



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

Statutory Budget Meeting

25th November 2024, 1.30pm
Buvinda House, Navan (and online via Zoom)

Presiding

Cathaoirleach, Councillor Sharon Tolan

Councillors Present:

Councillors Joseph Bonner, Peter Caffrey, Eugene Cassidy, Pdraig Coffey, Francis Deane, Aisling Dempsey, Sean Drew, Brian Fitzgerald, Pdraig Fitzsimons, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, David Gilroy, Suzanne Jamal, Nick Killian, Alan Lawes, Carol Lennon, Paddy Meade, Linda Nelson-Murray, Gerry O'Connor, Sarah Reilly and Gillian Toole.

Councillors Present via Zoom:

Councillors Dave Boyne, Mike Bray, Eddie Fennessy, Wayne Harding, Geraldine Keogan, Stephen McKee, Maria Murphy, Caroline O'Reilly, Amanda Smith, Alan Tobin, Emer Tóibín and Conor Tormey.

Apologies:

Councillors Yemi Adenuga, Fionnan Blake, Helen Meyer, Ronan Moore and Maria White.

Officials in attendance:

Chief Executive: Kieran Kehoe

Directors of Service: Fiona Lawless, Des Foley, Barry Lynch, Martin Murray, Dara McGowan, Fiona Fallon, Pdraig Maguire

Meetings Administrator: Elaine Daly

Finance Staff: Michelle Rankin, Ailie Dempsey, Karen Dalton.

1. To consider Chief Executive's Draft Budget of Meath County Council for Financial Year ending 31st December 2025

The Cathaoirleach opened the meeting, and it was noted that the Statutory Budget book including Tables A-F had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the Preliminary Budget meeting.

Chief Executive, Kieran Kehoe, addressed the meeting and noted that the Budget aligns with the ambitious objectives outlined in the recently adopted Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029. Budget 2025 provides for expenditure of over €232 million, which is an increase of 11.2% on the 2024 budget. He further outlined his key focus areas for 2025 as follows:

- Putting a particular focus on our local county roads across all of our County;
- Ensuring Meath County Council continues to enhance our community and



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

amenity infrastructure, particularly in our growing urban centres;

- Establish Meath as a leader in job creation and set a benchmark for economic development;
- Delivering the objectives of the Government's Housing for All Policy and the Meath County Housing Strategy, including age-friendly housing;
- Enhancing and maintaining our services, including significant additional resources in rural regeneration;
- Deliver the ambitious goals outlined in our Climate Action Plan and in our nine decarbonising zones

The Chief Executive noted that Meath County Council has the second lowest rate of commercial rates (ARV) in the country and that in order to deliver the ambitions for County Meath, further opportunities to increase revenue streams would be explored.

Finally, the Chief Executive thanked the Elected Members for their continued support, the Management for their contributions and support and the Director of Finance and the Finance Team for the preparation of the Budget.

Ms. Fiona Lawless, Director of Finance, made a presentation on the Draft Budget for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2025. The presentation included information on:

- Analysis of income and the various income sources;
- Overview of commercial rates and a profile of rate payers;
- Analysis of Expenditure, including operational and administrative aspects.

The presentation also outlined the Annual Budget 2025 by Service Division, with notable increases in service areas highlighted, as follows:

- Service Division A – Housing and Building
- Service Division B – Road Transport and Safety
- Service Division C – Water Services
- Service Division D – Development Management
- Service division E – Environmental Services
- Service Division F – Recreation and Amenity
- Service Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare
- Service Division H – Miscellaneous Services
- Service Division J – Central Management Charges

The Director of Finance concluded by highlighting the service areas that would see most increases – Housing; Transport; Economic Development and Rural Regeneration but stated that all Departments would see an increase in expenditure.

Following the presentation, the Cathaoirleach thanked the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Management Team and the Finance Team for their work in the preparation of



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

Budget 2025. The Elected Members were given an opportunity for questions and comments. Interventions were made by the following: **Councillors Sarah Reilly, Gerry O'Connor, Joe Fox, Noel French, Michael Gallagher, Eugene Cassidy, Nick Killian, Sean Drew, Emer Tóibín, Eddie Fennesy, Gillian Toole, David Gilroy, Paddy Meade, Padraig Fitzsimons, Alan Lawes, Alan Tobin, Linda Nelson-Murray and Mike Bray.**

The Elected Members broadly welcomed the proposed budget, which many contributors considered to be positive and progressive, and there were expressions of appreciation for the manner in which the Budget was compiled and how the Council's budget is managed generally. The Elected Members acknowledged that many of the issues raised at Municipal District meetings were considered in the budget. Members raised a number of issues as follows:

- Library Service;
- Housing Adaptation Grants;
- Economic Development;
- Rural Regeneration;
- Vacancy and Dereliction;
- Land Acquisition;
- Footpaths and safety at schools;
- Staffing queries;
- Climate Action Plan;
- Communications Strategy;
- Winter Gritting Programme;
- Local Authority Housing Stock;
- Septic Tank Inspections;
- Government Supports.

Responses and clarifications were provided by the Chief Executive, Mr. Kieran Kehoe and the Director of Finance, Ms. Fiona Lawless.

2. To pass a resolution adopting the draft Budget for 2025 as set out in Tables A – F.

It was proposed to adopt the Annual Budget on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly.**

A vote on the proposal to adopt the Budget was called as follows:

	For	Against	Abstain	Absent
ADENUGA, Yemi				✓
BLAKE, Fionnan				✓
BONNER, Joseph	✓			



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

BOYNE, Dave	✓			
BRAY, Mike	✓			
CAFFREY, Peter	✓			
CASSIDY, Eugene	✓			
COFFEY, Pdraig	✓			
DEANE, Francis	✓			
DEMPSEY, Aisling	✓			
DREW, Sean	✓			
FENNESSY, Eddie	✓			
FITZGERALD, Brian	✓			
FITZSIMONS, Pdraig	✓			
FOX, Joe	✓			
FRENCH, Noel	✓			
GALLAGHER, Michael	✓			
GILROY, David	✓			
HARDING, Wayne	✓			
JAMAL, Suzanne	✓			
KEOGAN, Geraldine	✓			
KILLIAN, Nick	✓			
LAWES, Alan			✓	
LENNON, Carol	✓			
MC KEE, Stephen				✓
MEADE, Paddy	✓			
MEYER, Helen				✓
MOORE, Ronan				✓
MURPHY, Maria	✓			
NELSON MURRAY, Linda	✓			
O'CONNOR, Gerry	✓			
O'REILLY, Caroline	✓			
REILLY, Sarah	✓			
SMITH, Amanda	✓			
TOBIN, Alan	✓			
TÓIBÍN, Emer	✓			
TOLAN, Sharon	✓			
TOOLE, Gillian	✓			
TORMEY, Conor	✓			
WHITE, Maria				✓

Votes For = 33, Against = 0, Abstain = 1, Absent = 6. In accordance with this decision, Meath County Council Budget 2025 was adopted.



Miontuairiscí/Meeting Minutes

- 3. Subject to section 6 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended and in accordance with the Budget adopted, determine the annual rate on valuation applicable in the calculation of the amount of the rate under Section 4 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Noel French** and seconded by **Councillor Padraig Fitzsimons**.

- 4. That Meath County Council makes a scheme for the abatement of rates due to it by liable persons, or classes of liable persons, in respect of vacant properties in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act of 2019 for the financial year ending 31st December 2025:**

100% of rates due where rates demand is less than €100,000

10% of rates due where rates demand is between €100,000 and €249,999

0% of rates due where rates demand is over €250,000

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Francis Deane** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

- 5. That Meath County Council approves of the transfer to capital account of the sums provided for various capital purposes in the Annual Budget for 2025 as adopted.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Brian Fitzgerald**.

- 6. That Meath County Council approves the estimated over expenditure for financial year 31st December 2024 as set out in Table A – F and outturn details.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Gerry O'Connor** and seconded by **Councillor Nick Killian**.

- 7. To adopt the Business Support Scheme, 2025 in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001.**

Unanimously adopted on the proposal of **Councillor Joe Fox** and seconded by **Councillor Sarah Reilly**.

An Cathaoirleach thanked the Elected Members for their attendance.

The meeting concluded at 3.40pm.