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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LISTOWEL TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT A DRAFT BUDGETARY PLAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LISTOWEL FOR 2015 HELD IN ÁRAS AN PHIARSAIGH, LISTOWEL ON THURSDAY, 9TH OCTOBER 2014

MIONTUAIRISCÍ DE CHRUINNIÚ CHOMHALTAÍ CHEANTAR BARDASACH LIOS TUATHAIL CHUN DRÉACHT-BHUISÉAD A MHEAS, AGUS CHUN GLACADH LEIS, DO CHEANTAR BARDASACH LIOS TUATHAIL DO 2015, MAR A BHÍ I ÁRAS AN PHIARSAIGH, LIOS TUATHAIL, AR AN 9ú DEIREADH FÓMHAIR 2014

PRESENT/I LÁTHAIR

Councillors/Comhairleoirí

**Cllr. R. Beasley
Cllr. J. Brassil
Cllr. M. Kennelly
Cllr. J. Moloney
Cllr. D. Nolan
Cllr. L. Purtill
Cllr. A. Thornton**

In attendance/i láthair

Mr. O. Ring	Delegated Executive for the MD of Listowel
Mr. G O'Brien	Meetings Administrator
Ms. A McAllen	Head of Finance
Ms. K Moriarty	SEO Finance
Mr. J McCarthy	AO Finance
Mr. D. O'Brien	AO
Ms. M. Galvin	CO Corporate Affairs

The meeting commenced at 1.30pm

14.10.06.01 Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Listowel for 2015.

Mr. O. Ring, Delegated Executive for the MD of Listowel read the following report into the record of the meeting:

1. Background

Section 102 (4A)(a) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014) provides that the Chief Executive shall consult the Municipal District Members for each Municipal District in the local authority's functional area in the preparation of a draft local authority budget and, for that purpose, a draft budgetary plan for the municipal district shall be prepared under the direction of the Chief Executive and submitted for consideration by the Members of each Municipal District. The purpose of a draft budgetary plan is to provide each Municipal District with an opportunity to allocate its portion of the General Municipal Allocation according to its own priorities.

The Draft Budgetary Plan sets out how any General Municipal District Allocation (GMA) allocated to the Municipal District will be spent. The definition of the GMA is provided for in the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 and is the name given to the discretionary funding which is made available to municipal district members for allocation in the draft budgetary plan. The amount an authority can provide by way of a GMA is dependent on the total level of income available to it and the non-discretionary costs that must be met as a first call on that income, including at municipal district level. The Chief Executive must consider the resource needs of the local authority in determining the overall level of the GMA. The GMA is also considered in context of the Budget Strategy discussion with the CPG and other Budget Strategy decisions. The estimate of the non-discretionary costs of the authority must also be taken into account.

Consideration on the main, strategic non-discretionary expenditure of the Council will form part of the Statutory Budget Meeting to take place in November.

Guidance issued from DOECLG provides that the total amount of GMA provided must be allocated by the Chief Executive to each municipal district in a manner that is fair and equitable. The Chief Executive must consider the resource needs; where appropriate, the population; and should make an allocation that is transparent, just, not arbitrary, and provides a minimum level of discretionary allocation to all districts.

2. Guiding Principles – General Municipal District Allocation

Following consideration of the Budget Strategy and arising from the decision of Council in relation to Local Property Tax for 2015, the request by Members to set aside €600,000 as part of the Municipal District Fund for the purposes of Recreational/Amenity/Community Supports has been incorporated as part of the General Municipal Allocation as set out below.

The total allocation for the General Municipal Allocation for 2015 is €1.7 mn across the 4 Municipal Districts in the County. This is a very significant allocation based on our overall Budget and the level of discretionary expenditure available to the Council.

The total amount of GMA provided is allocated on the basis of maintaining the existing levels of specific financial supports in the Town Councils 2014 Budgets and KCC supports and taking into consideration the varying population levels/areas of the Municipal Districts and also factoring in an adjustment in relation to the regional towns in the District Areas.

It must be noted that there are no additional resources available to the Council for the General Municipal Allocation and accordingly the allocation is made from our existing Budgets.

The following guiding principles have been applied in determining the level of General Municipal Allocation:

- County Councillors Roads Allocations are now re-defined as Councillor Specific Municipal District Operations Fund as part of the Municipal District Allocation. In this regard, Councillors allocations have been held at €29,000 per Council Member, thereby reflecting an increase on 2014 budget provision by €174,000 to allow for increased number of Councillors. This will be a Discretionary Fund for allocation by Members in a flexible manner according to their own priorities across all areas of work operations within the Municipal District.
- In addition, a total Municipal District Amenity/Recreation/Community Support Fund of €750,000 will be made available from the Council's Budget across the 4 Municipal District Areas. This Fund is provided having regard to Council Budget Strategy considerations for 2015 and arising from the decision and specific Councillors request in relation to the maintenance of LPT.
- It is intended that Schemes will be developed and put in place in conjunction with the relevant Strategic Policy Committee, which will provide guidance on the allocation of funding in both these areas and will provide meaningful discretion to the Municipal Districts in its allocation. Guidelines will be developed as part of the Schemes for funding allocations and to ensure proper Governance arrangements and to meet audit requirements.
- The total amount of GMA provided is allocated across the 4 Municipal Districts on the basis of maintaining the existing levels of specific financial supports in the Town Councils 2014 Budgets and KCC supports. For instance, within the Municipal District of Listowel, specific commitments to Listowel Writers Week and contributions for Event Lighting and contribution to the Local Marketing Group are proposed to be maintained for 2015 and to be considered by M.D. Members as part of this Municipal District Amenity/Recreation/Community Support Fund.
- It is intended to guarantee the maintenance of service delivery standards throughout the municipal areas and maintain the level of funding and

supports as provided in Budget 2014 for the Town Councils and Kerry County Council.

- It is proposed that at the December 2014/January 2015 Meetings of the Municipal Districts, and following adoption of the Council Budget for 2015, the specific and existing commitments in relation to the Municipal Districts will be considered by the Members. It is expected that prior to these meetings that the SPC will have agreed a Municipal District Amenity/Recreation/Community Support Grant Scheme for the allocation of funding.

It is vital, however, that overall income levels to the county ensure that these guiding principles are successful, as the General Municipal District Allocation is defined as discretionary expenditure within the Budget.

3. General Municipal Allocation – Listowel Municipal District

The General Municipal Allocation for Listowel Municipal District for 2015 is as follows :

Total General Municipal Allocation for Listowel Municipal District for 2015, this is composed of :	€321,000
Councillor Specific Municipal District Operations Fund	€203,000
Municipal District Discretionary Amenity/Recreation/Community Support Fund	€118,000

4. Conclusion

This Draft Budgetary Plan sets out the General Municipal Allocation for 2015 and the principles governing its proposed application. This Plan must be considered by Members at a Meeting of the Municipal District Members, and in accordance with Regulations, this Meeting must conclude no later than 21 days prior to the local authority budget meeting. There is no provision for the adjournment of this meeting. Following consideration of the Draft Budgetary Plan the Municipal District Members shall by resolution adopt the Draft Budgetary Plan, with or without amendment. The making of amendments is a reserved function.

The Chief Executive shall take account of any budgetary plan adopted by the Municipal District Members in preparing the Draft Local Authority Budget for 2015. If the members of any Municipal District do not adopt a draft budgetary plan, the Chief Executive may take account of the draft budgetary plan as presented to members of that Municipal District, without amendment.

Following adoption of the Council Budget for 2015, a Schedule of Proposed Works of Maintenance and Repair to be carried out during the financial year in each Municipal District is prepared as soon as possible under the direction of the Chief Executive, having regard to available resources. The draft budgetary plans of the Municipal Districts do not include the main strategic non-discretionary expenditure of the Local Authority, the spending of which will be prioritised by the Members as part of the development of a schedule of municipal district works after the budget has been adopted. The Schedule of Municipal District Works shall be considered by the Municipal District Members concerned and be adopted by resolution, with or without amendment by it. In making an amendment the Municipal District Members shall have due regard to the Council budget adopted.

I recommend adoption of the General Municipal Allocation for Listowel Municipal District for 2015 of €321,000. This fund represents a meaningful discretionary fund for allocation by Members in accordance with the priorities of the District and provides maximum flexibility to meet the operation and community/recreation/amenity/tourism needs of the area for the coming year.

Ms. A. McAllen, Head of Finance addressed the Members. She stated that the Chief Executive took into account a number of factors when deciding on the General Municipal District Allocation (GMA) for each Municipal Area. The allocation was provided in a fair and equitable manner. €1.7m discretionary funding available to the Municipal Districts is a significant allocation. If the Local Property Tax had decreased, the discretionary spend would not be there.

The Members were circulated a list outlining the Budget provisions made by Listowel Town Council and Kerry County Council Listowel Electoral Area for 2014. It outlined the financial commitment given to particular groups in the area. It was felt these were pertinent to the Municipal Area. It will be a matter for the organisations themselves to make a submission for allocation from this fund.

Ms. McAllen referred to the Councillor Specific Municipal District Operations Fund and the Municipal District Discretionary Amenity/Recreation/Community Support Fund. A new scheme is to be developed by the relevant SPC with an objective of ensuring accountability that the funding will be spent appropriately. This will come before the Plenary Council for adoption.

Ms. McAllen referred to the Council's legal obligation in relation to payment of capital grants, e.g. the pool in Ballybunion. If the facility does not continue as a pool, Kerry County Council have an obligation to repay the capital grant for some time.

Cllr. D. Nolan stated that there were a lot of towns and villages in the Listowel area that had similar groups. No provision had been made for these locations. Will Councillors be allowed to inspect all applications that come in requesting funding. Cllr. Nolan also referred to the Councillor Specific

Municipal District Operations Fund. She stated it was different to the previous Councillors' Allocations that were available through the Roads & Transportation Department. Will Councillors now be allowed to fund additional works that are now under the Operations remit which is now much broader than existed under Roads & Transportation.

Cllr. J. Moloney welcomed the Draft Budgetary Plan. He asked that if the Local Property Tax had decreased, would the fund of €1.7m exist. He asked where the fees from parking charges go now. Are they retained centrally or are they allocated specifically to the Listowel Municipal Area?

Cllr. J. Brassil said that of the €118,000 allocated to Listowel Municipal District, €51,000 has already been accounted for. If every group reapplied for funding that would only leave €67,000. In relation to setting up a scheme through the SPC to apply for this funding, he agreed with Cllr. Nolan that he wished to be part of the decision-making process. He had hoped that Listowel Municipal District would have received more funding.

Cllr. Brassil stated that during the year there will be budget targets for parking, rates for vacant properties etc. There was a need to work out some method of making income from it. If so, can we get a commitment that income will come back proportionately to the Municipal Districts. The extra funding would go to further enhance the €118,000.

In relation to Ballybunion Health & Leisure Centre, Cllr. Brassil asked that a breakdown would be available on similar expenses incurred by the other 3 Municipal Districts.

Cllr. Brassil stated that he was not sure if the €600,000 was to be divided equally between the Municipal Districts. He thought that the expectation was there that this would occur. How were the specific figures for each Municipal District reached at?

Cllr. L. Purtill asked if the Municipal District Discretionary Amenity / Recreation / Community Support Fund could be used for playgrounds.

Cllr. A. Thornton asked for clarification regarding what areas are they allowed to allocate funding towards as a result of the new discretionary amenity fund.

Cllr. M. Kennelly welcomed the Discretionary Fund. When divided equally between the 4 Municipal Districts, it resulted in a loss of €32,000 for Listowel. He referred to the County Councillor Allocation and asked if it was more flexible now.

Cllr. R. Beasley stated that as Chair for the Arts & Culture SPC, he would like to see more funding being spent on playgrounds. A lot of villages in North Kerry were without playgrounds. He also referred to the Tidy Towns Committees. A lot of villages are now on board with the competition. This is important to tourism. We will need to support these groups in whatever way

we can. Cllr. Beasley asked that the subvention received by Tralee and Killarney Leisure Centres be made known to them.

Cllr. A. Thornton asked if contribution to the Arts would remain with Kerry County Council. Is what was previously Listowel Town Council expenditure now with the Council?

Ms. A. McAllen stated that arts type contributions were dealt with through the Arts Office in Kerry County Council.

Mr. D. O'Brien stated there was no direct contribution from the Council. Groups would have written to Listowel Town Council previously which we may have funded. No specific funding was available at start of the year.

Ms. A. McAllen responded to the queries raised.

Members will have an input into the adoption of the proposed scheme. In relation to the allocation of the €600,000, Ms. McAllen stated that no commitment was given to divide this equally between the Municipal Districts.

Ms. McAllen referred to the €29,000 available to each Councillor under the Councillor Specific Municipal District Operations Fund. The fund of €203,000 is calculated at €29,000 per member ($€29,000 \times 7 = €203,000$). It had to be borne in mind that this is an actual increase in the allocations as we now have 6 additional Councillors in Kerry County Council and the allocation to each individual remains the same as it did in previous year's Budgets. If the Local Property Tax had decreased, the discretionary spend would not be there. The Chief Executive decided that a sum of €1.7m would be spent at the discretion of the members.

In relation to the division of the contribution to each Municipal District, Ms. McAllen stated that every effort was made to be as fair as possible, while honouring the principles of the General Municipal District Allocation. There are two large areas with large towns. The starting point was an adjustment to reflect the area / population / number of regional towns.

The rates applicable for vacant properties needs to be decided at the Statutory Budget Meeting.

In relation to parking, an income €115,000 was received for Listowel with €47,000 in expenses leaving a net income of €67,000. All income is now required to fund expenditure at plenary level.

In relation to the roads allocation, this is another scheme that is to come back to Councillors. Ms McAllen was cognisant of the town aspect, i.e. town parks, footpaths etc. The Councillors' Allocation now has a much wider remit but not as wide as Operations as a whole. The scheme will initially be prepared by the relevant SPC for Council approval.

Cllr. M. Kennelly asked what was happening in relation to unoccupied premises.

Ms. McAllen said a decision would be taken at the Statutory Budget. We need to be mindful of any decision made in relation to this. It is a very difficult income stream to collect. This must be done in a careful and planned way. An economic impact statement is to be undertaken for each Municipal Area.

In relation to car parking charges, any additional income raised by the Municipal District after expenditure can be ringfenced for the area. There is provision in the legislation for this.

Cllr. R. Beasley enquired about the subvention given to Tralee and Killarney Municipal Districts.

Ms. McAllen replied that no subvention was given to Tralee Sports & Leisure Centre. Tralee Town Council previously gave a contribution and this is forming part of the decision for Tralee Municipal District.

Cllr. J. Brassil referred to beach cleaning. North Kerry has a lot of beaches. This requires a lot of expenditure. Clean-ups after festivals must also be factored in.

Ms. A. McAllen stated that this is a new process for the Council. After adoption of the Budget in November a schedule of Municipal District works for each Municipal District will have to be agreed. This will take account of housing maintenance, street and beach cleaning. Each Municipal District will determine how the funding is to be spent.

Cllr. J. Moloney **PROPOSED** that we the members of the Municipal District of Listowel resolve to adopt the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Listowel for 2015 as presented.

Cllr. J. Brassil **SECONDED** the proposal.

A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

For: Cllrs. R. Beasley, J. Brassil, M. Kennelly, J. Moloney, D. Nolan, L. Purtill, A. Thornton (7)

Against: (0)

Mr. G O'Brien declared the proposal to be carried.

The meeting concluded at 3.00pm.

Gerard O'Brien

Gerard O'Brien
Meetings Administrator

Cllr. M. Kennelly
Cathaoirleach of Listowel
Municipal District