

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON FRIDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2017, AT 10.00 A.M. TO CONSIDER THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2018.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor S. Keary, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Browne, Butler, Collins (J), Collins (M), Costelloe, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Gilligan, Gleeson, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keller, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, McCreech, McMahon, Mitchell, O'Brien, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Prendiville, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (K), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy, Teskey.

An apology for her inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Crowley.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Economic Development (Mr. P. Daly), Director, Physical Development (Mr. K. Lehane), Director, Regional Services (Ms. C. Curley), Director, Service Operations and Change Management (Mr. G. Daly), A/Director, Support Services – Finance, Corporate, Human Resources and ICT (Mr. S. Coughlan), A/Director, Social Development (Ms. C. Kirby), Director, HAP Shared Services Centre (Mr. E. Prendergast), Meetings Administrator (Mr. C. O'Connor), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. T. Knox), Financial Accountant (Mr. P. Murnane), Administrative Officer, Finance Department (Ms. I. Griffin), Administrative Officer, Finance (Mr. K. Dore).

Circulated (a) Draft Chief Executive's Budget Report and Tables, including Capital Programme 2018-2020; (b) Proposed Vacant Property Refund Scheme 2018; (c) Proposed Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018; (d) Proposed Tourism Sector Support Scheme 2018; (e) Proposed Business and Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property 2018; and (f) Draft Budget 2018 Presentation dated 13th November, 2017.

The Mayor opened the Meeting by stating that the Members were required to consider the Chief Executive's Draft Budget of Limerick City and County Council for year ending 31st December, 2018, the Draft Budget had been served in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

The Mayor then invited the Chief Executive to present an overview of the Draft Budget for 2018 to the Council.

In recommending the Budget to the Council for consideration, the Chief Executive confirmed that all the Statutory Requirements in relation to the Budget had been complied with. He outlined the budgetary process which had commenced on 19th September, 2017, when there was an initial Corporate Policy Group (CPG) Meeting on the budgetary strategy and the key objectives. On 28th September, 2017, the Council made its decision on the rate of Local Property Tax (LPT). During the period 18th October, 2017, to 27th October, 2017, there was a Statutory Draft Budgetary Plan Meeting in the Metropolitan and Municipal Districts. There were two further CPG Meetings on 24th October, 2017, and 13th November, 2017. In addition, earlier that week, there had been a Full Council Workshop where the Draft Budget 2018 was presented to the Members, followed by an extensive Question and Answer Session. Consideration and adoption of the Schedule of Municipal Works by each of the Metropolitan / Municipal Districts would be set for early 2018 following the adoption of the Budget.

The Chief Executive advised the Members that the outturn of Budget 2017 had delivered well against the estimated budget. In relation to the Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City and County Council for the year 2016, there was an accumulated balance on the Revenue Account of €810,407 (credit). He added that he was satisfied that every effort would be made to break-even on the Revenue Account for 2017. However, there was pressure on a number of income heads and ongoing controls on expenditure were in place.

The Chief Executive then listed the core objectives of Budget 2018 as follows:

- Continue the pace of economic investment in the City and County through the creation of an environment to facilitate job creation; and lead a Digital Strategy that would lay the foundation for a 'Smart Limerick Region.'
- Enhance local services provided by the Local Authority through increased resources facilitated by the Member's decision to vary the rate of LPT by 7.5% and a proposed increase in the ARV of 1.75%.
- Ensure that Limerick was at the forefront in targeting European Funding and Investment.
- Enable the Council to advance minor flood relief schemes in collaboration with the Office of Public Works.
- Revitalise urban areas and villages through the dedicated resources of the Urban and Village Renewal Department.

- Continue and, where possible, enhance programme of supports to communities.
- Continue to move to a proactive approach to maintenance of social housing stock.
- Deliver a cultural, tourism and festival programme which would make Limerick a recognised hub, both nationally and internationally.
- Enhance rural development by continued investment in the Council's infrastructure.
- Continue to seek efficiencies in service provision, cost reduction and value for money.

The Chief Executive outlined that the total estimated expenditure included in the Draft Budget for 2018 was €561.32 million, which represented an increase of €190.12 million on the adopted figure for 2017. He explained that the growth in the HAP Transactional Shared Service Centre accounted for the majority of the increase. As this expenditure was matched by an increase in corresponding income, it had no net effect on the Budgetary Provisions.

The Chief Executive went on to refer briefly to the income side of the Budget. He stated that 76% of income, excluding HAP, was generated locally through Commercial Rates (35%), LPT (12%) and Goods and Services (29%).

In preparation for 2018, it was noted that a comprehensive workforce planning exercise was ongoing throughout the Organisation which would help ensure that appropriate structures were in place to support effective service delivery. Recruitment of staff within the Organisation would continue and, in particular, would focus on the replacement of staff following retirements, promotions and departures. As a major employer in the region, it was important that the Council would provide employment opportunities; in this regard, an Apprenticeship Programme would be launched in 2018.

The Chief Executive referred to Capital Works Programme for the period 2018-2020 with a total projected spend of €420 million. He highlighted the key areas of spend within the Capital Budget as follow :

- Housing – Rebuilding Ireland €205 million
- Roads Capital Programme €140 million
- Economic Development €48 million
- Recreation and Amenity, which included Hinterland Funding, Rural Development Programme and Town & Village Renewal Projects.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive said the Draft 2018 Budget had been prepared with a proposed 1.75% increase in Commercial Rates ARV (Annual Rate on Valuation) and reflected the decision by the Council to increase the rate of Local Property Tax by 7.5% for 2018. These increases, he said, would enable the Council to further improve service delivery. He added that the Council would also continue to facilitate economic development by progressing key capital projects in both the City and County, including Urban and Village Renewal, while also marketing Limerick as a great place to visit and do business.

The Chief Executive said he wished to thank the Mayor and Members for their assistance and support, particularly the Members of the Corporate Policy Group, in preparing the budget. He also wished to thank the Directors and their staff for their commitment to Limerick in 2017 and in the preparation of the Budget. He wished to particularly thank the A/Head of Finance, Sean Coughlan, and his staff for their efforts in shaping and preparing the Budget.

It was unanimously agreed that the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Budget 2018, as circulated to Members, be read into the Minutes of the Meeting as follows:

Introduction

"The Draft Budget for the financial year ending 31st December 2018 has been prepared, circulated to Members, and public notice of the Budget Meeting placed in the press, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

The Statutory Budget Meeting has been fixed for Friday, 17th November 2017 at 10am, Council Chamber, Dooradoyle. 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 fourteen days beginning on the day on which the local authority budget meeting begins. The Budget therefore must be adopted by 1st December 2017.

Circular Fin 06/2017 also refers to the prescribed period that applies for the holding of the 2018 Budget meeting for Local Authorities as follows; 1st November 2017 to 30th November 2017. It was agreed by the Members at the September Council meeting to hold the Annual Budget Meeting on Friday 17th, November, 2017.

Budget Process

The budget process for the preparation, consideration and adoption of the budget requires statutory compliance with a number of steps which can be summarised as follows:

Step 1 - Decision by the Council on the adjustment factor to the Local Property Tax (LPT) following a public consultation process. This decision was made at the Council Meeting on 28th September.

Step 2 - Allocation of the General Municipal/ Metropolitan Allocation (GMA). The Draft Budgetary Plan was considered at the following meetings:

Metropolitan District of Limerick	27 th October
Newcastle West Municipal District	18 th October
Adare / Rathkeale Municipal District	26 th October
Cappamore / Kilmallock Municipal District	19 th October

Step 3 - Consultation with the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and adoption of the Draft Budget by Council. Budget Strategy presented to CPG Meeting held on 19th September with further meetings held on 24th October and 13th November. The Statutory Budget meeting is scheduled for 17th November with a budget workshop to be held on 13th November.

Step 4 - Consideration and adoption of the schedule of Municipal works by each of the Metropolitan / Municipal Districts. These meetings will be convened in early 2018 following the adoption of the Budget.

Through consultation with the Corporate Policy Group and consideration of the views of Council as expressed through the different stages of the budgetary process, in particular as expressed through the meetings of the Municipal/ Metropolitan Districts, the budget as presented considers this feedback in a reasoned and balanced manner.

At the Statutory Budget Meeting, the Members will be asked to make the following decisions:

- adopt the Budget with or without amendment.
- determine the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV).
- determine the proportion of Rates Refund applicable on vacant commercial premises.

Budget Strategy & Objectives

The Draft Budget has been prepared on the principle of a “balanced budget” based on the overall level of resources available to the Council and the requirement to meet statutory, contractual, legal and other obligations. It incorporates the decisions made by the Council in relation to the local property tax and general Municipal/ Metropolitan allocations. Under the Local Government Act, 2001 as amended, the Draft Budget is required to set out the expenditure necessary to carry out the functions of the Council and the income estimated to accrue to the Council.

The key objectives of the 2018 Budget are set out in the Table below:

Key Objectives of Budget 2018

- Continue the pace of economic investment in the City and County
 - Create an environment to facilitate job creation within the City & County
 - Implementation of tourism & marketing strategy 2017-2023
 - Lead a digital strategy that will lay the foundation for a 'Smart Limerick Region'
 - Small & Medium Business Support Scheme
 - Business and Retail incentive scheme
 - Tourism sector support scheme
- Enhance local services provided by the Local Authority through increased resources facilitated by the members decision to vary the rate of Local Property Tax by 7.5% and a proposed increase in the Commercial Rates' Annual Rate of Valuation (ARV) of 1.75%
- Revitalise our urban areas & villages through the dedicated resources of the Urban and Village renewal department
- Ensure that Limerick is at the forefront in targeting European Funding & investment
- Enable the Council to advance minor flood relief schemes in collaboration with the Office of Public Works
- Continue & where possible enhance our programme of supports to our communities
- Continue to move to a proactive approach to maintenance of our social housing stock
- Deliver a cultural, tourism and festival programme to make Limerick a recognised hub both nationally and internationally
- To enhance rural development by continuing to invest in our infrastructure
- Continue to seek efficiencies in service provision, cost reduction and value for money

National Economic Outlook

The economic landscape is characterised by considerable uncertainty at present, particularly on the external front. The main source of uncertainty relates to the fallout from the UK referendum in June 2016, which creates considerable institutional, political and economic

challenges and opportunities in the years ahead. From an economic perspective, the short-term impact has mainly been reflected in exchange rate developments and, in particular, the significant appreciation of the euro-sterling bilateral rate already evident.

Table 1 below outlines the main economic and fiscal variables underlying the Department of Finance's budget for 2018.

<i>Variable - % change (unless stated)</i>	2015	2016	2017	2018
<i>Economic Activity</i>				
Real GDP	25.6	5.1	4.3	3.5
Real GNP	16.4	9.6	0.0	3.3
<i>Prices</i>				
HICP	0.0	-0.2	0.2	0.8
Core HICP	1.2	0.5	0.1	1.0
GDP deflator	4.9	0.0	0.5	0.9
<i>Balance of Payments</i>				
Current account (per cent of GDP)	10.2	3.3	3.0	2.0
<i>Labour Market</i>				
Total Employment ('000)^	1,964	2,020	2,075	2,125
Employment	2.6	2.9	2.8	2.3
Unemployment (per cent)	9.4	7.9	6.3	5.7
<i>Public Finances (per cent of GDP)</i>				
General government balance	-1.9	-0.7	-0.3	-0.2
Structural balance	-2.2	-1.7	-1.1	-0.5
Debt ratio (year-end)	78.6	72.8	70.1	69.0
Net debt position (year-end)	66.9	63.7	61.2	59.6

Table 1: Summary of Main Economic and Fiscal Variables (per cent change(unless stated))

Source: Department of Finance Economic and Fiscal Outlook Budget 2018, p.2

At a macro-economic level, national budgetary policy will be geared towards balancing the budget by 2018 (a balanced budget is defined as a structural deficit of no more than 0.5 per cent of GDP).

The Local Government Sector is part of General Government (as is the Local Government Fund). Own-resource Local Authority (LA) expenditure is profiled to stay broadly flat between 2017 and 2018, this means that own-resource expenditure must stay in line with last year unless specific revenue raising measures are identified (i.e. increased rates, LPT, housing rents, parking fees, planning fees, library and sports facility fees, casual trading fees etc.). So, expenditure policy at the sub-General Government level will have serious implications for national fiscal policy - expenditure increases in the LA and other sectors with own resource income will have to be met by offsetting expenditure reductions in Voted expenditure to ensure compliance with fiscal rules

Local Economic Outlook:

The word 'renaissance' was used to describe what would unfold when the vision for an emerging and dynamic new Limerick was outlined in 2013 with the Limerick 2030 Economic and Spatial Plan. It's a word loaded with expectation but as the few years since have shown, it is more than being fulfilled.

More than 12,000 jobs have been announced since 2013; 8,341 of these are full time with a further 3,692 in construction. A total of 2,615 jobs have been announced since the start of 2017, with 1,080 of these jobs in construction.

There has been more than €1.6 billion of investment by new or existing companies in Limerick announced since 2013. Limerick is now the fastest growing Irish region for foreign direct investment outside of Dublin.

The redevelopment of the city centre is now well underway thanks to the establishment of Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC, now just over a year old. Focused initially on city projects like the Opera Site and its already underway Gardens International sister-site on Henry Street, it will ultimately deliver a city and county programme of investment that amounts to the biggest commercial property play undertaken outside Dublin.

Innovate Limerick, which is helping to drive innovation across the city and county has already claimed a number of major wins. These include the development of a 35,000 sq ft Innovation Hub at Roxboro and Engine in the city centre, where it will co-locate FDI companies and provide shared workspace along with a Production and Digital Skills Hub, ensuring that the skills required for film production are available in Limerick. Troy Studios is creating a completely new industry in Limerick and is currently in production for a major new international series.

Innovate Limerick has also been the driver behind the establishment of the Innovation Factory in the former Anderson jewellery manufacturing facility in Rathkeale, which it acquired shortly after the plant closed in 2013 with the loss of 140 jobs. Today, it is operating at near capacity. The 2030 Plan has also given rise to a new Investment Office as part of the local authority's Economic Development Directorate to work with other key agencies to attract investment.

The list of new arrivals in Limerick in recent times speaks volumes; companies like Uber, Northern Trust, ACI Worldwide, Virgin Media, Optel Vision, Ernst & Young, Ripplecom, Fazzi Healthcare Services, Stats, Ortec Inc and Teckro employing thousands of jobs.

A new Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy 2017-2023 has been designed to revitalise the tourism industry, double the number of visitors, capture key opportunities that exist for growth and highlight priority action areas to unlock the significant benefits that a thriving tourism industry can bring.

The renaissance has also been energised by the local authority's determination to take advantage of digital technologies. This will help to double the number of digital start-ups in Limerick, double the number of SMEs trading online, double the use of data and create equal opportunities for all citizens. Limerick is the first city in Ireland to appoint a Chief Digital Officer to lead a digital strategy that will lay the foundation for the Smart Limerick Region. One manifestation of this is Limerick.ie, an already award winning platform that enables locals and visitors instant access to information on some 2,000 attractions and 1,000 events across the city and county each year. The digital strategy will enable vast real-time engagement across the Internet of Things, delivering huge environmental and security enhancements for all citizens, young and old.

It's in keeping with the new sense and exciting sense of ambition in Limerick today. The delivery on that ambition in four short years has seen the narrative completely transformed nationally and internationally about Limerick – a city and county now recognised as a vibrant place to live, study, play and invest in.

National Planning Framework (NPF)

Limerick is ideally placed to accommodate additional employment and residential growth due to its central location, which gives it a strategic national accessibility advantage over all other regional centres. The Mid West National Planning Framework submission therefore requests an increase in projected population growth, the continued development of Shannon Airport and key infrastructure projects in the Mid West to be included in the Ireland 2040 plan to ensure more effective regional balance.

From Limerick's perspective, the development of a City with a scale that can impact on a national and international level is imperative if the NPF is to deliver for the nation. Therefore the National Planning Framework must compellingly articulate a clear, strategic and ambitious vision for the City Region supported by an increase in the projected population growth.

Outturn 2017

In presenting the Annual Budget for the year ended 31 December 2018 to Council, I wish to take this opportunity to summarise the financial position of Limerick City and County Council as at 31 December 2016. The Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City and County Council for the year 2016 shows the accumulated balance on the Revenue Account is in a credit position of €810,407.

I have reviewed the up to date position and I am satisfied that every effort will be made to break-even on the Revenue Account for 2017; however there is pressure on a number of income heads and ongoing controls on expenditure are in place.

The 2018 draft Budget reflects the need to continue a strong financial management ethos while making every effort to meet the ever increasing demands on the services of Limerick City and County Council.

Analysis of Expenditure Requirements 2018

The total estimated expenditure included in the Draft Budget for 2018 amounts to €561.323 million, a increase of €190.12 million on the adopted figure for 2017. The growth in the HAP transactional Shared Service Centre accounts for the majority of this increase. As this expenditure is matched by an increase in corresponding income, it has no net effect on the Budgetary Provisions. The following **Table 2** depicts Revenue expenditure by Division.

Division	Draft Budget 2018	Adopted Budget 2017
A - Housing & Building	29,398,146	27,484,141
A - HAP Shared Service Centre	402,772,776	213,592,367
B - Road Transport & Safety	37,160,120	37,098,893
C - Water Services	13,693,402	13,575,769
D - Development Mgt	17,731,303	15,822,039
E - Environmental Services	31,978,334	31,174,725
F - Recreation & Amenity	13,157,635	12,496,700
G - Agri, Ed, Health & Welfare	1,408,739	1,598,151
H - Misc Services	14,022,097	18,364,705
	561,322,552	371,207,490

Table 2: Analysis of Expenditure by Division

The following chart gives a breakdown of expenditure by each division.

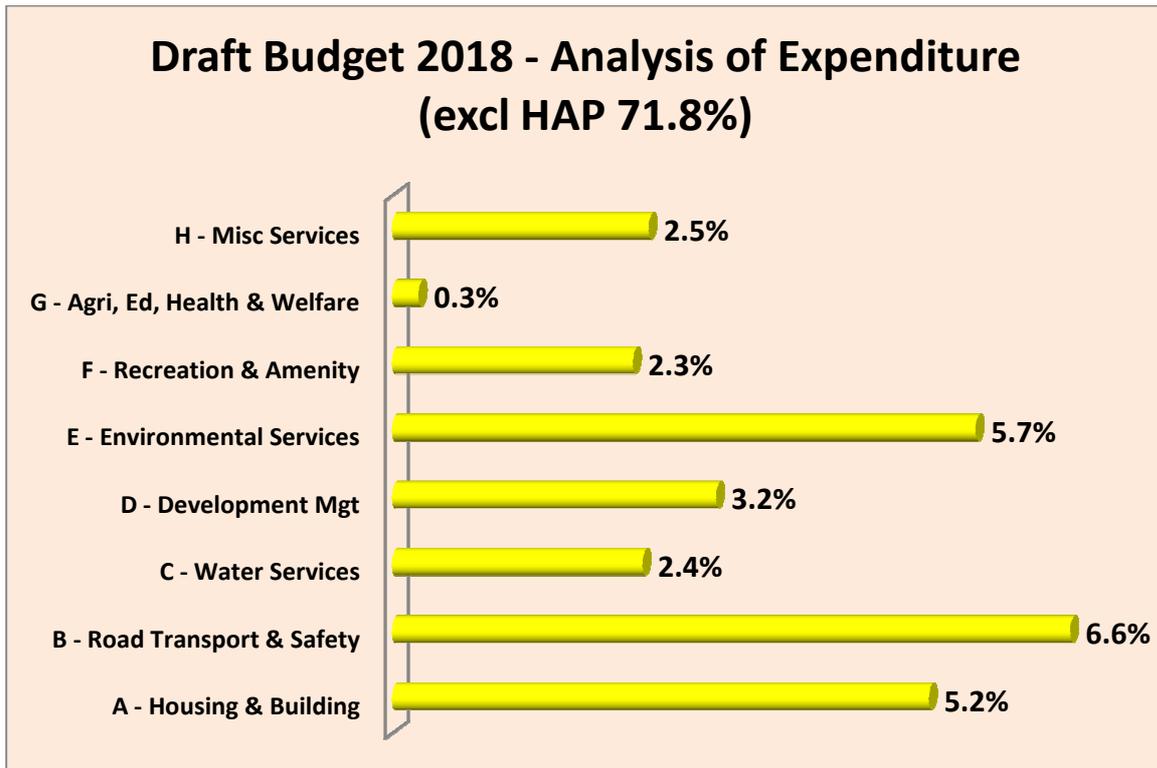


Chart 1: Analysis of split of Expenditure (excl HAP) by Division

The following bar chart shows the estimated expenditure for Draft Budget 2018 for each Division, with comparative figures for 2017:-

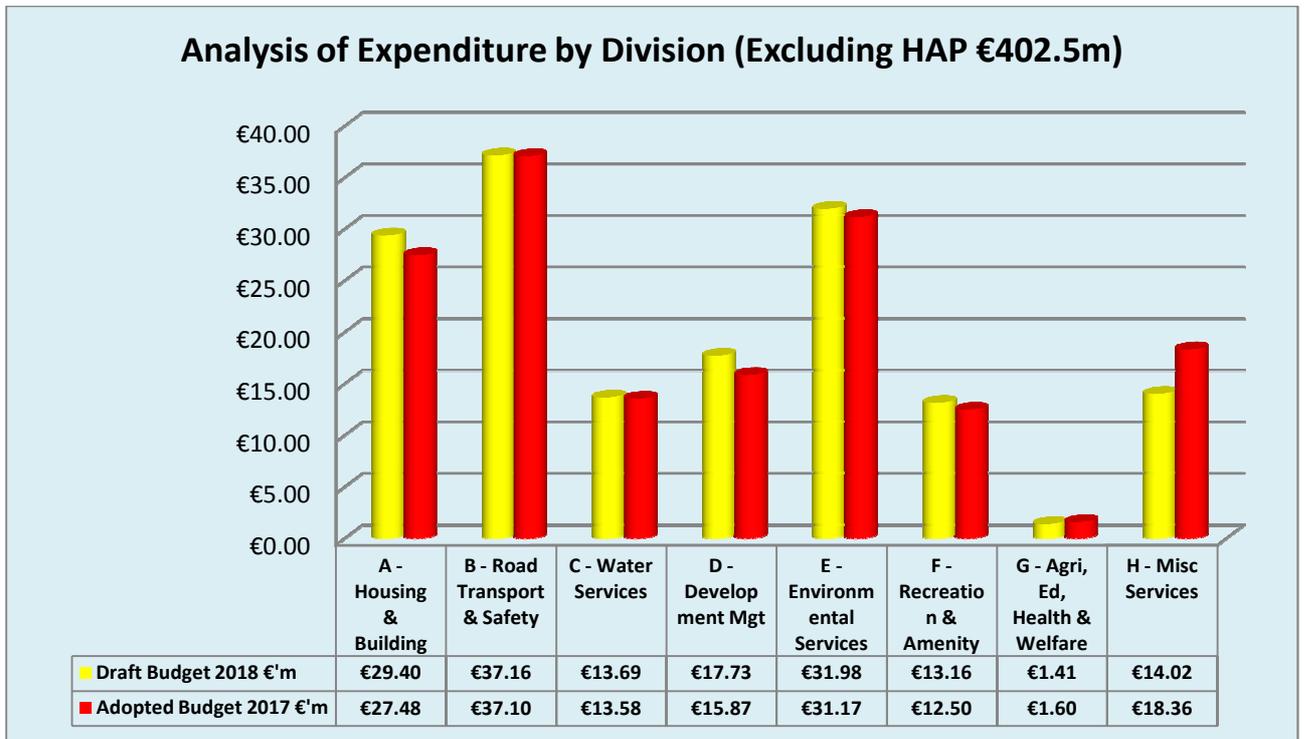


Chart 2: Analysis of Expenditure (excl HAP) by Division - Draft Budget 2018 versus Budget 2017

Analysis of Income 2018

The level of expenditure shown above, at €561.323 million, will be financed from the following sources:-

Source	Amount (€)
1. Local Property Tax	18,730,914
2. Commercial Rates	54,960,700
3. Grants & Subsidies (net of HAP)	38,901,441
4. Goods & Services (net of HAP)	46,328,514
Sub Total Income (Excluding HAP)	158,921,568
1. HAP Differential Rent	97,159,863
2. HAP Subsidy from DHPCLG	305,241,120
Sub Total HAP	402,400,984
Total including HAP	561,322,552

Table 3: Analysis of Draft Budget 2018 Income

The following Pie chart highlights the % split by income category excluding HAP.

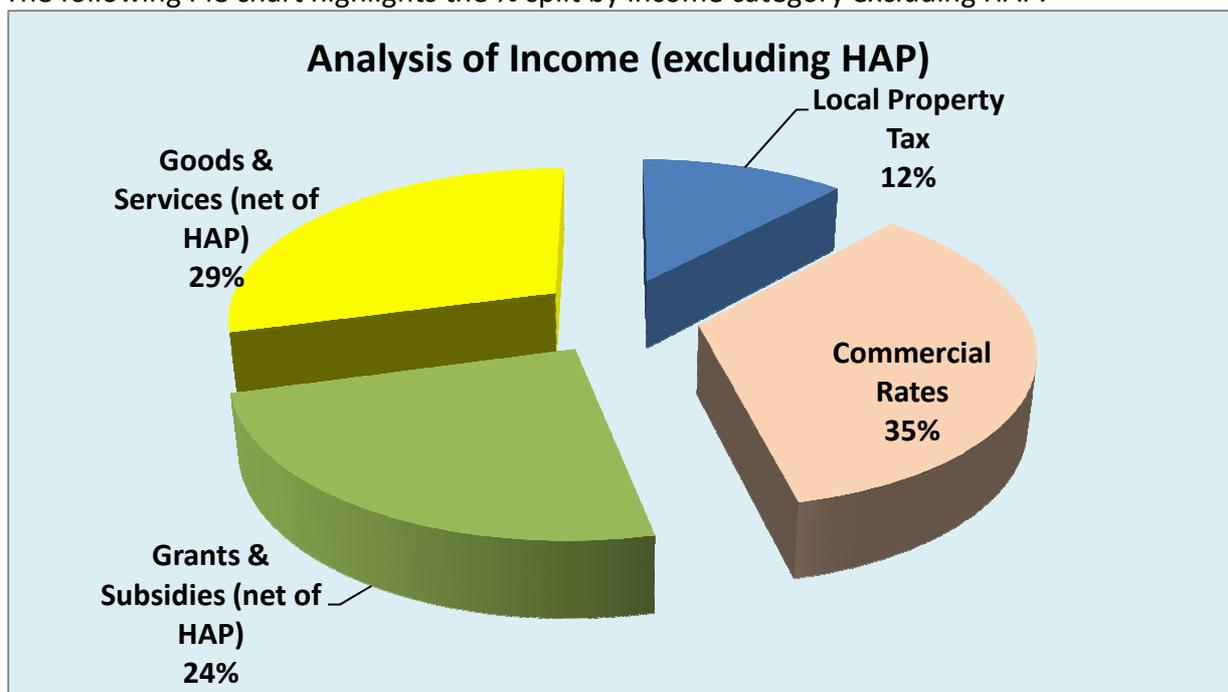


Chart 3: Analysis of Draft Budget 2018 Income (excluding HAP)

76% of the Council's income (excluding HAP) is now generated locally through Commercial Rates (35%), LPT (12%) and goods & services (29%).

Comparative figures for Budgets 2018 and 2017 are shown hereunder.

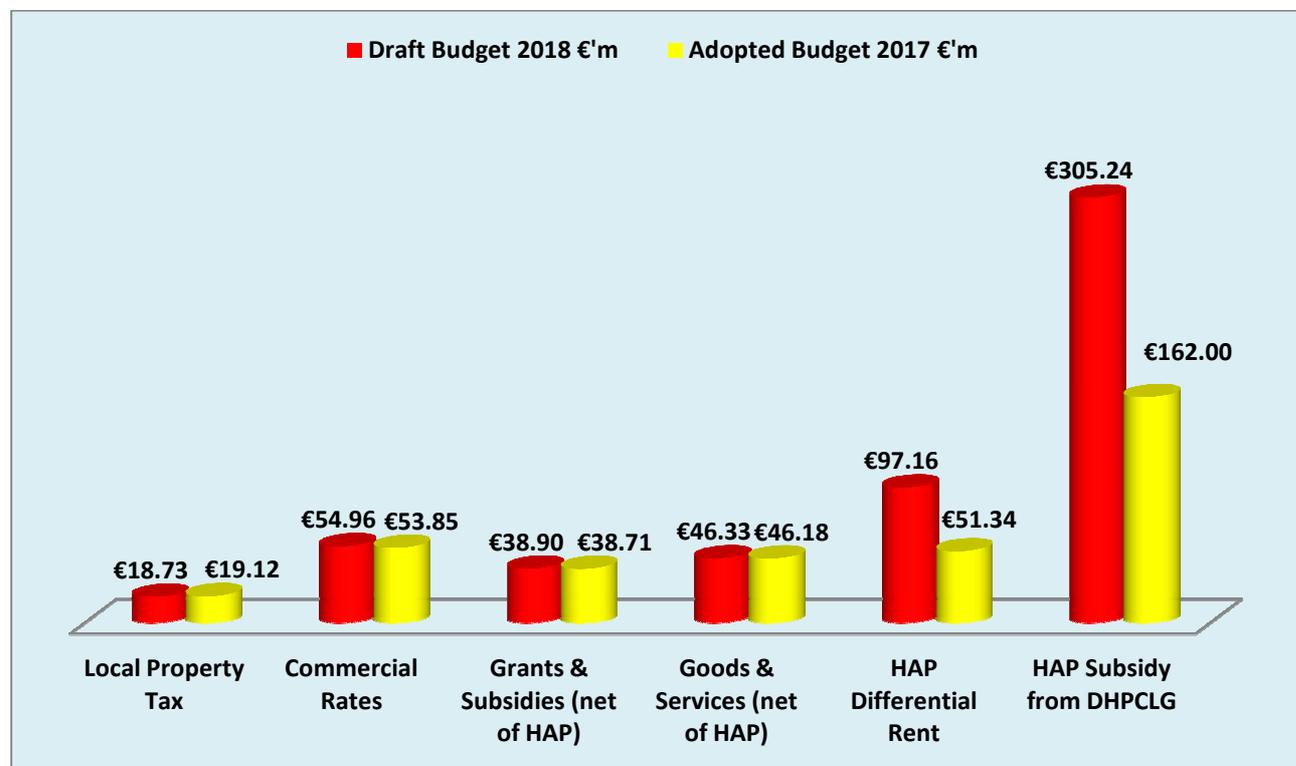


Chart 4: Analysis of Income: Draft Budget 2018 v's Budget 2017

Local Property Tax Allocation 2018

Local Property Tax (LPT) is now a key funding source for Local Government replacing the General Purpose Grant funding allocation. The initial allocation under this funding heading was confirmed as €17,554,464 which now includes compensation for loss of Pension Related Deduction (PRD) income of €2,929,305. The basis of this funding is an allocation of 80% of the LPT collected from property owners in the City and County and retained by the Local Authority with the remaining 20% being paid into an equalisation fund from which payments are made to Counties not achieving a level of funding equivalent to the 2013 General Purpose Grant (GPG) through their own LPT receipts.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 and associated Regulations permits the Members of the Council to vary the Rate by a maximum increase or decrease of 15%. The Council decided to adjust the LPT rate upwards by 7.5% in 2018 equating to an increase of €1,176,448 (compared to an increase of 10% in 2017: €1,566,810).

The 2018 allocation from the Local Property Tax and the calculation provided by the DHPLG on the basis of this allocation is set out in **Table 4** below:

Limerick City and County Council - 2018 LPT Allocation	
LPT 100%	€15,685,975
LPT 20% to Equalisation Fund	(€3,137,195)
=> LPT 80% Retained Locally	€12,548,780
Distribution from Equalisation Fund	€5,005,684
Original LPT Allocation	€17,554,464
7.5% increase in LPT rate	€1,176,448
Revised LPT Allocation	€18,730,912

Table 4: LPT Reconciliation

The 7.5% LPT variation for 2018 of €1,176,448 has been allocated to provide additional resources for the delivery of the following services (compared to 10% LPT variation for 2017) as follows:

<i>Svc</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	<i>LPT 10% Allocation 2017</i>	<i>LPT 7.5% Allocation 2018</i>	<i>Decrease in Revenue</i>
B03 & B04	Own Resource element of Local & Regional Roads	€515k	€315k	(€200k)
E0601	Street cleaning	€220k	€220k	€0
B0601 & B0602	Traffic Management	€200k	€200k	€0
F0401	Community	€65k	€0	(€65k)
E0502	Litter Management	€20k	€0	(€20k)
F0301	Maintenance of Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	€140k	€140k	€0
F0201	Library Service	€110k	€50k	(€60k)
E1101	Fire Service	€100k	€100k	€0
D0501	Tourism Development & Promotion	€200k	€151k	(€49k)
Total		€1,570k	€1,176k	(€394k)

Table 5: Allocation of additional resources

Commercial Rates

Commercial Rates is a significant contributor to the total budgeted income for the Council and it is vital to the level of service delivery that income from this source is maximised. In this respect it is critically important that the Valuation Office reverts promptly with new valuations during 2018. Limerick City and County Council will continue to ensure that all commercial properties in the City and County are included on the rates records and are properly rated.

The Council continues to improve its collection percentages across all the major income headings. In that respect engagement with rate payers with a view to addressing arrears will continue to be a priority during 2018. In circumstances where there is no engagement, the Council will pursue the outstanding arrears via the legal route.

Draft Budget 2018 has been prepared assuming an increase of 1.75% in the general Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV), with the distribution of the 1.75% noted across the services outlined below in **Table 6**:

<i>Svc</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	1.75% increase in Rates Allocation 2018
B03 & B04	Own Resource element of Local & Regional Roads	€300k
E0601	County Street cleaning	€300k
F0401	Community	€100k
E0502	Litter Management	€40k
F0201	Library Service	€141k
D0501	Tourism Development & Promotion	€60k
Total		€941k

Table 6: Allocation of additional resources from proposed 1.75% Commercial Rate increase

Table 7 below outlines the combined effect for 2018 of the LPT increase of 7.5% with proposed Commercial Rate increase of 1.75% compared to the 10% LPT increase for 2017. The net effect is an increase in resources to the Council of €547,000 for 2018.

<i>Svc</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	<i>LPT 10% Allocation 2017</i>	<i>LPT 7.5% & Rates 1.75% Allocation 2018</i>	<i>Increase in Revenue</i>
B03 & B04	Own Resource element of Local & Regional Roads	€515k	€615k	€100k
E0601	Street cleaning	€220k	€520k	€300k
B0601 & B0602	Traffic Management	€200k	€200k	€0
F0401	Community	€65k	€100k	€35k
E0502	Litter Management	€20k	€40k	€20k
F0301	Maintenance of Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	€140k	€140k	€0
F0201	Library Service	€110k	€191k	€81k
E1101	Fire Service	€100	€100	€0
D0501	Tourism Development & Promotion	€200k	€211k	€11k
Total		€1,570k	€2,117k	€547k

Table 7 combined effect for 2018 of the LPT increase of 7.5% with proposed Commercial Rate increase of 1.75% compared to the 10% LPT increase for 2017.

Vacant Property Scheme

Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for an amendment to rating law in relation to the refund of rates on vacant properties. This change now gives the power to the members of local authorities to vary the level of rates refunds that apply in individual local electoral areas within the overall administrative area of the local authority.

Article 29 of the Local Government (Financial & Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 provides that the decision to alter the rate of refund should be decided at the statutory annual budget meeting and that the rate of refund decided in respect of the relevant local

electoral area shall apply to eligible persons for the year to which the budget relates. The budget has been framed on the basis the refund rates on vacant property noted in **Table 8** below.

The following amended vacant property scheme is proposed to continue in 2018:

Band	% Refund
Up to €2,803 Annual Rate Demand	100%
€2,804 to €11,164 Annual Rate Demand	50%
€11,165 to €55,961 Annual Rate Demand	25%
Over €55,962 Annual Rate Demand	10%

Table 8: Proposed Vacant Property Scheme 2018

Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018 (SME Scheme)

The proposed Small and Medium Business Support scheme will pay a financial support to occupiers of commercial properties with a total annual commercial rate bill of up to and including €25,000 (compared to €21,000 in 2017) but not less than €1 in 2018 (compared to €500 in 2017). The proposed % support for 2018 rates is 9% (compared to 9% in 2017) subject to a maximum refund of €1,000 which will be subject to a number of terms and conditions.

It should be noted that 94.5% of the Rated properties in Limerick City and County Council have an annual rate demand of less than €25,000 and will benefit subject to the Scheme being approved by the Council, which compares to 85% of rated properties able to benefit from the SME Scheme in 2017.

Tourism Sector Support Scheme 2018

The Proposed Tourism Sector Support Scheme for 2018 will be a financial support/reduction to occupiers of commercial properties directly linked to the Tourism Sector. In order to qualify, the total annual Commercial Rates liability must be in excess of €25,000 (Businesses with a Rate Demand less than €25,000 already qualify for the SME Scheme 2018) and is subject to a number of terms and conditions. The support grant payment which is aimed specifically at the Tourism and Hospitality Sector will be set at 4% of the total Rates, including arrears, for 2018 subject to the Scheme being approved by the Council.

Business & Retail Incentive Scheme 2018

The Proposed Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for 2018 will continue to be available for businesses in all towns and villages across Limerick City and County Council. The scheme is

intended to address property vacancy rates, improve streetscapes and to support the business community.

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Transactional Shared Service Centre

Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) operate the HAP Shared Services Centre (SSC) on behalf of all 31 local authorities and the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE). The HAP project went fully national on 1st March 2017. HAP is already the largest non-capital support programme and is projected to deliver 84,000 of the Government's overall social housing target of 131,000 social housing units by 2021. Around 400 tenancies per week are currently established by the HAP SSC. By the end of 2017 it is anticipated that the HAP SSC will be managing over 31,000 HAP tenancies on behalf of the local authority sector.

The HAP SSC has budgeted to process €398m in payments to HAP landlords and expects collect almost €100m in rent from HAP tenants in 2018. Circa 17,000 new HAP tenancies will be set up in 2018. There are currently 50 people employed in the HAP SSC, which is located in the Granary on Michael Street in Limerick City. The numbers employed in the centre are expected to grow to over 100 in the coming years.

New Urban & Village Renewal Department

There is a shared public interest in ensuring the most efficient use of land and buildings especially in cities, towns and villages. In addition the towns and villages of County Limerick would benefit from greater attention both in terms of active land management and public realm improvements.

In view of the above, aside from long standing legislation in this area including the Planning & Development Act 2000 and Derelict Sites Act 1990 the Government has recently introduced various legislation, plans, strategies and initiatives including:

- Urban Regeneration & Housing Act 2015 (Vacant Sites Register/Levy)
- Rebuilding Ireland (including forthcoming Vacant Homes Strategy)
- Realising our Rural Potential: Action Plan for Rural Development
- CEDRA Report & REDZ
- Town & Village Renewal Scheme
- Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
- Buy & Renew/Lease & Repair Schemes
- Clár Programme.

An enhanced response to urban and village renewal including addressing vacancy and dereliction is also supported by Limerick City & County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and the Limerick Local Economic & Community Plan. It is clear therefore that there is a strong national and local priority in this policy area. In response to that there is now a need to bring a more robust operational focus to the issue with clear and measurable targets to deliver on. ***To address this priority locally an Urban & Village Renewal Department within the Service Operations Directorate has been set up.*** This would involve consolidating existing functions and staff with some targeted additional resources having regard to the need to deliver stronger results in this area. Under the operating model the relevant

strategic directorate would be Economic Development and the relevant SPC - Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning. This would be a cross cutting department working closely with others departments in Service Operations and across the entire Council. It would also forge strong partnerships with community groups and provide regular updates to Metropolitan/Municipal Districts. It is recommended the operational focus and objectives of this new department would be three-fold:

- Provide a stronger focus on active land management
- Assist in managing and identifying opportunities for Council Property
- Deliver public realm improvements and town and village renewal schemes.

General Municipal/ Metropolitan Allocation 2018

Circular Fin 08/2015 referred to the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) (Amendment) Regulations (S.I.363 of 2015), which amends the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 by providing that the meeting at which Municipal/ Metropolitan members consider the draft budgetary plan must conclude no later than 10 days prior to the local authority budget meeting.

Following the adoption of the budget a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repair to be carried out during 2018 in each Municipal/ Metropolitan District will be prepared for consideration and adoption by the Municipal/ Metropolitan District Members

The draft budget has included a general Municipal/ Metropolitan allocation of €1.203m in total for district members which will provide a focus and clarity as regards how the elected members want to account for the expending of monies within their area.

Workforce Planning

In preparation for 2018, a comprehensive Workforce Planning exercise is underway throughout the Organisation. The exercise is designed to allow us to build capacity and position ourselves to respond to the ever changing needs of our citizens. Recruitment of staff within the Organisation will continue and in particular will focus on the replacement of staff following retirements, promotions and departures. .

In addition, the Council will focus particularly on our outdoor staff, as key representatives of the Organisation, present in our Communities on a daily basis. While we are all working hard collectively to achieve our common goals, it is the staff on the ground on a daily basis who have a direct hand in creating and presenting places we all desire to live, work, invest in and enjoy. As a major employer in the region, it is important that we provide employment opportunities to the communities we serve. In this regard, an Apprenticeship Programme will be launched in 2018. At present a detailed review of craft trades currently employed, numbers profiling, and retirements in the coming 5-10 years, is well underway. In going to market we will launch a comprehensive advertisement campaign around this Apprenticeship Programme, to attract and train a new generation of craft workers within the Organisation.

The Council are mindful of our retired staff and those who plan to retire in the coming years. The Graph below shows our overall numbers at present and the number of retired staff, which will rise significantly towards the end of 2018.

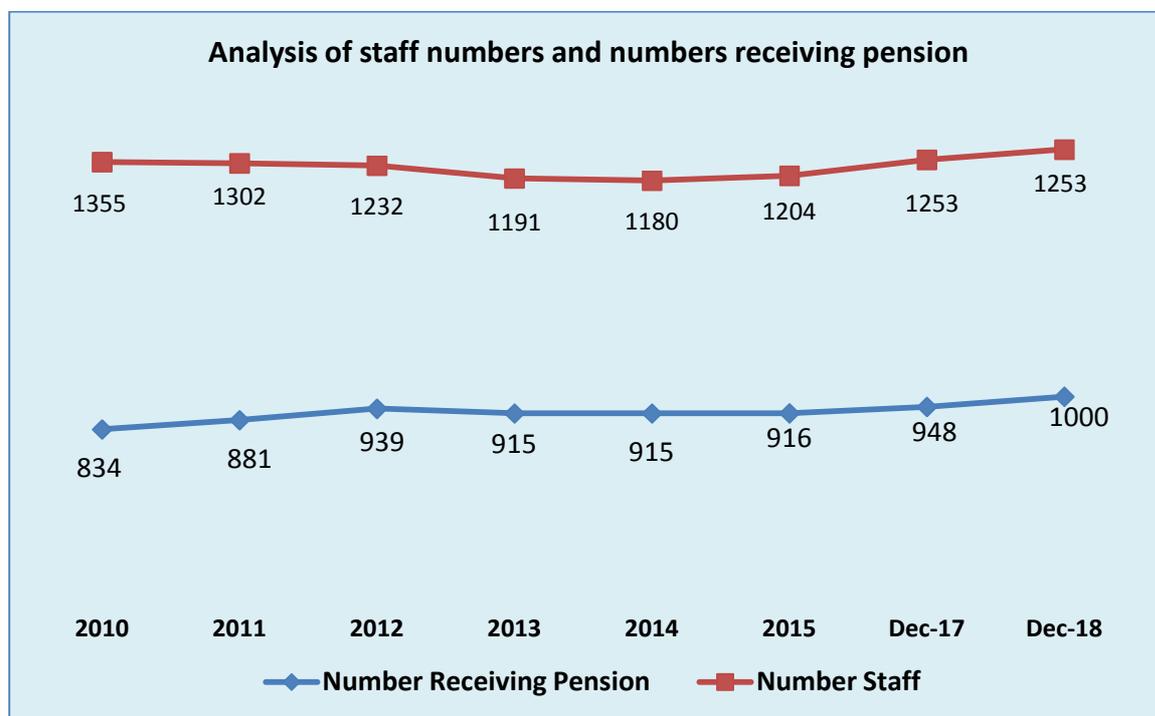


Chart 5: Analysis of staff numbers and number receiving pensions 2010-2018

Business Process Improvement

The Business Improvement Department was established in 2017 following a new operating model being implemented for the organisation which separates the strategic functions from the operational functions for more effective service delivery. Departments are being supported in 8 Steps of Business Improvement; 1. Service Catalogue; 2. Business Improvements in Departments; 3. Risk Register; 4. Team Communication; 5. Operational Level Agreements; 6. Key Performance Indicators and Service Targets defined for each department 7 Integrations with Customer Services; 8. Workforce Planning. This is with a view to ensuring all departments are operating to a high standard in these areas.

By means of supporting departments in making their own business improvements, we are promoting the DMAIC approach which takes staff through a number of steps in order to deal with a challenge in their work i.e. Define the problem; Measure it; Analyse it; Improve it; Control it. Business improvements currently undergoing the DMAIC approach include Part V planning regulations, litter/illegal dumping, personal protective equipment supplies, fleet management, records management in Community Support Services, housing maintenance and property valuations. An example of a business improvement was grants management in Community Support Services. It resulted in a reduction of application process time by 50% to 15-20min; No backlog, originally 2-3 years; 70% reduction in representations from Councillors; € 0.7million extra (metropolitan) in applications processed without the need for additional staff; metropolitan and municipal districts using one system thus consistency; all letters automated; reporting is standardised and automated; paper file

for signed application form only. Future improvements will include grants applications online, electronic signature and Agresso integration for payments.

As part of our delivery of public services, much of our work involves delivering an array of projects for the benefit of the public ranging hugely in type and value. Our primary challenge is to achieve all the project goals within the given constraints of which the primary ones are scope, cost and time. The Project Management Framework is important in the context outlined above but is equally important for ensuring our operating model works to best effect, in particular given the separation of strategic and operational functions. We are doing a number of things to make this happen: creating a project workflow for our organisation and developing standard project management documents to support this.

Seventy staff have already trained in Applied Project Management in UL. A Project Management Advisory Group is in place, made up of a range of staff with experience in project management, advising us as to the best fit of the approach for our organisation. An external advisor is in place to guide us through the process and to ensure we respect the integrity of project management. Digital staff are supporting the approach with applying our requirements to our current system. The next stage will see rigorous testing of the framework in a number of different project types. The combination of this will, in time, ensure the approach gets traction in the organisation as staff, funders and ultimately the citizen, see the value of it.

There are a number of key business improvement projects being worked on which will benefit the whole organisation: 1. LITe Limerick Information Transformation electronic; 2. Case Management for Improved Customer Service for Maintenance Services; 3. Financial Management Improvement Programme; 4. Staff Development Programme; 5. Strategic Workforce Planning; 6. Insight Limerick - Central Repository for Data, Maps, GIS database, Analytics and Reports; 7. LCCC Project Management Framework; 8. ICT & Digital Strategy Improvement Plans.

Having a dedicated business improvement department, whilst still very new, is proving successful to date. Embedding a culture of continuous improvement is key to the success of Limerick City and County Council into the future.

Irish Water

The Budget includes provision for the ongoing Service Level Agreement (SLA) arrangements with Irish Water as Limerick City and County Council provides water services on behalf of the national water authority. The Budget includes provision for the expenditure associated with the operation of the SLA and for recoupment of these costs from Irish Water.

Capital Budget 2018-2020

In accordance with Section 135 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended the Local Government Reform Act 2014, please find attached a report on the programme of capital projects proposed by Limerick City and County Council for the 3 years 2018 to 2020.

Given the fact that we are proposing allocations over 3 years, it would be unrealistic to suggest that these allocations are definitive and are subject to funding being available in future years. Capital projects by their very nature are flexible rolling plans which involve an annual review and possible adjustment. Below, please find a summary of potential spend and source of funding for the 3 year capital plan 2018 to 2020.

Capital Expenditure 2018 -2020	Grant funded	Loan funded	Special Levy Schemes	Development Levy Funded	Revenue Funded	Other (Land Sales / Contributors)
€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
420.13	380.48	18.75	4.19	5.51	9.58	1.62

Table 9: Summary Capital Plan 2018-2020

Conclusion

Limerick City and County Council has continued to provide quality local authority services against the background of a challenging economic environment and reduced funding. The draft 2018 budget has been prepared with a proposed 1.75% increase in Commercial Rates ARV (Annual Rate on Valuation), and reflects the decision by Council to increase rate of Local Property Tax by 7.5% for 2018. These increases will enable the Council to further improve service delivery. The Council will also continue to facilitate economic development by progressing key capital projects in both the City and County including Urban and Village renewal while also marketing Limerick as a great place to visit and do business.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mayor and the Council Members for their assistance and support, particularly the Members of the Corporate Policy Group in preparing this budget. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Management Team and their own teams for their commitment and hard work in preparing this document. The coming year will again be challenging but offers significant opportunities. I look forward to the full support of the Members at the Statutory Budget Meeting to be held Friday, 17th November 2017.”

Councillor Gilligan formally proposed the adoption of the Budget as presented. This was seconded by Councillor O’Brien.

The Chief Executive, in response, stated that while he appreciated the proposal to adopt the Budget as presented, the Members were required by law to consider the Budget. He added that each division would be examined individually and Members would be afforded an opportunity to pose questions in relation to each division.

Councillor Sheahan (J)

Councillor Sheahan (J), on behalf of the Fine Gael Group, welcomed the various elements of the Budget pointing out that there was a lot of good news within this Budget. He said the indicators within showed that Limerick had certainly turned a corner and that it was on the 'cusp' of further expansion, both economically and socially, as a City to work and live in. He referred to the Limerick 2030 Plan and the forming of Limerick 2030 DAC which had put Limerick in a unique position as a leading local authority. He said the Council had been successful in acquiring European funding in the amount of €85 million, which was a massive vote of confidence for the future development and growth of Limerick. He asked for the support of all Members in making submissions on the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Issues Paper for the Southern Region, which had as a closing date 26th January for receipt of submissions / observations. He said the National Planning Framework was anti-rural and that Limerick was not recognised as an international centre of scale.

He referred to the housing crisis and said that the social housing provision had seen a move from brick and mortar to rental subsidy as a quick fix cheap option, but that it was not fully thought out. He added that one could not speak about housing without highlighting the problem of homelessness. He said there was a serious crisis but welcomed the fact that the Council had prioritised work in this area.

Councillor Sheahan (J) said there was a lot of buoyancy in the budget; figures such as rent and rate collection were up. Last year the Local Property Tax had been increased by 10% and Commercial Rates by 5%, and this had raised an extra €4 million in funding. The budget, as presented, proposed a rate increase which he said the Fine Gael Party would not support as they had given a commitment in relation to rates at last year's Budget Meeting. He concluded by stating that his Party was of the opinion that the Budget could be balanced without a rate increase and requested further information and clarity in relation to the Budget/costs provided for street cleaning, insurances, SME Support Scheme, Festival Development and Roads and requested details from the other parties and, in particular, Fianna Fáil, as to how the deficit due to the cut in the LPT rate would be adequately met.

Councillor Collins (M)

Councillor Collins (M), on behalf of the Fianna Fáil Group, addressed the Meeting, firstly acknowledging the monumental work that had gone into the preparation of the Budget. He paid tribute to Sean Coughlan, A/Head of Finance, and his staff, for making themselves available all week in the lead-up to the Budget Meeting.

The Draft Budget had been prepared on the principle of a "balanced budget" based on the overall level of resources available and the requirement to meet statutory, contractual, legal and other obligations.

He said Limerick was dealing with a hugely increased budget this year of €561.3 million, up from €371 million last year. This was significant and indicated how well positioned the Council was in attracting businesses to locate and conduct their business in Limerick.

Councillor Collins (M) said the investment loan of €85 million from the European Investment Bank to develop the Opera Centre Site was hugely progressive and he congratulated everyone involved.

He continued by stating that he was pleased to see a stronger focus on town and village renewal. He stressed that further funding was needed from Central Government to allow the Council purchase more properties that were lying idle in villages. This would help twofold – it would deal with dereliction but would also provide much needed housing for local families.

He added that the Fianna Fáil Group welcomed the delivery of a cultural programme which would make Limerick a recognised cultural hub, both nationally and internationally. They would like to see continued efficiencies in service provision, cost reduction and value for money.

The delivery of the HAP Programme was a major and significant contract for the Local Authority with responsibility for a revenue of €402 million, up from €214 million last year.

Insurance and rising pension costs were noted as being a major drain on resources.

Culture

The provision of €500,000, which was ring-fenced for culture programmes, was to be welcomed. He called on the Chief Executive that, for 2018, the €500,000 spend would be offered proportionally to each District and that, if no projects were forthcoming, it would be put back into a central fund for re-distribution to groups in areas that had worthy projects.

Rates

Rates, he said, were one of the main sources of income of this budget. The Fianna Fáil Group was supporting an increase of 1.75% in the commercial rate. This equated to €941,000. This would be a significant additional spend for the delivery of vital resources in areas such as local and regional roads, street cleaning, community, litter management, library service and tourism development and promotion.

He said his Party was proposing a slight change to the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018 which would be revenue cost-neutral. His Party was proposing to reduce the rate of support payment to 8% (from 9%), subject to a maximum limit of €1,600 (from €1,000) aimed specifically at Small and Medium Sized Businesses which had a qualifying annual rate warrant of between 0 and €25,000.

He continued by stating that Fianna Fáil supported the tourism sector and continuing the Support Scheme payment of 4% for the coming year.

He also welcomed the ambitious Capital Programme of €120 million for 2018 and referred, in particular, to a number of projects in the Municipal District of Newcastle West – Athletics

Hub, Development of the Great Southern Greenway, Public Realm Renewal Plan for Glin, Works at Kantoher, Safety Works at Templeglantine and Traffic Management Plans for Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale.

To conclude, Councillor Collins (M) said he would like to formally propose the adoption of the budget as presented with the proposed increase of 1.75% on the ARV, subject to the amendment set out regarding change to the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme.

Councillor Leddin

Councillor Leddin, on behalf of the Labour Group, paid tribute to the A/Head of Finance and his team for their advice and assistance throughout the budgetary process.

He referred to the proposed increase in ARV of 1.75% and said it would only affect a small percentage of ratepayers as a result of the many rebate initiatives which had been introduced by the Council. The Labour Party had no issue with the rate increase which would enable the Council to further improve service delivery. He said the Council was innovative, progressive and, in particular, highlighted the establishment of Innovate Limerick, Limerick 2030 and the huge level of economic activity ongoing in Limerick.

He went on to welcome the proposal to launch an Apprenticeship Programme in 2018, a model which would give an opportunity to upskill existing staff. He said it was very progressive and important for the Council to lead the way as a major employer in the region.

He complimented initiatives such as Smarter Travel, Digital City and Limerick.ie.

Councillor Leddin stated that the National Planning Framework lacked ambition. He added that the declassification of urban centres to towns, if they had a population of less than 10,000, was of major concern.

He asked for clarification in relation to legislative changes governing the area of derelict sites. While welcoming the additional resources for culture and tourism, he queried if the Council was achieving value for money.

He concluded by stating that the Labour Party would be supporting the Budget as presented, subject to a few minor changes.

Councillor McCreesh

Councillor McCreesh, on behalf of the Sinn Féin Group, welcomed the presentation on the 2018 Budget and paid tribute to staff in the Finance Section for producing a very detailed budget book.

He said the total estimated expenditure of €561 million was a very impressive amount that was only surpassed by Dublin City Council.

He referred to the amount of €402 plus million that was allocated to HAP which, he said, underlined everything that was wrong with the direction taken by the Council as it continued to implement Government policy on housing.

He continued by stating that the Council had not taken responsibility for the building of required housing but had instead handed over massive amounts to private landlords in order to delegate the provision of providing homes.

He concluded by stating that the Council should increase the Capital Budget and accept the funding that central government stated was available for the building of houses. He said the private sector should not be allowed to hold up the delivery of the required housing. The national crisis was getting worse and needed to be addressed.

Councillor Prendiville

Councillor Prendiville, on behalf of the Solidarity Group, thanked staff for their assistance in the lead-up to the Budget Meeting.

He referred to the standards in rented houses and expressed serious concern in relation to the level of inspections. He added that there was 20% less inspections carried out this year which was very unsatisfactory.

He said that the increase in the homeless budget of €15,000 was well short on what was needed. He said it was at a time when homeless services were pushed to capacity and it was likely that the number of those homeless would increase.

He concluded by stating that the proposal to build 546 houses next year was not enough. The Council, he stressed, needed to adequately plan to meet the needs of the City and County.

The Mayor adjourned the Meeting for 10 minutes.

On resumption, the Mayor outlined the proposed format for the next part of the Meeting. He said it was proposed to take Divisions A, B, C and D together as a group. Each Councillor would be given an opportunity to speak and ask questions in relation to each Division. The Chief Executive and relevant Director would answer questions raised by the Members. Once complete, it was then proposed to move on to Divisions E, F, G/H, again these Divisions would be taken together and the same format as previously advised would apply.

In relation to Divisions A, B, C and D, the following points were raised by the Members:

- Importance of making submission by 26th January in relation to Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy Issues Paper for the Southern Region was stressed.
- Concern expressed in relation to amount provided for school meals - could this budget be increased.
- Could the process of getting voids back into use be accelerated.

- Welcomed proposals for development of Tourism and Festivals.
- Clarification sought in relation to the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) sites, affordable price of house, breakdown requested.
- Rural development – how could Local Communities access funding.
- Housing Finance Agency – could funds be raised through this agency.
- Increase in insurance costs – what could be done in relation to this area.
- Age-Friendly / Food Strategy Initiatives discussed.

In addition, Members asked questions on several aspects of the Annual Budget for Divisions A, B, C and D which were responded to by the Chief Executive and relevant Directors of Service. The Council then noted the provisions made in the Draft Annual Budget Plan for these Divisions.

It was then agreed to move on to consider Divisions E, F, G/H.

The following points were raised by the Members in relation to these Divisions:

- Was there best practice available in relation to the Fire Service – considerable budget provided for this area.
- Current status of Rathbane Golf Club.
- Increased investment in area of suicide prevention was welcomed.
- Queried Derelict Sites Programme and possibility of using the Compulsory Purchase Order process more to deal with issue.
- Importance of Age-Friendly Programme.
- Budget provision for development of Burial Grounds.
- Initiatives to deal with Litter Pollution.
- Significant increase in payroll for Rates Office.
- Queried increased budget for “RAPID” in 2018 – had the team met in 2017.
- Role of Council in relation to Abattoirs.
- Process of allocating funds in 2018 in relation to Arts and Culture.

In addition, Members asked question on several aspects of the Annual Budget for Divisions E, F, G/H which were responded to by the Chief Executive and relevant Directors of Service. The Council then noted the provisions made in the Draft Annual Budget for these Divisions.

On conclusion of debate on each of the Divisions, the Chief Executive clarified the position for the Members in relation to what was before them at this point in the Meeting. He said there was a proposer and seconder to adopt the Budget as presented.

Councillor Sheahan (J) said the Fine Gael Party was opposed to the Budget as presented and that they were not in favour of the rate increase.

Following further discussion, the Mayor stated that a vote would be required on the proposal to adopt the Chief Executive's Draft Budget, as presented, as proposed by Councillor Gilligan and seconded by Councillor O'Brien.

The result of the voting was as follows:

For

Councillors Collins (J), Collins (M), Daly, Donegan, Foley, Gilligan, Gleeson, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, O'Brien, O'Dea, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Ryan, Secas, Sheahan (K), Sheehy, Teefy. **(20)**

Against

Councillors Browne, Butler, Costelloe, Galvin, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, McCreesh, McMahon, Mitchell, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Donnell, Prendiville, Scanlan, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teskey. **(19)**

The Mayor declared the Motion to adopt the Budget, as proposed by Councillor Gilligan and seconded by Councillor O'Brien, as carried and it was agreed that the resolutions, as set out hereunder, would be adopted by the same voting:

"THAT, the Annual Budget of €561,322,552 for the financial year ending 31st December, 2018, prepared and circulated by the Chief Executive, be adopted as per Tables A, B, D, E and F, in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014."

"AND THAT, in accordance with the Annual Budget thus adopted, €0.2627 be and is hereby determined as the General Annual Rate on Valuation to be levied for the several purposes specified in the said Tables for the financial year ending on 31st December, 2018, in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014."

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon;
 And Resolved:

"THAT, in accordance with Section 135 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, the Report on Capital Projects 2018 – 2020, as presented to the Meeting, is considered."

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor O'Dea;
 And Resolved:

"THAT, the proportion of commercial rates refund that applies on vacant properties in 2018 within the administrative area of Limerick City and County Council, in accordance with the provisions of Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, and Part 5 of the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations, 2014, and Section 14 of the Local Government Act, 1946, be set at 10% for 2018. (Item 4 on Meeting agenda)."

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
 Seconded by Councillor O'Dea;
 And Resolved:

"THAT, the Vacant Property Refund Scheme 2018 to encourage the beneficial use of commercial property in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 43 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, is adopted. (Item 5 on Meeting agenda)."

In relation to the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018, the following amendment, which was noted as being cost-neutral, was proposed by Councillor Collins (M) and seconded by Councillor O'Dea:

Reduce the rate of support payment to 8% (from 9%) - Subject to a maximum limit of €1,600 (from €1,000).

Councillor Sheahan (J) stated that the Fine Gael Group would also be proposing an amendment to the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme. At this point, it was agreed to take a further adjournment of 10 minutes for them to consider their amendment.

On resumption, the following amendment to the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018, which was noted as being cost-neutral, was proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J) and seconded by Councillor Galvin:

Propose a rate of payment support of 12.5% for properties less than €500. Reduce the limit to €987.

The Mayor stated that a vote would be taken on the amendment proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J) and seconded by Councillor Galvin.

The result of the voting was as follows:

For

Councillors Butler, Galvin, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, Mitchell, O'Donnell, Prendiville, Scanlan, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teskey. **(14)**

Against

Councillors Browne, Collins (J), Collins (M), Costelloe, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Gilligan, Gleeson, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, McCreesh, McMahon, O'Brien, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Dea, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Ryan, Secas, Sheahan (K), Sheehy, Teefy. **(25)**

The Mayor declared the amendment proposed by Councillor Sheahan (J) and seconded by Councillor Galvin as defeated.

The Mayor then advised that a vote would be taken on the amendment proposed by Councillor Collins (M) and seconded by Councillor O'Dea.

The result of the voting was as follows:

For

Councillors Collins (J), Collins (M), Donegan, Foley, Gilligan, Gleeson, Loftus, Lynch, O'Brien, O'Dea, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Ryan, Sheahan (K), Sheehy, Teefy. **(17)**

Against

Councillors Browne, Butler, Costelloe, Daly, Galvin, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, Leddin, McCreesh, McMahon, Mitchell, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Donnell, Prendiville, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teskey. **(22)**

The Mayor declared the amendment proposed by Councillor Collins (M) and seconded by Councillor O’Dea as defeated.

In response to a query, the Chief Executive stated that the original proposal in relation to the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018, incorporated in the Budget as presented, would stand.

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
Seconded by Councillor O’Dea;
And Resolved:

“THAT, the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2018, in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 43 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, is adopted as circulated without amendment. (Item No. 6 on Meeting agenda).”

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
Seconded by Councillor O’Dea;
And Resolved:

“THAT, the Tourism Sector Support Scheme 2018, in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 43 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, is adopted, as circulated. (Item 7 on the Meeting agenda).”

Proposed by Councillor Collins (M);
Seconded by Councillor O’Dea;
And Resolved:

“THAT, the Business and Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property from 01/01/2018 until 31/12/2018 in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, subject to finances available, is adopted, as circulated. (Item 8 on Meeting agenda).”

In response to a query raised by Councillor Prendiville in relation to the Tourism Sector Support Scheme, the Chief Executive stated that the Budget was now adopted and while the Scheme could be amended if cost-neutral, the funds could not be reallocated to a different area.

The Mayor and Members thanked the Chief Executive, A/Head of Finance and staff for their assistance in the formation of the Budget.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed:

Mayor

Date:
