

**Minutes Annual Budget Meeting held at 3:00 p.m.
Monday 18 November 2024 in the Council Chamber
Áras Chill Dara, Devoy Park, Naas, Co Kildare**

Members Present: Councillors J. Neville,(Cathaoirleach), V. Behan, A. Breen, A. Breslin, F. Brett, B. Caldwell, S. Doyle, K. Duffy, G. Dunne, T. Durkan, W. Durkan, D. Fitzpatrick, N Heavey, I. Keatley, C. Kelly, M. Leigh, P. McEvoy, S. Moore, B. O’Loughlin, R. Power and D. Trost

Online: Councillors P. Balfe, B. Dooley, A. Farrelly, R. Heather, N. Killeen, P. Melrose, N. Ó Cearúil, P. O’Dwyer, T. O’Dwyer, C. O’Rourke, L. Panaite Fahey, E. Sammon, S. Ní Raghallaigh and B. Wyse

Apologies: Councillors, B. Clear, A. Feeney, T. McDonnell, C. Pender, and P. Ward

Also Present: Ms. S. Kavanagh (Chief Executive), Ms. A Apell, Ms M Higgins, Mr. A. Dunney and Mr. E. Ryan (Directors of Service), Mr. D. Creighton, Ms. C. Barrett, (A/Directors of Service), Ms. E. Hanlon (Head of Finance), Ms C O’Grady (Meetings Administrator), Mr. J. Hannigan (Meetings Secretary), and other officials.

BM 01/1124

The Cathaoirleach welcomed everyone to the Budget 2025 meeting of the Council and confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed on the Council’s YouTube channel. He reminded everyone attending that no recording or photography is allowed online or in the chamber during the meeting.

He reminded members that there is no privilege attaching to anything said at the meeting, either online or in the chamber.

BM02/1124

Declaration of Interests

The Cathaoirleach sought from the members any declarations of conflicts of interest or pecuniary or beneficial interests under Section 177 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended. There were no declarations.

BM03/1124

Consideration of Budget

Ms Kavanagh welcomed everyone and thanked all those who had contributed to bringing the budget to the members. She advised that this was the first budget of the new council and that the members today were being asked to approve an expenditure budget of €260 million and to note a Capital Budget of €808 million. She informed the members that the Budget must balance and that it had been prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended. The Draft Budget was prepared showing the amounts estimated, as necessary, to meet the expenses and provide for the liabilities and requirements of Kildare County Council during the financial year ending 31 December 2025. A copy of the Draft Budget in the prescribed form, together with explanatory and comparative statements of the figures had been circulated to the members. Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, provides that the Budget must be adopted within a period of 14 days from the date of the statutory Budget meeting. Accordingly, the Budget must be adopted no later than 2nd December 2024.

Ms Hanlon informed the members that the process of preparing the Budget involved a number of stages including the consideration by the Corporate Policy Group and the Finance committee of the broad parameters for Budget 2025 at a number of meetings in September and October. It also involved a detailed review of income and expenditure headings by the Management Team.

draft budgetary plans were agreed at the Municipal District meetings in October. The draft budget for 2025, the 3 year capital programme 2025-2027 and the proposed abatement of rates in respect of vacant properties scheme for 2025 were

issued to the members in both hard and soft copy on Nov 5th in accordance with regulation.

She noted that the budget book is set out in the following format

Chief Executives report pages 3 to 11

High level financial charts pages 13-15

Division reports – details of works and services delivered by the sections in 2024 and proposed activities for 2025. Pages 17-109

Key features – synopsis of areas of significant interest and changes in expenditure for 2025 on pages 112-119

The statutory tables in the format prescribed by legislation and regulation pages 121-155

She advised the members they would be asked to:

1. Adopt the budget for 2025 by resolution (with or without amendment)
2. Determine the annual rate on valuation (ARV)(Rate)
3. Approve the proposed Rates Vacancy Scheme for 2025
4. Note the 3 year capital programme 2025-2027.

The total estimated expenditure for 2025 is €260.3m, up from €236.3m in 2024, an increase of €24m.

The total estimated income by division is €163m, an increase of €20m on 2024.

She gave a % breakdown of the expenditure by division

She gave a breakdown of where the income came from explaining that 54% of Kildare's income comes from local sources – that being, local property tax 9%, rates 27% and good and services 18%.

About 46% of income comes from the exchequer. There are substantial increases for 2025 on housing grants, payroll recoupments and roads grants.

She noted that it is not proposed to increase the Rate(ARV) for 2025.

Ms Hanlon then went through Pages 121- 154 of the budget book providing a short summary of each Table

Table A page 121 is an overall summary of the draft budget for 2025 and shows the total estimated expenditure for 2025 to be €260.3m

Total estimated income by division is €163m

Local Property Tax (LPT) of €22.1m is an increase of €694k on 2024.

Estimated income from rates for 2025 is €74.36m.

Table B pages 122-129 are a slightly more detailed breakdown of income and expenditure following Table A

She then moved onto Table D on page 131 of the budget book which gave a breakdown of the income from goods and services provided by the council, for 2025. This income is detailed throughout the divisions. Total estimated income for 2025 from goods and services is €45.1m (up €3.8m on 2024).

Table E Page 132 of the budget book, gives a breakdown of the estimated income for 2025 from grants and subsidies of €118m

Table F starts on page 133 and shows the estimated expenditure for 2025, the adopted budget for 2024 and the estimated outturn for 2024 by service and subservice.

She went through the following items in detail

Division A Housing pages 133-135 in the budget book. Total estimated expenditure for 2025 €101m (2024 €88.2m)

Division B - Roads Page 136-138. Total estimated expenditure for 2025 €48.5m

Division C Water Services Pages 139 and 140. Total estimated expenditure for 2025 is €10.1m

Division D Development Management – Pages 141 to 143 Total expenditure 31.1m (2024 €29.3m)

Division E Environment and Fire service – Pages 144 to 146 of the budget book. Total estimated expenditure in this Division €26.4m (2024 €24.4m)

Division F - Recreation and amenity. Pages 147-148 of the budget book. Total expenditure in this division of €19.5m (2024 €17.6m)

Division G - Agriculture Education Health and Welfare Pages 149 and 150 Total expenditure €1.4m (2024 €1.3m)

Division H- Miscellaneous Services Pages 151 to 153. Total estimated expenditure for 2025 €21m (2024 €21.9m)

Ms Hanlon informed the members that the Draft Kildare County Council Rates Abatement Scheme in respect of Vacant Properties (Vacancy Relief) Scheme for 2025 and the Chief Executives report on same had been circulated to the Members. The proposed scheme continues to give 100% vacancy relief to eligible properties but with an application limit of 5 consecutive years. She advised the Members that the draft budget provides a balanced budget based on the overall level of resources

available to the council combined with the requirement to meet statutory, contractual, legal and other obligations for 2025.

The executive has listened to the Members over the past year and has directed additional resources towards areas such as Housing Maintenance, Housing Adaptation Grants and DPG's, Climate Action, Parks and Tree Maintenance where possible in order that it can deliver on key priorities.

BM04/1124

Motions

The Cathaoirleach took the following motion submitted in the name of Councillor T. Durkan.

That all unspent money generated from Local Property Tax and Paid Parking fees are retained and rolled over with in their respective Municipal Districts for future spending.

The motion was proposed by Councillor T. Durkan and seconded by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. J. Neville.

Ms E. Hanlon reminded members that surpluses carried forward from paid parking could only be used for roads programmes.

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor T Durkan seconded by Councillor Neville and agreed by all present that all unspent money generated from Local Property Tax and Paid Parking fees are retained and rolled over with in their respective Municipal Districts for future spending.

Councillor Duffy, as Chair of the Finance Committee, thanked all those who participated in the preparation of the Budget. He proposed that the budget be adopted without amendment, the annual rate be set at €0.2268, the vacancy relief scheme be made as outlined and that the Capital Programme be noted.

Councillor Doyle seconded Councillor Duffy's proposal and again thanked all who participated in the preparation of the Budget and the proposal was agreed.

The Cathaoirleach read the agreed resolutions for the Budget 2025 as follows

Adoption of Budget

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor K. Duffy seconded by Councillor S. Doyle and agreed by the members present with one member indicating that they were not supporting the budget, that pursuant to Section 103(7) of the Local Government Act 2001, Kildare County Council do hereby adopt for the financial year ending 31 December 2025 the budget set out in tables A, B, D,E and F of the draft budget without amendment presented to the council.

Adoption of the Annual Rate

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor K. Duffy seconded by Councillor S Doyle and agreed by the members that subject to Section 6 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended and in accordance with the Budget adopted, the members shall determine the annual rate on valuation applicable in the calculation of the rate under Section 3 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended.

The annual rate on valuation set out in Tables A,B,D,E and F of €0.2268 is to be the annual rate on valuation to be levied for the financial year ending 31 December 2025 for the purposes set out in those tables.

Vacancy Relief

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor K. Duffy seconded by Councillor S. Doyle and agreed by the members that Kildare 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 Section 9 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019, as amended.

Such a scheme in respect of vacant property will provide for a 100% abatement of rates on vacant properties (with a limit of five consecutive years) as provided for in

Section 9 (1) of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended for the financial year ending 31 December 2025.

Capital Programme 2025-2027

Resolved on the proposal of Councillor K. Duffy seconded by Councillor S. Doyle and agreed by the members present that the Capital Programme 2025 – 2027 be noted.

The meeting concluded.