

Minutes of Budget Meeting of Leitrim County Council held in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon, Monday, 27th November, 2017.

Members Present Councillor Barry, Brendan
Councillor Bohan, Mary
Councillor Dolan, Frank
Councillor Fallon, Pádraig
Councillor Ellis, Caillán
Councillor Guckian, Des
Councillor Guckian, Sinead
Councillor Gurn, Felim
Councillor Logan, Seadhna
Councillor Mulvey, Caroline
Councillor McCartin, John
Councillor McDermott, Sean
Councillor McGowan, Sean
Councillor O'Rourke, Paddy
Councillor Stenson, Enda
Councillor Warnock, Justin

And Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire, Cathaoirleach presiding

Apologies: Councillor Gerry Dolan

Officials Present: Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive
Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Culture and Emergency Services
Mr. Shane Tiernan, A/Director of Services, Economic Development, Planning, Environment and Transportation
Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance
Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner
Mr. Shay O'Connor, Senior Engineer, Infrastructure
Mr. Billy Lowe, Senior Engineer, Water
Mr. Joe Lowe, Head of Local Enterprise Office
Ms. Una Wynne, Financial Management Accountant
Mr. Terry McGovern, A/Senior Executive Officer
Ms. Sinead Flynn, Meetings Administrator
Ms. Carmel Doherty, Staff Officer
Ms. Carmel Coll, Staff Officer
Ms. Ann Moran, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Shelia Guckian, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Kathleen McGovern Ellis, Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Anna Moran, Clerical Officer
Ms. Anita Flynn, Clerical Officer

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27/11/2017 **Votes of Sympathy**

The Members extended a vote of sympathy to the following:

- The Moffat family, Lurgan, Drumboylan, Carrick-on-Shannon, Roscommon on the death of Mr. Patrick Moffat.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire invited the Chief Executive to give an overview of the Draft Budget for 2018 as presented to the Members.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive referred to the Draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December, 2018 and to his report dated 17th November, 2017 as circulated to each Member. A copy of the Budget document as circulated to the Members appears as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

Mr. Gilhooly advised that the Draft Budget has been prepared to maximise the best use of resources for the year ahead and in accordance with the key principles of continuing to promote the economic development of the county, to improve and protect the living environment and to maximise organisational capacity within the resources available. He outlined that the Draft Budget for 2018 provides for revenue expenditure of €34,999,065 including the Local Property Tax allocation of €8,956,315.

Mr. Gilhooly outlined that the three Municipal Districts adopted the General Municipal Allocations (GMA) for inclusion in the 2018 Draft Budget and that the GMA Allocation has been taken into account within the relevant service divisions. He advised that it is anticipated that details of the 2018 Roads Budget will also be notified to the Local Authority in February, 2018 and will be subject to further discussion with the Members.

Mr. Gilhooly acknowledged the ongoing support of the business community and their important contribution towards the funding of essential services throughout the county. He stated that there has been no increase in the Annual Rate on Valuation since 2008 and he outlined that this will be the 10th consecutive year in which no increase in the annual rate of valuation will be applied.

Mr. Gilhooly advised that in order to ensure that a balanced budget is presented to the Members and to maintain the financial stability of Council finances, the Council will continue to adopt prudent financial management to ensure the best use of the available financial resources. He outlined a number of existing and positive actions that have been provided for in Budget 2018 which includes the following:

- The continued promotion and development of the county.
- Ongoing development of the Blueway in partnership with Waterways Ireland.
- Enhancement of amenities at Glencar Waterfall.
- An increase in funding for local roads to bring the full allocation to €600,000.
- The development of a new Destination Centre at Knock Airport that will provide a platform to promote the counties including Leitrim that have an equity stake in the Airport.
- The development of a new Arts Strategy to encompass a Culture and Creativity Strategy.
- 2018- Clar – Town and Village Enhancement – REDZ.
- To develop a Local Area Plan for Carrick on Shannon.
- The appointment of a Heritage Officer and the development of a Heritage Plan for 2018.
- The Leitrim Diaspora Strategy will be developed in 2018.
- There will be a continued focus on broadband improvement throughout the county.
- Financial support has been provided for the Connaught Fleadh which will be hosted in Ballinamore in 2018.

Mr. Gilhooly then invited Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance to introduce Budget 2018.

Mr. Dwyer gave a detailed overview of the budgetary process and the structure of the Budget document. A copy of the presentation as delivered, and as circulated to the Members, appears as **Appendix 2** to the Minutes of this Meeting in the Minute Book.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire thanked Mr. Dwyer for his presentation and invited any questions from the Members and the following items were raised:

- Councillor John McCartin thanked Mr. Dwyer for his presentation and requested that a copy of the presentation be circulated to all Members. Mr Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance agreed to this request.
- Councillor Mary Bohan referred to the decision of the Members at the September, 2017 Council meeting not to vary the Local Property Tax for 2018. She outlined that the variation, if approved, would potentially only generate an additional income of €33,000 for the Council. Councillor Bohan proposed that the Council should seek this funding from Central Government rather than home-owners paying an increased Local Property Tax.
- Councillor Enda Stenson supported Councillor Mary Bohan's comments.
- Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire expressed concern for local business owners that are unable to compete with large businesses that have a large online presence. She stated that many consumers are now shopping on line and that online businesses do not have to pay commercial rates and finance other costs associated with running a business that is open to the public.
- Councillor Enda Stenson stated that online trading is also a threat to the local food sector in Leitrim.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian stated that the business community should see online trading as an opportunity rather than a threat as online sales facility can greatly enhance a business and assist in increasing sales and revenue for a business.
- Councillor Justin Warnock queried if the Council receive any direct income from tourists that travel to Leitrim for boating holidays.
- Councillor John McCartin expressed his concern in relation to Councillor Warnock's comments with regard to imposing levies on the boating industry in the county. He stated that the county is very reliant on tourism and that the sector is an important economic driver for the local economy.
- Councillor Felim Gurn queried if there is funding available to recruit additional staff.
- Councillor Brendan Barry queried if the Council will be in a position to create any permanent roles.
- Councillor Sean McDermott welcomed the contents of the presentation. He particularly welcomed projects planned for North Leitrim.
- Councillor Sean McGowan also expressed his concern in relation to the staffing levels within the Local Authority.

- Councillor Justin Warnock requested clarification on the replacement of a staff resource with responsibility for sourcing EU funding for projects.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly acknowledged the concern of the Members in relation to the staffing issue. He advised that the Council must continue to operate within very restrictive budgetary constraints and that in this regard the Council cannot recruit additional staff at this time. Mr. Gilhooly referred to the very significant economic benefit generated by the boating industry in the county notwithstanding that there is no direct financial income arising to the Local Authority from the sector. He advised that currently three projects in the county have been identified for an EU funding source.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance in response to Councillor Mary Bohan's comments stated that if the Local Property Tax had been varied over by 1% over the last number of years that it would have a cumulative effect to generate an additional €100,000 per annum for the Local Authority.

This overview of the Budget was noted by the Members and it was agreed that Mr. Dwyer would proceed to give an overview of each individual Division and that questions arising would then be addressed after each Division.

Division A - Housing and Building

Mr. Vincent Dwyer gave an overview of the provisions in Division A – Housing & Building and he invited any questions from the Members. The following items were raised:

- Councillor Enda Stenson requested details in relation to the eligibility criteria for a Local Authority Loan. He also requested details of the current interest rate and the confirmation that finances are available to process loan requests.
- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke noted that the return of vacant Local Authority dwellings to productive use in the shortest possible time-frame has a positive impact as the unit becomes available to meet the housing need of a household on the Housing Waiting List and a new tenancy also generates additional rental revenue income for the Council.
- Councillor Des Guckian sought clarification on the numbers approved for Social Housing Support on the Housing Waiting List and the number of dwellings allocated per annum.
- Councillor Justin Warnock complimented the Council on housing repairs carried out in the Manorhamilton Municipal District. He also queried if Contractors are employed to attend to housing maintenance requests in each Municipal District.
- Councillor Frank Dolan queried the position on the Housing Grant Allocation for 2017.
- Councillor Sean McGowan requested an update on the level of activity under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). He queried if the scheme is seen as a replacement for standard Local Authority accommodation.
- Councillor Brendan Barry queried if the Council has received many applications for the Repair and Leasing Scheme.
- Councillor Mary Bohan acknowledged that there is a shortage of family type dwellings Local Authority dwellings in Drumkeerin.
- Councillor Sean McDermott queried if there is a demand for 4 bedroom dwellings for households on the Housing Waiting List.

- Councillor Des Guckian requested clarification on the figure relating to the administration of Homeless Services as outlined in the Budget given that there are no reported cases of homelessness in Leitrim.

In response to the queries raised Ms. Mary Quinn, Director of Services, Housing and Community, Corporate Services, Culture and Emergency Services responded as follows:

- The net housing need as identified on in the most recent Statutory Assessment of Housing Need was 367 households.
- The number of new tenancies created in Local Authority accommodation in Leitrim is approximately 55-60 per annum. The refusal rate on offers of social housing support based on allocations issued in 2017 is 38%.
- A panel of Contractors is in place to attend to housing maintenance requests in each Municipal District.
- The 2017 Housing Grant Allocation has been expended in full, however, the scheme remains open to processing applications and additional funding will be available in 2018 to fund the scheme.
- HAP Scheme – a total of 80 households are signed up to HAP payments. The scheme is a form of social housing support and replaces rent supplement which was administered by the Department of Social Protection.
- The uptake on the Repair Leasing Scheme in Leitrim has been poor. The scheme is currently being reviewed by the Department of Housing, Planning, and Community & Local Government.
- The administration of the Homeless Service expenditure relates to staffing costs and costs associated with services provided i.e. overnight emergency accommodation and the payment of rent deposits.
- There is limited demand for 4 bedroom houses from households on the Housing Waiting List.
- Mr. Dwyer clarified that housing loan applications are initially assessed by the Local Authority and a final decision on eligibility is made by the Housing Finance Agency. He outlined that the current interest rate is 2.3%.

Division B - Road Transport & Safety

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division B – Road Transport and Safety. He outlined that the final budget in relation to Roads will not be known until the allocations are made in early 2018. He invited any questions from the Members and the following items were raised:

- Councillor Caillian Ellis raised concerns in relation to flooding that had occurred on roads last week due to the heavy rain fall. He expressed his concern that water tables are not been cleaned which results in water pooling on the road surface which then results in the surface of roads deteriorating.

- Councillor Frank Dolan welcomed the re-opening of the Local Improvement Scheme and the allocation of €238,000.
- Councillor Brendan Barry proposed that a number of outdoor staff employed on temporary contracts be employed on a permanent basis.
- Councillor Ellis supported Councillor Barry's proposal.
- Councillor Enda Stenson acknowledged that a JCB was working in his area last week cleaning water tables.
- Councillor Sean McDermott proposed that traffic islands and hard shoulders should be part of National Primary Road Projects.
- Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed funding from Minister Michael Ring with regard to Local Improvement Schemes but expressed her disappointment that this funding is coming from the Rural Development budget. Councillor Bohan stated that this funding should be used exclusively to fund rural initiatives and projects. She also queried if the Local Improvement Scheme is open to accepting new applications and she proposed that a special allocation should be sought to progress the backlog of two hundred LIS applications that are currently on the list.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian noted that TII reduction of 30% on National Roads Maintenance and she proposed that a letter issue to the Minister expressing disappointment with a 30% decrease.
- Councillor Sean McGowan and Councillor Mary Bohan supported this proposal.
- Councillor Sean McDermott queried if there is a panel in place to fill current retirements for Outdoor Staff.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian raised the issue of public lighting at the Jamestown and Drumsna Junction.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive advised that the position in relation to staffing will be reviewed when details of the Roads Allocation are available. He also advised that it is hoped that the TII do not implement a 30% reduction to the Roads Budget similar to the 30% reduction in the National Roads Maintenance Budget.

Mr. Shay O'Connor, Senior Executive Engineer responded as follows:-

- Once the LIS Schemes are completed that staff will then be tasked with completing essential maintenance work.
- The Local Authority must comply with the directives issued by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in relation to the provision of hard shoulders on roads.
- No decision on staffing levels can be considered until such time as the Roads Allocation for 2018 is available.
- Work is currently in progress on surveying the National Primary route and this has not been impacted upon by the 30% reduction on National Roads Maintenance.

- Public lighting at Jamestown and Drumsna Junction does not warrant public lighting as per Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).
- A panel for Outdoor Workers is in place.
- When the Local Improvement Scheme is reopened to accepting new applications a public advertisement will issue to inform the public that the scheme is open to accepting new applications.

Division C - Water Services

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division C – Water Services and he invited any questions from the Members. The following items were raised:

- Councillor Mary Bohan queried how many private Group Water are in receipt of a subvention from Leitrim County Council.
- Councillor Enda Stenson requested clarification on water charges relating to agricultural use.
- Councillor Sean McGowan queried the position in relation to Group Sewerage Schemes.
- Councillor Brendan Barry noted an increase in the water budget for staff fixing leaks.
- Councillor Justin Warnock requested an update on the Edenville Group Water Scheme.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance responded as follows:-

- The Local Authority have a meeting with Irish Water next week and additional information/clarification will be available then.
- Farming activity is considered as a non domestic activity and is a cost to be borne by the sector. The responsibility for the collection of non-domestic water charges is administered by Irish Water.
- There are a total of 12-14 applications for Group Sewerage Schemes, two have been approved and the remainder are on the Waiting List.

Mr. Billy Lowe, Senior Executive Engineer responded as follows:-

- A total of 70 to 80 private Group water schemes receive subsidies/grants.
- Edenville Group Water Scheme remains on the list but there is no allocation of funding available for the Scheme.

Councillor Mary Bohan commended the staff of Leitrim County Council and all the voluntary people involved in the Group Water Schemes.

Division D - Development Management

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division D – Development Management and he invited any questions from the Members. The following items were raised:

- Councillor Mary Bohan welcomed the appointment of a Heritage Officer. She queried as to when the recruitment process will be progressed to have a resource assigned to the role.
- Councillor Felim Gurn proposed that a full time resource be appointed to promote the tourist potential of North Leitrim. He welcomed that the Leitrim Tourism Office had attended the National Ploughing Championship to promote Leitrim as a tourist location. Councillor Gurn proposed that a town twinning initiative should be considered for Carrick-on-Shannon, Ballinamore and Manorhamilton with towns in France. He also proposed that Leitrim County Council should examine additional initiatives e.g. additional signage at Knock Airport to promote Leitrim as a tourist destination and called for continued investment in Slow Tourism Initiatives.
- Councillor Sean McGowan welcomed the appointment of a full time Heritage Officer and also supported the call for town-twinning.
- Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire paid tribute to Drumshanbo who had a successful town twinning event in the summer.
- Councillor Des Guckian paid tribute to the work carried out by the part-time Heritage Officer.
- Councillor Justin Warnock proposed that North Leitrim should be promoted as a viable National Park to encompass all of North Leitrim.

Councillor Mary Bohan disagreed with Councillor Warnock and stated that in order to create and sustain vibrant rural communities in North Leitrim that people are needed to maintain the areas. She stated that the creation of a National Park would have a detrimental effect on the future of North Leitrim.

Councillor Justin Warnock argued that there is merit in his proposal and that the project should be considered having regard to the success of similar projects in North Yorkshire and Snowdonia. Councillor Warnock also called for additional opening times for the Sean MacDiarmada Homestead in Kiltyclogher to facilitate tourists visiting the site.

- Councillor Sean McDermott also called for the resourcing of the Sean MacDiarmada Cottage to ensure that it is open to the public for the entire summer season .He also queried if monies for the Sean MacDiarmada Summer School are ring fenced. Councillor McDermott also sought clarification on the ICBAN contribution.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian noted an increase of €30,000 in forward planning and sought clarification as to the rationale for the increased allocation.
- Councillor Enda Stenson queried if there are two Tourism Bodies in County Leitrim for the promotion of the tourist offering of the county and he queried if any additional promotion of the Lough Rinn Rowing Facility is planned for 2018. Councillor Stenson also queried if an update from Minister Damian English in relation to the Zero Discharge Scheme was available.

- Councillor Sinead Guckian sought clarification under the following services - Community and Enterprise Function and Economic Development and Promotion.

Mr. Bernard Greene, Senior Planner gave an update on the Built Heritage Grant Scheme.

- Councillor Des Guckian stated that there is an enormous burden on local community groups to avail of these grants. He also stated that the value of the grants is relatively small in value.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive responded as follows:-

- Staff from the Leitrim Tourism Office have been integrated into Leitrim County Council. The Council has invested significant financial resources into Tourism in the county over the last number of years and resources will be focused at the further development and promotion of the following tourism initiatives: Lough Rynn Rowing, Clancy's Castle Manorhamilton, the new Lakeland initiative and the Slow Adventure projects with Scottish partners
- Provision has been made for the Sean MacDiarmada Summer School in 2018. The responsibility for the opening of the Sean MacDiarmada Homestead rests with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and the Council will liaise with the OPW in this regard.
- The ICBAN Contribution is maintained at the same level as 2017 and there is an increase amount of funding sought from the Western Regional Assembly.
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- The increased funding allocated to forward planning is as a result of the costs that will be involved in the preparation of statutory planning policy matters.
- A sum of €10,000 is being made available for tourism printing materials.
- The Council will review the existing town twinning arrangements in the county.
- The costs associated with the Community & Enterprise Function are associated with the LCDC.

Division E - Environmental Services

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division E – Environmental Services and he invited any questions from the Members. The following items were raised:

- Councillor Sean McGowan sought clarification on the landfill aftercare costs and on environmental initiatives planned for 2018. He called on the Council be proactive in addressing the issue of illegal dumping in the county. Councillor McGowan suggested that the Council should increase their usage of CCTV cameras to act as a deterrent to people disposing of household waste in an illegal manner.
- Councillor John McCartin concurred with Councillor McGowan's comments.
- Councillor Mary Bohan sought clarification in relation to plans to recruit an additional Community Warden to assist with environmental enforcement.

- Councillor Justin Warnock raised an issue in relation to the illegal dumping of mattresses. He stated that the cost of disposing of mattresses at the Civic Amenity Centres as increase and that this may have had a negative impact and lead to an increased level of illegal dumping of mattresses.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer advised that the Council had borrowings to finance the cost of both landfill sites and that the loan expires in 2025. He also advised that annual servicing and monitoring of the landfill sites is completed in accordance with the EPA licence.

- Councillor Justin Warnock stated that there is 30% afforestation around Lough Melvin and this is having a detrimental effect on fish stocks etc.
- Councillor Des Guckian sought a breakdown on Landfill Aftercare Costs.
- Councillor Enda Stenson acknowledged the work carried out on the footpaths in Kiltoghert Graveyard. He proposed that the footpath in the new Mohill graveyard be examined as the surface is very slippery and dangerous.
- Councillor Justin Warnock sought clarification on litter picking in North Leitrim.
- Councillor Caroline Mulvey proposed that a separate budget/fund for Climate Change be allocated as a considerable amount of funding will be required in the future to fund climate change initiatives.

Mr. Gilhooly responded as follows:-

- CCTV monitoring is operational at a number of Bottle Banks in the county and other litter black spots. Voice activate commenced at the Bottle Banks last week.
- The WERLA Office is involved in ongoing anti-dumping campaigns and other environmental enforcement initiative on an inter-agency basis.
- Lough Melvin is a priority and all issues affecting the water will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Kiltoghert Burial Ground was a specific Community led project and there is still funding available in this scheme if any group wishes to apply for funding. The issue of the condition of the footpath at the new Cemetery in Mohill will be raised at the next Municipal District Meeting.
- Supports will be provided for litter picking initiatives to Community Groups.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, outlined that no provision is provided in the 2018 Budget for Climate Change Initiatives, however, he agreed that provision will need to be made in the future for the costs associated with climate change.

- Councillor Pdraig Fallon sought an update on Water Quality Management and what influence this will have on the farming sector.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive advised that national inspections have taken place on septic tanks, implementation of river basin management plans and that further technical roles are to be created in this area. He advised that there is a work programme in place with the EPA and Teagasc and farm surveys are being carried out nationally to improve and support farmers.

Division F - Recreation & Amenity

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division F – Recreation & Amenity and he invited any questions from the Members. The following items were raised:

- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke requested clarification in relation to the reduced level of funding available to the Library Service in 2018.
- Councillor Justin Warnock queried the level of funding allocated to the Library Service in 2018. He stated that he considered that the costs were excessive and he queried if a level of the funding could be diverted to fund other services.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer responded to Councillor O'Rourke and outlined that the reduction in the Library funding for 2018 will have no direct impact on core Library services.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly stated that there has been significant investment in the Library Service in Leitrim over many years and that the county is renowned for having an excellent Library Service. He outlined that the Library Service has an increased use of its services becoming a hub to and providing access to broadband services for the public. Mr. Gilhooly confirmed that there are no proposals to cut the Library Services and he advised that the Council are currently awaiting approval for approval to fill the Executive Librarian post.

- Councillor Seadhna Logan said that the Library Service is under-resourced and any cut to the service would be detrimental and would not be supported by the Elected Members.
- Councillor Des Guckian and Councillor Mary Bohan concurred with Councillor Logan's comments.
- Councillor Mary Bohan outlined that the Rowantree Centre in Drumkeerin are establishing a Library in the town. She requested that the Library Service support them by donating books to the centre. Councillor Sinead Guckian supported this proposal.
- Councillor Felim Gurn suggested that Branch Libraries in the local towns be linked to the Genealogy Centre in Ballinamore Library for people who want to trace their ancestors.
- Councillor Sinead Guckian suggested that the Arts Programme should be listed under Economic Development rather than the Recreation and Amenity Programme Group.

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance acknowledged the merit of Councillor Sinead Guckian's comments and advised that the Budget layout as presented is as per the Department's Budget template.

Division G - Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare and he invited any questions from the Members. The following items were raised:

- Councillor Sean McGowan an allocation of €20,000 is not sufficient given the level of drainage works required in the county. He queried if any further update has been received from Minister Kevin 'Boxer' Moran in relation to a proposed new Land Drainage Scheme which the Minister had referred to during his visit to Leitrim.
- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke and Councillor Sean McDermott supported Councillor McGowan's comments.

- Councillor Mary Bohan noted that Leitrim County Council received an additional €230,000 in funding for Local Improvement Schemes, however, Donegal County Council received a significantly larger allocation of €2.5 million.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly responded to Councillor Mary Bohan advising that there still is the possibility of getting additional funding for some pilot projects.

- Councillor Paddy O'Rourke proposed that R201 should be considered for funding under the Flood Migration Scheme.
- Councillor Seadhna Logan requested clarification as to why the cost of the Dog Warden Service has almost doubled.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly in response to Councillor Logan's query advised that the Dog Warden Service had been re-tendered in 2017 and that the cost of the service has increased following the tendering process. He advised that the cost is considered to be a very reasonable rate given the service provided in the county.

Councillor John McCartin paid tribute to the excellent work of the Dog Warden Service in County Leitrim.

- Councillor Justin Warnock expressed his concerns in relation to Tyne Lodge which is a historical building along the coast line and that no money has been forthcoming for this.
- Councillor Justin Warnock expressed his disappointment that there was not additional funding provided in the Budget to promote the Agriculture sector in the county.

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly advised that from a tourism perspective there will be initiatives to support Farmers Markets which will benefit the farming/agricultural sector.

Division H - Miscellaneous Services

Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance gave an overview of the provisions in Division H – Miscellaneous Services and he invited any questions from the Members.

This update was noted by the Members and no queries on this item were raised.

17/177

27/11/2017 Adoption of Draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2018

Mr. Joseph Gilhooly, Chief Executive outlined that the Members examined the Budget in detail by Programme Group and that it was now a matter for them to consider the adoption of the Budget as presented.

Councillor John McCartin complimented Mr. Gilhooly, Chief Executive the Mr. Dwyer, Head of Finance and the staff of Leitrim County Council for preparing Budget 2018 having regard to the limited finances available to the Local Authority. He proposed the adoption of the Budget as presented.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke.

Councillor Des Guckian made a counter-proposal not to adopt Budget 2018 as presented to the Members. There was no support for Councillor Des Guckian's counter-proposal.

Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire paid tribute to the staff that prepared the budget and acknowledged the difficult decisions that have to be made because of the limited financial resources available to the local authority. Councillor Finola McGuire also paid tribute to the voluntary work of Community Groups throughout the county.

Proposed by Councillor John McCartin, seconded by Councillor Paddy O'Rourke AND AGREED

"That Leitrim County Council adopts for the financial year ending 31st December 2018, the Budget set out in Tables A - F, and further resolves to determine in accordance with the said Budget the rates set out in Table A to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for 2018 for the purposes set out in those Tables."

17/178

27/11/2017 Determination of Annual Rate on Valuation

Proposed by Councillor Mary Bohan, seconded by Councillor John McCartin AND UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

"That Leitrim County Council hereby determines in accordance with the Budget as proposed and adopted by the Members, the Annual Rate on Valuation to be levied for the several purposes specified in the Budget for the financial year ending 31st December, 2018."

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27/11/2017 Certification

The Cathaoirleach and the Chief Executive then signed the Statutory Certificate to the effect that at the Budget Meeting of Leitrim County Council held this 27th November 2017, the Council by resolution adopted for the financial year ending 31st December 2018, the Budget set out in Tables (A to F) and by resolution determined in accordance with the said budget the Rates set out in Tables (B and C) to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for that year for the purposes set out in those tables.

The Cathaoirleach, Councillor Finola Armstrong-McGuire thanked the Chief Executive Mr. Joseph Gilhooly and Mr. Vincent Dwyer, Head of Finance for the Budget Book as presented. She also thanked the Members for the manner in which the meeting was conducted. Councillor Armstrong-McGuire Cathaoirleach also extended festive greetings to the Members, the staff of Leitrim County Council and the public. She also made an appeal to the public to be mindful of their personal safety by wearing appropriate high visibility clothing if out walking etc over the holiday period.

This concluded the business of the meeting at 3.30 p.m.

SIGNED:

**Councillor Finola Armstrong McGuire
Cathaoirleach**

**Joan Lowe
Meetings Administrator**

DATE: 8th January, 2018