

Minutes of Meeting of West Clare Municipal District to consider Draft Budgetary Plan held on the 7th October, 2014 at 4.00 p.m. in Council Chamber, Offices of the Municipal District of West Clare, Town Hall, Kilrush

Cathaoirleach sa Cathair:

Cllr. P.J. Kelly,

I Láthair:

Cllr. C. Curtin, Cllr. R. Nagle, Cllr. B. Slattery, Cllr. I. Lynch, Cllr. M. Hillery, Cllr. B. Chambers, Cllr. G. Keating.

Officials present:

Ms. A. Haugh, Area Co-Ordinator & Director of Service,

Mr. N. Barrett, Head of Finance

Mr. C. Feeney, A/Senior Executive Engineer ,West Clare Municipal District

Ms. C. O' Connor, Management Accountant

Mr. J. Corry, Administrative Officer & Meetings Administrator.

1. Draft Budgetary Plan for 2014

At the outset of the meeting Cllr. Kelly welcomed everyone & he thanked Niall & Caroline for being present. He indicated that the GMA had been made by the Chief Executive based on population. He wondered why consideration hadn't been given to the resource needs of each area. He added that the West Clare MD had 47.4% of the land mass of the county, had 66.66% of the road network, that it contributes over 38% of the counties Rates, it has 31% of the counties houses & 61% of the counties vacant houses. He deduced therefore that the West Clare MD area were paying more than any other MD area towards LPT & NPPR in Clare. On this basis he indicated that he was shocked at the GMA which had been made available to the West Clare MD & the basis used to apportion same i.e. population as opposed to resource needs. N. Barrett indicated that the process encompasses a General Municipal Allocation & a Schedule of Works (considered after the Budget is adopted). He indicated that a major part of the Schedule of Works will be the Roads Programme which will take into account the relevant road lengths & types of roads etc. He added that similarly the Schedule of Works would consider the parks & open spaces, beaches etc. He also pointed out that an amendment to the legislation was put to the Dail by Deputy Cowen in December 2013 on the basis that a Co Council would be required to ensure that income would be redistributed to a municipal district in a fair & equitable manner in reasonable proportion to the income directly generated within that MD & this amendment was lost. He added that it was felt that the allocation of the GMA on the basis of population was felt to be reasonable. He said it would be open to interpretation & comments would be welcome to feed into the Budgetary process. He went on to explain that owing to NPPR receipts received in

2014 (€500k to 30/6 & a further €750k since then) that an allocation of €50k was being made available to each MD area to spend on discretionary roads projects during 2014. He also clarified that the LPT would not revert back to the full amount until 2016 when the Cllrs could make a decision re same again. Cllr. Kelly raised a question re conference allocations for 2014 for the members which would not be spent & he queried as to where these monies would go. N. Barrett indicated that at the end of 2014 same would be considered as part of the AFS & that certain areas may be positive vs budget for the year & other areas may have overspent & that the position would need to be looked at cumulatively to see whether you were in surplus or deficit for the year. Cllr. Kelly queried as to why the members of the MD were not consulted with as part of the process of the GMA. N. Barrett indicated that the members were being briefed now as part of the process & that the CPG would have been consulted with also. Cllr. Kelly indicated that he was very unhappy with the process & he suggested adjourning the meeting to 13th October at 11.30am in Ennis where he wanted the Chief Executive to clarify: Why the GMA was divided between MDs on the basis of population rather than resource needs, why the income generated in an area was not taken into account when considering the GMA & what happened with unspent monies in 2014. This proposal was seconded by Cllr. Curtin. Cllr. Slattery & Cllr Keating suggested that Clare Co Council had foregone €1.5 million in reducing the LPT which could have been used by Clare Co Council to make greater allocations available to each MD. Cllr. Nagle indicated that this was a democratic decision of the Council & he added that the Minister had promised that 80% of the LPT generated in each Local Authority area was to be retained in that area however this transpired not to be the case. He added that greater local democracy as a result of the reform of local government was a fallacy as local members have less power & they can only consider the GMA & either accept or reject it & if they reject it the Chief Executive can take account of the budgetary plan as presented to the members without amendment. N. Barrett indicated that there was no provision in the legislation to adjourn the meeting & he advised that the meeting was being held within the prescribed period & it was necessary for the meeting to be concluded 21 days before the Budget meeting. Cllr. Keating proposed that the members would adjourn the meeting for a short while to allow the members to discuss & reconvene a short time later however he received no seconder for this proposal. The members noted that when considering a Budget that the 28 elected members would consider same & that in that context that they did not want to be isolated.

The meeting then concluded

Signed :

Cllr. P.J. Kelly

Cathaoirleach

Signed :

J. Corry

Meetings Administrator

Dated this the 11th day of November 2014.