mr. I. Grimes, Director of Services, Housing, Community & Emergency Services
Mr. J. Murphy, Head of Finance
Mr. F. Galvin, Director of Services, Roads, Water & Environment
Mr. D. Murphy, Financial Accountant
Mr. E. Ruane, Meetings Administrator
Ms. S. Walsh, Senior Staff Officer

Chief Executive introduced the Budget and went through the issues covered in the written report pointing out what was proposed, increase in rates of (1%) and an increase in unoccupied properties levy from 25% to 30%, plus reduction in Housing expenditure, and expenditure for Roads and Festival Funding. He referred to the unique features of rates being reduced by realignment on amalgamation in the City by 20%, the County by 5% while holding the Dungarvan rate and he recommended adoption to the Council.

Cllr. Kelly referred to the deficit and suggested the Council reject the Budget and go back to Government for extra funding. Cllr. Cummins referred to the decline in the Local Government Fund. He sought clarification in the Budget book on the figures for Festival funding, and on the increase in vacant sites levy from 25% to 30% and he questioned the calculation. Cllr. O’Ryan wanted clarification on the Income figures for goods/services, grants. He said that the €47m deficit was not funded adequately by Central Government. The Road grant was reduced and we are looking for €1.2m to keep the service level up. He queried what is our disposable income figure and looked for clarification as to why is our insurance was going up 500k over next 3 years.

The Chief Executive said that there was a number of sources of funding – Roads and Local Government funding. The Local Government Fund was good around the amalgamation. He explained what is an achievable income level on vacant properties charges. He hadn’t a figure to hand on the disposable income figure but it was between €5-10million. He said our fixed costs are very clear, payroll costs, building overheads and insurance costs. IPB is not profit making but still has to phase in a 20% increase over 3 years.

Cllr. O’Leary said that local democracy was under threat and asked about overall deficit. Cllr. O’Neill queried if vacant properties also include vacant sites, especially properties gone into NAMA and can we collect from NAMA. Cllr. Roche asked if the problems were structural and if government funding was too small.

Chief Executive said that the vacant sites levy not coming in until 2019. NAMA is not the owner of the property only the owner of the loan hence no rates, he said the level of service and investment in arts, economic development and community are part of the structure and are a burden.

Cllr. Mulligan asked was the increase in rates sought to pay the increase in overheads. Cllr. O’Ryan asked if the income and expenditure ratio was common throughout the Local Authorities in Ireland. Cllr. Tobin said in respect of the Global revaluation grant, we should seek it again.

The Chief Executive stated that he made representation in relation to the Global Revaluation grant and that there is no indication that this grant will be available. In terms of income and expenditure each Local Authority has similar types of distribution over the sections. The proposed increase in commercial rates closes half the deficit and cuts in spending with close the other half. John Murphy. Head of Finance said that the overall deficit to the end of December 2015 is €7.9m.

Cllr. Kelly said that borrowing and overdraft should be considered. Cllr Roche asked about rates income from the retail sector. Cllr. Daniels commented on the decline in funding, and expressed concern on the increase on vacant sites from 25% to 30%.

The Chief Executive did not have the exact rates take from the retail sector to hand, the Council has already borrowed and this needs to be serviced.

At this stage of the meeting it was proposed to adjourn for a half hour by Cllr. Tobin, seconded by Cllr. Cummins. Cllr. Roche, proposed an amendment to adjourn the meeting to another day, seconded by Cllr. Kelly. The amendment was put and defeated by – 18 votes to 12.

The original proposal was put and carried and the meeting adjourned for 30 minutes.

The meeting re-convened at 19.03. Cllr. Doocey proposed to adjourn for a further 30mins- seconded by Cllr. Pratt. Cllr. Roche objected. No amendments proposed, Cllr. Doocey's proposal was put and carried by the majority and the meeting adjourned for 30 minutes.

Cllr. Geoghegan said Fine Gael is not in a position to support the Budget and rejected the Budget on behalf of the party. Supported by Cllr. Cummins

Cllr. Tobin said he could not support the Budget on behalf of Fianna Fail , Cllr. Brazil, Cllr. Pratt, Cllr. Quinlan, Cllr. O'Ryan all indicated that they would not support the Budget. Cllr. O'Donnell and Cllr. Fitzgerald expressed disappointment that the Budget was not going through. Cllr. Mulligan and Cllr. Nugent indicated also that they could not support the Budget. Cllr. Daniels proposal that the Budget be put to Council was not in order. Cllr. Hearne expressed disappointment.

At this stage it was agreed to adjourn the meeting until Tuesday 6th December, 2016 at 5pm.

L. Power, DOS notified Council that the workshop on Festival Funding, set for Monday 5th December, was deferred until after the budget meeting of 6th December.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Mayor