

RECORD/MINUTES OF THE INISHOWEN MUNICIPAL DISTRICT BUDGET 2021 "GOTOMEETING" HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2020 AT 12.30pm

Councillors Present:

Councillors Paul Canning, Nicholas Crossan, Albert Doherty, Terry Crossan, Rena Donaghey, Martin Farren, Martin McDermott, Bernard McGuinness and Jack Murray.

Officials Present:

John McLaughlin, Chief Executive Officer, Richard Gibson, Head of Finance, Aideen Doherty, Area Manager Housing & Corporate, Seamus Hopkins, Area Manager , Roads and Transportation, Leona Finlay, Assistant Planner , Mathew Byrne, Waste Protection Officer, Fiona Doherty, Development Officer, Community and Enterprise Una Cresswell, A/Senior Staff Officer

The Cathaoirleach of Inishowen Municipal District, Cllr. Albert Doherty, welcomed everybody to the Budget 2021 Gotomeeting and handed over to Richard Gibson, Head of Finance to brief the members. It was acknowledged that comprehensive discussions had taken place in the recent Budget Workshop and that many matters were considered and clarified to the members there.

Richard Gibson outlined in a short presentation, the purpose of the meeting to the members which was to consider the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Inishowen for 2021. Accordingly Richard Gibson reiterated to the members the purpose of the meeting and outlined the general Municipal allocation background in summary as follows;

- The Local Government Reform Act 2014 and associated regulations require the allocation of a General Municipal Allocation (GMA) to each Municipal District as part of the annual revenue budget process.
- In respect of 2020, a preliminary allocation of €180,000 was made for the Inishowen Municipal District, with this subsequently being adopted at the 2020 plenary budget in November 2019.
- The rationale behind this approach was that it was not practicable to allocate a global and final figure as part of the General Municipal Allocation, prior to the final and full plenary budget being adopted, at which point in time it could only be known with certainty as to what capacity existed within the Council's resources to allocate such funding.
- Discussions with the Department of Housing Local Government & Heritage have outlined the challenges associated with the timing required under the current regulations with regard to the allocation of the GMA. The Department has acknowledged the challenges associated with this, and is continuing to review the current approach.
- This approach will not be amended in time for the 2021 revenue budget considerations. Any amendments made to the budgetary process will only come into effect for future years' budgets beyond 2021.
- On that basis it is now proposed to allocate an amount equivalent to €20,000 per member, at this juncture, to the General Municipal Allocation. The final and conclusive decision will be made as part of the plenary budget meeting in November

2020, at which point in time the members can conclude and determine the final amount to be made available to the General Municipal Allocations. This could, if the members wished, affirm the allocation proportionate to the number of members in respect of each of the individual Municipal Districts or suggest an alternative allocation methodology.

- The draft budgetary plan sets out how any General Municipal Allocation allocated to the Municipal District will be spent.
- The definition of the GMA is “discretionary funding which is made available to municipal district members for allocation in the draft budgetary plan”.
- The Local Government Reform Act 2014 and associated regulations require the allocation of a General Municipal Allocation to each Municipal District as part of the annual revenue budget process.
- 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 priorities.
- This does not replace 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.
- Regulations require that the draft budgetary plan shall set out the General Municipal Allocation and its proposed application for the forthcoming financial year.
- It is not practicable, in the context of the sequencing of budget processes, to allocate a global and final figure as part of the GMA, prior to the final plenary budget being adopted.
- It is only when the plenary budget is adopted that it can be known for certain what capacity exists within the Council’s resources to allocate such funding.
- For 2020, an allocation equivalent to €20,000 per elected member has been allocated as part of the GMA with its application specified as “Development Management – Strategic Development Fund”
- This is equivalent to the Strategic Development Fund allocation that has been made for the last number of years as part of the statutory plenary budget (Development Fund Initiative – DFI)
- Section 102 (4A) (c) and (d) provide that it is a reserved function of the members of a municipal district to adopt the draft budgetary plan with or without amendment.
- The regulations specifically state that there is no provision for the adjournment of the municipal district budget meeting.

Some discussion took place on the following matters and Richard Gibson answered questions from members and clarified matters:

- Ferries
- Greencastle Harbour
- Members Development Fund monies that have not been drawn down can this be carried forward?
- Public Lighting – Minor Infrastructure Scheme

- Swan Park
- Digital Hubs
- Central Government reimbursement for loss of income from Rates
- Grants and supports for Businesses
- Progression of SI Houses

Richard Gibson advised it was hoped that Budget 2021 is as close as possible to Budget 2020 and that services can be protected as far as possible. He added that there is confidence that the local Authority Sector can carry on. In terms of the capital budget, Richard advised that it hoped that the Council will continue to deliver on projects as far as possible in the current times.

There was a consensus from all the members to agree on the proposal of the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District of Inishowen for 2021.

Recommendation

It was therefore recommended that in line with the requirements of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and associated regulations that the Inishowen Municipal District adopts a provisional general municipal allocation in the amount of €180,000 at this time.

On the proposal of Cllr Rena Donaghey, seconded by Cllr Nicholas Crossan, it was agreed that the Inishowen Municipal District adopts a provisional general municipal allocation in the amount of €180,000.

It was agreed that a quorum of elected members (Cllrs Jack Murray, Albert Doherty, Martin Farren and Martin McDermott)-would meet later in Carndonagh PSC to formally adopt the recommendation.

Certified: _____
Cathaoirleach

Date: _____

Area Manager

Date: _____