

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AT MEETING OF LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DOORADOYLE, LIMERICK, ON THURSDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2018, AT 11.00 A.M. TO CONSIDER THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2019.

PRESENT IN THE CHAIR:

Councillor J. Collins, Mayor.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Sheahan (K).

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive (Mr. C. Murray), Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Economic Development (Mr. P. Daly), Director, Physical Development (Mr. B. Kennedy), Director, National and Regional Shared Services (Ms. C. Curley), Director, Service Operations (Mr. K. Lehane), Director, Support Services (Mr. S. Coughlan), Director, Social Development (Mr. G. Daly), Director, Housing Development (Ms. A. Duke), A/Director, Capital Investment (Mr. J. Delaney), Meetings Administrator (Mr. J. Clune), Administrative Officer, Corporate Services (Ms. F. McCormack), Financial Accountant (Mr. P. Murnane), Administrative Officer, Finance Department (Ms. I. Griffin), Administrative Officer, Finance (Mr. K. Dore), Staff Officer, Finance (Ms. C. Liston).

Circulated (a) Draft Chief Executive's Budget Report and Tables, including Capital Programme 2019-2021; (b) Proposed Vacant Property Refund Scheme 2019; (c) Proposed Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2019; (d) Proposed Tourism Sector Support Scheme 2019; (e) Proposed Business and Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property 2019.

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, 2019, the Draft Budget having been served in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

The Mayor stated that the Budget 2019 process for engagement with Members commenced on 17th September, 2018, with an initial Corporate Policy Group meeting. On 24th September, 2018, the Council made its decision on the rate of Local Property Tax (LPT). There were two further Corporate Policy Group meetings held on 15th October and 12th November. Also, the

draft budgetary plan was approved by each of the Municipal Districts and Metropolitan District during October. During the period 15th October to 19th October, there was a Statutory Draft Budgetary Plan Meeting in the Metropolitan and Municipal Districts. There were two further CPG Meetings on 15th October, 2018, and 12th November, 2018. In addition, earlier that week, there had been a Full Council Workshop on 12th November where the Draft Budget 2019 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 2019 following the adoption of the Budget.

The Council are required to consider the Chief Executive's draft Budget for 2019, in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, along with determining the Annual Rate on Valuation. Also, the 3-year Capital Programme 2019-2021 would be considered in accordance Section 135(2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended. In relation to the various proposed Schemes, they would be considered subsequently, as set out on the agenda.

He concluded by stating that the Chief Executive would present an overview of the draft 2019 Budget:

The Chief Executive referred to 2019 the year in which Local Government as we know it will celebrate 120 years of our existence. As a sector and integral part of government we have adapted in our attempts to keep pace with the ever changing social economic and cultural environment and the demands of a multicultural and diverse society. We have seen our country and the people of the local region we serve suffer the consequences of economic devastation and which manifested itself in the past years in Limerick's poor economic performance, employment black spots, the consequential deprivation and our reputation at home and abroad.

The Chief Executive recalled June 2014 when Limerick City and County Council came together as a new authority with a clear sense of purpose, a shared vision for Limerick and the Midwest, and a determination to address the ills of the past. While embracing the values of public service and remaining true to the ethos of local democracy this council made the vital decisions that have restored belief, confidence and pride to the region. It is important that to remind ourselves of some of the key decisions that enabled progress to be made.

The Chief Executive outlined the key decisions that had been made such as;

Agreeing an historic single annual rate on valuation for the first time allowing the stimulation of the local economy underlining our commitment to economic growth in order to generate employment and create an environment for continued prosperity.

Fully embedding the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) into the Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016 (as extended) with €170m committed by central Government in the national capital plan.

The provision of €10m investment for Limerick to shine as National City of Culture 2014 and a commitment to maintain an annual Arts and Culture fund thereafter

The raising of a working capital loan of €32m to help kick-start the Limerick 2030 Plan and drive investment across the city and county by the development of key strategic sites.

The purchase of the former Dell factory in Castletroy to allow Troy Studios develop its footprint and build a successful international quality film, TV and content industry in the Limerick region.

Establishment of Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC to prioritise the redevelopment of 1.4 million sq ft of prime real estate accelerating Limerick's emergence as one of Europe's most attractive investment locations.

The Members' vision for the Opera Site received the backing and support of the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank with €170 million being provided for development highlighting the confidence both institutions have in Limerick's plans for the city centre.

The provision of an additional 25% (€2.3m) on the allocation of €9.276m Rural Development Programme to assist in delivering strategic rural projects across County Limerick in partnership with West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development CLG.

Becoming one of the first local authority in the country to adjust upwards the rate of Local Property Tax (LPT) above the base line figure allowing greater investment in the delivery of key local services at a minimal cost to the property owners.

The provision of a Small and Medium Business Support scheme to protect and scale this sector. Also, the extension of the Business and Retail Incentive scheme to all towns and villages in Limerick to address property vacancy rates and support the business community.

The establishment of Innovate Limerick, which is driving innovation and acting as a delivery mechanism for the projects outlined in the Limerick 2030 Plan and the Limerick Regeneration implementation plans and others.

The Chief Executive stated that the leadership, vision and decision-making shown by the Members have supported all of these initiatives and this faith in the new Limerick story has

seen Limerick now become the fastest growing economy in Ireland and the Irish urban success story of the last decade.

The Chief Executive stated that the Draft Budget presented today 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.

Budget 2019 marks the end of an historic period for local government not just in Limerick but in the country as a whole. This budget is the fifth since the amalgamation of Limerick’s two councils and is the last before we head into the local elections in May 2019. Limerick’s can-do attitude, which has made it one of the fastest growing regions in Ireland, has been led by the Council. Since Limerick City and County Council came into existence in 2014, staff have been flexible in adapting to the changing work environments and structures, while always ensuring the maintenance of quality services with limited resources. Elected members have supported the changing environment and work practices and backed the entire progress through strategic decision-making and strengthening the income base of the Local Authority.

The Chief Executive stated that all of this work has been completed against the backdrop of an uncertain economic environment and various challenges posed from social, economic and environmental viewpoints. Despite the uncertainty Limerick City and County Council continues to grow quality local authority services.

The Chief Executive referred to 2018, the Council again had to react to unforeseen events, which demonstrated the professionalism, commitment and determination of staff to manage the impact of these events. These included several severe weather events at the beginning of the year and the joyous occasion of the homecoming for Limerick’s victorious All-Ireland senior Hurling Champions in August.

The draft 2019 budget has been prepared with a proposed 1.9% increase in Commercial Rates ARV (Annual Rate on Valuation), and reflects the decision by elected members to increase rate of Local Property Tax (LPT) by 7.5% for 2019. These increases will enable the Council to further improve service delivery.

The Chief Executive stated that Limerick City and County Council will continue to facilitate economic development by progressing key capital projects across 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 thanked the Mayor and the Council Members for their foresight, assistance and support, particularly the Members of the Corporate Policy Group in preparing this budget. He expressed his appreciation to the Management Team and their own teams for their commitment and hard work in preparing the document. He stated that the coming year will again be challenging but offers significant opportunities.

It was unanimously agreed that the Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Budget 2019, 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 2019 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 Thursday, 15th November 2018 at 11am, 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 14 days beginning on the day on which the local authority budget meeting meets. The Budget therefore must be adopted by 29th November 2018.

Circular Fin 05/2018 also refers to the prescribed period that applies for the holding of the 2019 Budget meeting for Local Authorities as follows; 1st November 2018 to 30th November 2018. It was agreed by the Members at the September Council meeting to hold the Annual Budget Meeting on Thursday 15th November 2018 at 11am, in Council Chamber, Dooradoyle.

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 the 24th 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	15 th October
Adare / Rathkeale Municipal District	16 th October
Cappamore / Kilmallock Municipal District	18 th October
Newcastle West 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 the 17th September with further meetings held on the 15th October and 12th November. The Statutory Budget meeting is scheduled for 15th November with a budget workshop to be held on the 12th 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 2019 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.

Background

Since Limerick City and County Council came into existence on 1st June 2014, the local authority has enabled and accelerated the growth of a renewed, unified Limerick and a Limerick with a bright future through key budgetary decisions made by Members.

Some key decisions include:

- Agreeing an historic single annual rate on valuation for the first time allowing the stimulation of the local economy underlining our commitment to economic growth in order to generate employment and create an environment for continued prosperity.

- The Members vision for the Opera Site received the backing and support of the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank with €170 million being provided for development highlighting the confidence both institutions have in Limerick's plans for the city centre.
- The provision of an additional 25% (€2.3m) on the allocation of €9.276m Rural Development Programme to assist in delivering strategic rural projects across County Limerick in partnership with West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development CLG.
- The purchase of the former Dell factory in Castletroy to allow Troy Studios develop its footprint and build a successful international quality film, TV and content industry in the Limerick region.
- Becoming the first local authority in the country to adjust upwards the rate of Local Property Tax (LPT) above the base line figure allowing greater investment in the delivery of key local services at a minimal cost to the property owners.
- The provision of a Small and Medium Business Support scheme to protect and scale this sector. Also, the extension of the Business and Retail Incentive scheme to all towns and villages in Limerick to address property vacancy rates and support the business community.
- Establishment of Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC to prioritise the redevelopment of 1.4 million sq ft of prime real estate accelerating Limerick's emergence as one of Europe's most attractive investment locations.
- The raising of a working capital loan of €32m to help kick-start the Limerick 2030 Plan and drive investment across the city and county by the development of key strategic sites.
- The provision of €1m investment for Limerick to shine as National City of Culture 2014 and a commitment to maintain an annual Arts and Culture fund thereafter.
- The establishment of Innovate Limerick, which is driving innovation and acting as a delivery mechanism for the projects outlined in the Limerick 2030 Plan and the Limerick Regeneration implementation plans and others.
- Fully embedded the Limerick Regeneration Framework Implementation Plan (LRFIP) into the Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016 (as extended) with €170m committed by central Government in the national capital plan.

The leadership, vision and decision-making shown by the Members have supported all of these initiatives and this faith in the new Limerick story has seen Limerick now become the fastest growing economy in Ireland and the Irish urban success story of the last decade.

National Economic Outlook

The Irish economy has continued to perform strongly this year despite a softening of the growth in the Eurozone and the UK. While the global economic outlook remains bright, there remains a number of dark clouds on the horizon. The UK will be the slowest growing economy in Europe in 2019. Given Ireland's reliance on this key export market, the risks posed by a hard Brexit are evidenced by the drop of 7.2% in exports to the UK already this year. Emerging market imbalances are also an area of concern. As the economy overall approaches full employment, wage pressure and labour shortages will become a broader issue and a constraint on economic growth potential.

Table 1 below outlines the main economic and fiscal variables underlying the Department of Finance's budget for 2019.

<i>Variable - % change (unless stated)</i>	2015	2016	2017	2019	2019
<i>Economic Activity</i>					
Real GDP	25.6	5.1	4.3	3.5	4.2
Real GNP	16.4	9.6	0.0	3.3	3.9
<i>Prices</i>					
Core HICP	1.2	0.5	0.1	1.0	1.4
<i>Balance of Payments</i>					
Current account (per cent of GDP)	10.2	3.3	8.5	12.0	11.7
<i>Labour Market</i>					
Total Employment ('000)^	1,964	2,020	2,075	2,125	2,321
Employment	2.6	2.9	2.8	2.3	2.8
Unemployment (per cent)	9.4	7.9	6.3	5.7	5.2
<i>Public Finances (per cent of GDP)</i>					
General government balance	-1.9	-0.7	-0.3	-0.2	0.0
Structural balance	-2.2	-1.7	-1.1	-0.5	-0.7
Debt ratio (year-end)	78.6	72.8	70.1	69.0	61.4
Net debt position (year-end)	66.9	63.7	61.2	59.6	55.2

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

Source: Department of Finance Economic and Fiscal Outlook Budget 2019, p.2

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 in 2019, 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 & 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 Outlook:

2018 has seen many significant milestones occur for Limerick City and County as we continue our ambitious plans to develop Limerick into the future.

It has been an exceptional year on the jobs front with more than 3,000 jobs announced for Limerick since January 2018 and over €516 million invested. Companies which have made investment announcements during the year include H&MV, AMCS, Nordic Aviation Capital, Uber, Edwards Life Sciences and Eir.

This brings a total of 15,712 jobs for Limerick since 2013 with over €2.2 billion of investment by companies including General Motors, Troy Studios, Regeneron, Fazzi, HCL, WP Engine, Design Pro and Northern Trust.

We have, with our Limerick 2030 economic and spatial plan, a clearly defined pathway and, step by step, we are making our way to a place that Limerick has never been before.

A carefully planned, sustainable and socially balanced city at the centre of - and driving - a wider region that, in turn, is playing a major role in a rebalanced and effective national economy.

With just two full years of activity behind it, 2019 will be the third and pivotal year for Limerick Twenty Thirty Strategic Development DAC. 2019 will see very significant progress across the company's impressive portfolio, picking up on the momentum gathered in 2018, most notably and visually around its first major build project, Gardens International, which is now in the advance stages of completion. This LEED Gold development – one of the highest international quality accreditations in the construction industry – will be operational in the New Year when its first tenant, Nordic Aviation Capital, takes up occupancy.

Already completed and operational is Troy Studios, a 350,000 sq. ft. film hub that reflects the exciting mix in the revitalised Limerick. 2018 saw filming begin at the site, with up to 350 people working on a new production called 'Nightflyers', by Universal Cable Productions for American broadcaster Syfy Netflix channel. Troy Studios' sound stages are already operational but an expansion was announced in the autumn to help create year-round film production.

2019 will be a momentous year also for the landmark Opera Site, the 1.62 hectare city centre project that will be developed at a total cost of circa €180m. Fully funded as of 2018 and with master-planning significantly advanced, the project will take a critical step shortly when a planning application will be lodged with An Bord Pleanála for the development. Late 2019 is also expected to see enabling works at the site, ahead of construction on what is one of the most important developments ever undertaken in Limerick, one with the capacity to create 3,000 jobs across a 450,000 sq ft campus.

Master-planning will also be advanced in 2019 at another key development, the 10-acre Cleeves Riverside Campus on the northern bank of the River Shannon, which is suited to a mix of potential uses, including education, tourism, residential, incubation/innovation space and commercial office. An inter-disciplinary design team was appointed in 2018 to carry out a scoping study to explore options going forward for this high-potential site.

Significant steps will also be taken in 2019 with the Mungret Park development, one of the largest planned residential projects outside the capital. Master-planning was commenced in 2018 on this 60-acre site, which will ultimately be able to deliver an 850-unit development built over a phased basis. A planning application will be lodged in 2019 for the first phase – 250 units. This is scheduled for completion in 2021.

We are approaching the first anniversary of ENGINE, a dedicated fixed office, co-work and training facility located in the heart of Limerick's Georgian District. There are currently 90 people working on site with expansion plans for this facility including the creation of a Digital Collaboration and Virtual Reality Centre in the adjacent building (No. 29 Cecil Street).

Building upgrade works have been completed at Rathkeale Enterprise Centre, with anchor tenant Design Pro recently announcing further expansion plans. It is envisaged that the workforce at this former Andersen Ireland Factory will reach 200 in the coming 12 months with an E-Hub in Abbeyfeale also set for development as a central community space.

As a local authority, we are determined to ensure that the housing challenge continues to be addressed in a focused and concerted manner under the policy framework of 'Rebuilding Ireland- Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness'. To that end, I have established a Housing Development Directorate whose sole focus is on Housing Delivery to meet housing demand.

In tandem with the delivery of new units, the focus is also maintaining and enhancing our existing housing stock. During 2019, Housing Development will bring a strategic focus to this. A planned maintenance programme will see significant, targeted investment in the homes of our tenants through investment of a €15m loan over a 4-year period. Such a programme would also bring greater focus on voids, dereliction and vacant houses. The Housing Maintenance Programme, that we are all familiar with, will continue in response to general maintenance calls from our tenants.

The introduction of a Single Differential Rent Scheme throughout the City and County is an important step in achieving fairness and consistency in terms of the calculation of rents. We are very aware also of the importance of ensuring that the charges levied are based on our tenants' ability to pay.

While the standard allocation model will remain in place, it is our intention to pilot a Choice-Based Letting (CBL) model of allocation during 2019. The management of existing tenancies is a critical piece of work in which we continue to engage.

Consultation and communication with our Elected Representatives, our tenants and the wider community is critical. We are committed to working collaboratively to achieve a solution to the housing challenges we face.

Strong collaboration with Approved Housing Bodies will continue, as a means of enhancing delivery mechanisms while also providing additional services to our tenants who face significant challenges in their daily lives. The continued roll-out of a Housing First model will allow us to work with families and individuals, who have experienced homelessness, by providing the continuing support they need to build stable, permanent homes for themselves, their families and their communities.

The Housing Development programme is ambitious, but, by actively and constructively working together, we will accelerate supply and transform housing in a way that will be to the benefit of all who live, work and invest in Limerick.

I have restructured the Social Development Directorate to provide a more co-ordinated and accessible services for all communities in Limerick. The development of enhanced community supports is critical in the overall development of our City and County having regard to the key role the community and voluntary sector play. The co-ordination of service delivery and funding streams will result in increased value for money and achieve better outcomes for local communities. There will be a significant focus on stimulating and strengthening Limerick's City, towns and villages to improve quality of life and investment. This will help address dereliction, vacancy and underutilisation, providing property development supports and place-making.

The Council will progress in 2019 key infrastructural projects including the M20 Limerick to Cork scheme, the Foynes to Limerick City Road scheme, the Mungret (LIHAF) Road scheme and the Northern Distributor Road. These schemes will facilitate further economic growth for the City and County.

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 2019 Budget are set out in the Table below:

Key Objectives of Budget 2019

1. Dedicated Housing Development directorate with priority on the following areas

- Focused implementation of proactive approach to maintenance of our social housing stock in certain areas.
- Increase resources for the maintenance budget to meet the ongoing demands of our social housing stock and provide match funding to address voids, dereliction and vacant properties
- Increase resources in the area of tenancy enforcement
- Increased resources in the area of Homelessness
- Rollout of choice-based letting and streamline Metro Areas of Choice
- Introduce single differential rent scheme in 2019
- Deliver on targets as set out in Rebuilding Ireland
- Working with Approved Housing Bodies as a key delivery mechanism.

2. New Social Development Directorate to provide a stronger focus on a number of interrelated areas around support to communities:

- Community Development Supports: Engagement and advice to communities on grant schemes and other Council led supports
- Revitalisation of our urban areas & villages through a stronger focus on addressing dereliction, vacancy & delivering public realm improvements
- Delivering a cultural and arts programme in conjunction with the newly formed Cultural SPC for the benefit of the Citizens of Limerick and visitors to our City and County.
- Deliver an enhanced programme of festivals and events through the implementation of the proposed Festival and Event Strategy.
- Delivering Tourism Development
- Strengthening the role of our libraries, gallery and museum play in enhancing the quality of life of our citizens

3. Economic Development:

- Continue the increased pace of economic investment/ job creation in the City and County
- Launch and implement Limerick's new brand identity
- Continue to deliver on Limerick 2030 economic & spatial strategy
- Expand Innovate Limerick projects and support LEO programme for SME sector
- Lead a digital strategy that will lay the foundation for a "Smart Limerick Region".
- Ensure that Limerick is at the forefront in targeting European funding and investment.

4. Physical Development:

- To continue to invest in the rural and urban infrastructure through the delivery of the 2019 schedule of municipal district works
- Progress key infrastructure projects to facilitate the continued economic growth in Limerick and the Mid-West
- Protect the natural and built environment for Limerick City and County including the progression of the CFRAMS programme in conjunction with the OPW, to continue to work towards our 2020 climate change targets and to meet the objectives of the Water Framework directive.

5. Delivery 2019 targets set for HAP shared service and continue to provide a quality service while actively looking to implement innovative solutions to delivery further efficiencies.

6. Continue to seek efficiencies in service provision, cost reduction and value for money.

Outturn 2018

In presenting the Annual Budget for the year ended 31 December 2019 to Council, I wish to take this opportunity to summarise the financial position of Limerick City and County Council as at 31 December 2017. The Annual Financial Statement of Limerick City and County Council for the year 2017 shows the accumulated balance on the Revenue Account is in a credit position of €812,260.

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 2018; however there is pressure on a number of income heads and ongoing controls on expenditure are in place.

The 2019 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 2019

The total estimated expenditure included in the Draft Budget for 2019 amounts to €689.585 million, an increase of €128.262 million on the adopted figure for 2018. 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 2019	Adopted Budget 2018
A - Housing & Building	€35,445,918	€29,398,146
A - HAP Shared Service Centre	€518,781,747	€402,772,776
B - Road Transport & Safety	€39,420,857	€37,160,120
C - Water Services	€14,665,694	€13,693,402
D - Development Mgt	€19,814,221	€17,731,303
E - Environmental Services	€32,314,238	€31,978,334
F - Recreation & Amenity	€13,948,846	€13,157,635
G - Agri, Ed, Health & Welfare	€1,369,896	€1,408,739
H - Misc Services	€13,823,171	€14,022,097
	€689,584,588	€561,322,552

Table 2: Analysis of Expenditure by Division

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

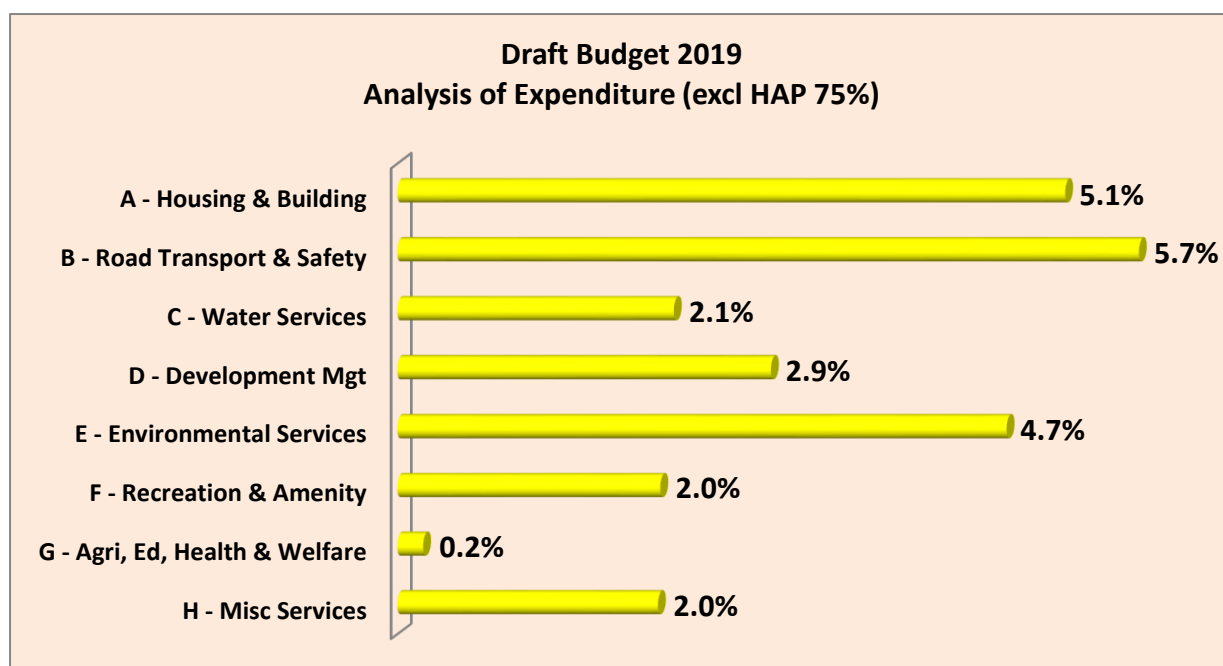


Chart 1: Analysis of split of Expenditure (excl HAP) by Division

The following bar chart shows the estimated expenditure for Draft Budget 2019 for each Division, with comparative figures for 2018:

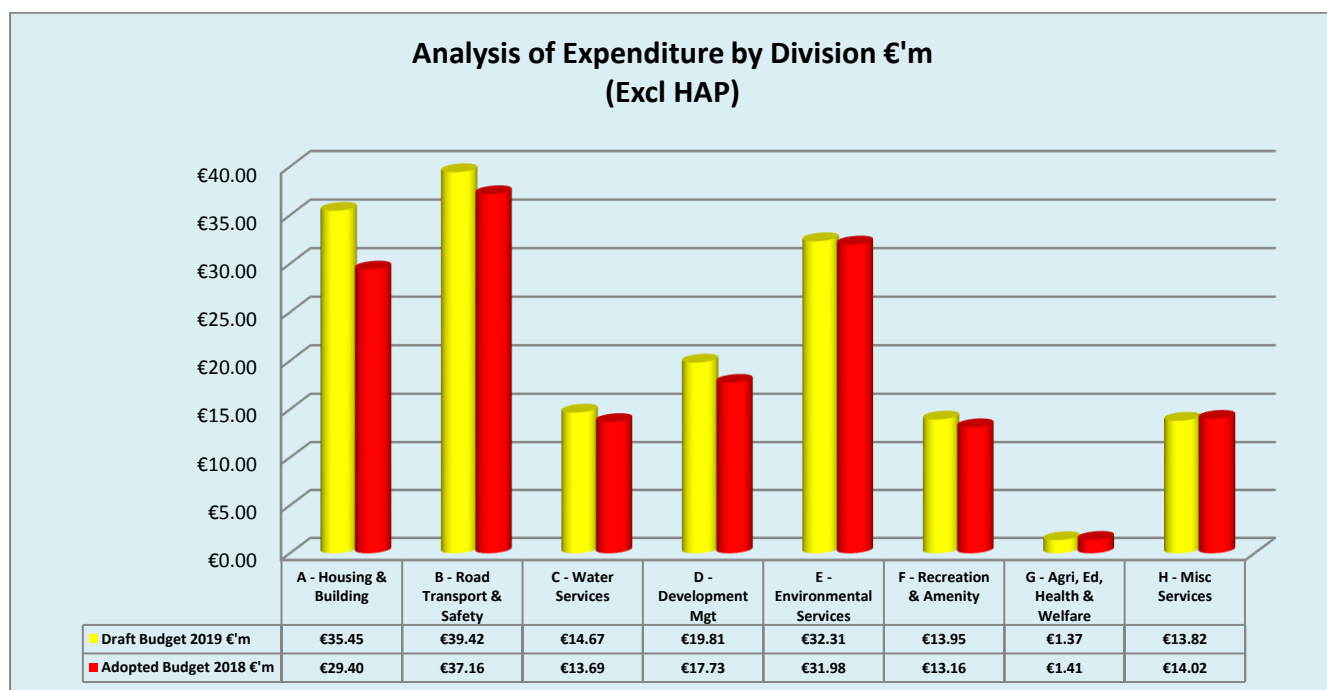


Chart 2: Analysis of Expenditure (excl HAP) by Division - Draft Budget 2019 versus Budget 2018

Analysis of Income 2019

The level of expenditure shown above, at €689.585 million, will be financed from the following sources:

Source	Amount
1. Local Property Tax	€18,732,066
2. Commercial Rates	€55,977,993
3. Grants & Subsidies (net of HAP)	€45,605,495
4. Goods & Services (net of HAP)	€50,810,088
Sub Total Income (Excluding HAP)	€171,125,642
1. HAP Differential Rent	€125,583,120
2. HAP Subsidy from DHPCLG	€392,875,826
Sub Total HAP	€518,458,946
Total including HAP	€689,584,588

Table 3: Analysis of Draft Budget 2019 Income

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

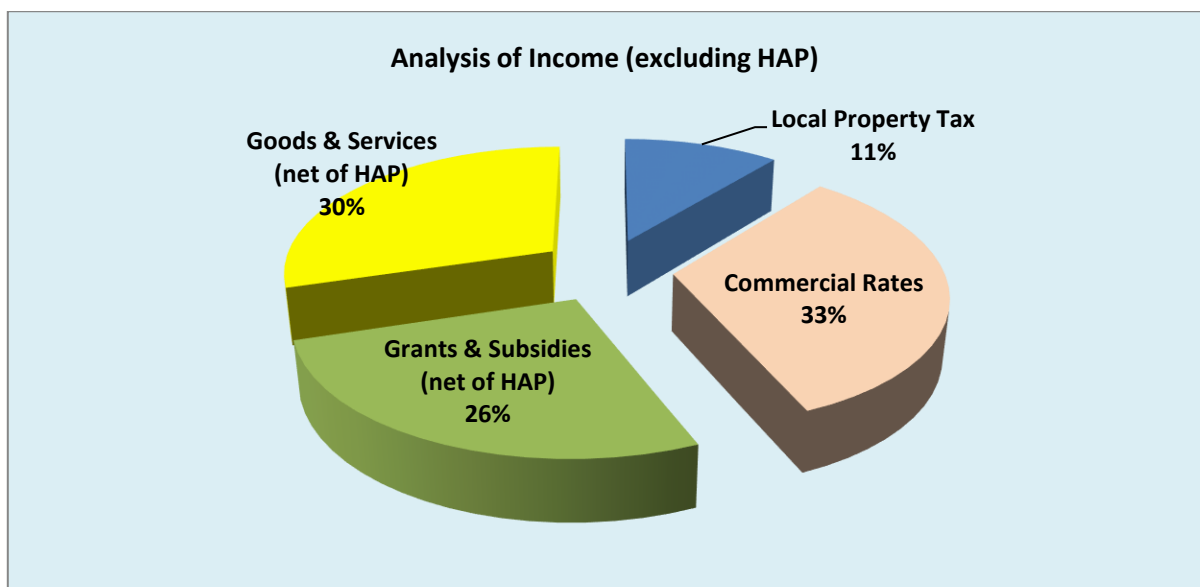


Chart 3: Analysis of Draft Budget 2019 Income (excluding HAP)

74% of the Council's income (excluding HAP) is now generated locally through Commercial Rates (33%), LPT (11%) and goods & services (30%).

Comparative figures for Budgets 2019 and 2018 are shown hereunder.

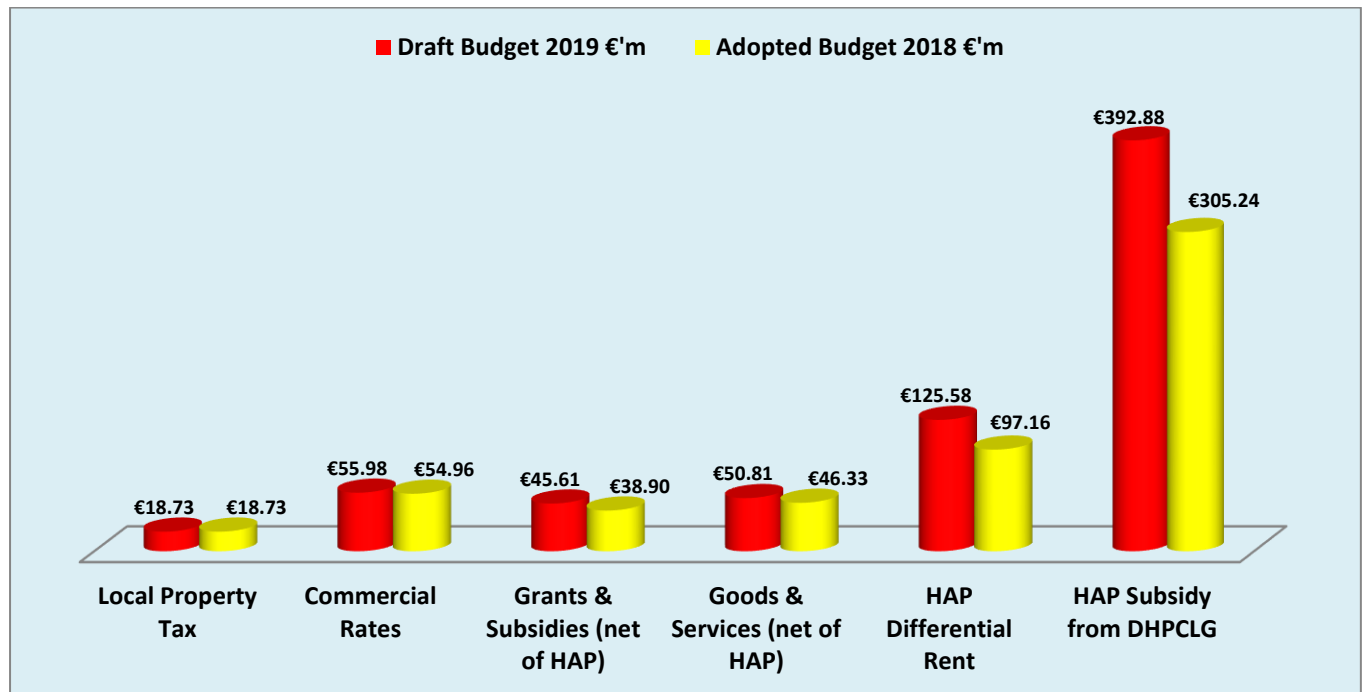


Chart 4: Analysis of Income: Draft Budget 2019 v's Budget 2018

Local Property Tax Allocation 2019

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. 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 2019 equating to an increase of €1,177,602.

The 2019 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:

<i>Limerick City and County Council - 2019 LPT Allocation</i>	
LPT 100%	€15,701,369
LPT 20% to Equalisation Fund	(€3,140,274)
=> LPT 80% Retained Locally	€12,561,095
Distribution from Equalisation Fund	€4,993,368
Original LPT Allocation	€17,554,464
7.5% increase in LPT rate	€1,177,602
Revised LPT Allocation	€18,732,066

Table 4: LPT Reconciliation

The 7.5% LPT variation for 2019 of €1,177,602 has been allocated to provide additional resources for the delivery of the following services as follows:

<i>Svc</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	<i>LPT 7.5% Allocation 2019</i>
B03 & B04	Own Resource element of Local & Regional Roads	€316k
E0601	Street cleaning	€220k
B0601 & B0602	Traffic Management	€200k
F0301	Maintenance of Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	€140k
F0201	Library Service	€50k
E1101	Fire Service	€100k
D0501	Tourism Development & Promotion	€151k
Total		€1,177k

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 2019. 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 2019. In circumstances where there is no engagement, the Council will pursue the outstanding arrears via the legal route.

Draft Budget 2019 has been prepared assuming an increase of 1.90% in the general Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV), with the distribution of the 1.90% noted across the services outlined below in **Table 6**:

<i>Svc</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	1.90% increase in Rates Allocation
A01	Housing Maintenance (including CCTV maintenance)	€450k
A05	Homeless Service	€100k
A04	Tenancy Enforcement	€150K
B03 / B04	Local & Regional Roads Own Resources	€150k
D05	Tourism Development & Promotion	€50k
F05	Festival Development	€150k
Total		€1,050k

Table 6: Allocation of additional resources from proposed 1.90% Commercial Rate increase

Table 7 below outlines the combined effect for 2019 of the LPT increase of 7.5% with proposed Commercial Rate increase of 1.90%.

<i>Svc</i>	<i>Service Description</i>	<i>LPT 7.5% & Rates 1.9% Allocation 2019</i>
A01	Housing Maintenance (Including CCTV maintenance)	€450k
A05	Homeless Service	€100k
A04	Tenancy Enforcement	€150k
B03 & B04	Own Resources element of Local & Regional Roads	€466k
B06	Traffic Management	€200k
D05	Tourism Development & Promotion	€201k
E06	Street cleaning	€220k
F05	Festival Development	€150k
F03	Maintenance of Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	€140k
F02	Library Service	€50k
E1101	Fire Service	€100k
Total		€2,227k

Table 7 combined effect for 2019 of the LPT increase of 7.5% with proposed Commercial Rate increase of 1.9%

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 2019:

Band	% Refund
Up to €2,856 Annual Rate Demand	100%
€2,857 to €11,376 Annual Rate Demand	50%
€11,377 to €57,024 Annual Rate Demand	25%
Over €57,025 Annual Rate Demand	10%

Table 8: Proposed Vacant Property Scheme 2019

Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2019 (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 but not less than €1 in 2019. The proposed % support for 2019 rates is 9% subject to a maximum refund of €1,000 which will be subject to a number of terms and conditions.

Tourism Sector Support Scheme 2019

The Proposed Tourism Sector Support Scheme for 2019 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 2019) 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 2019 subject to the Scheme being approved by the Council.

Business & Retail Incentive Scheme 2019

The Proposed Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for 2019 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 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. Approximately 350 tenancies per week are currently established by the HAP SSC. By the end of 2018 it is anticipated that the HAP SSC will be managing over 45,000 HAP tenancies on behalf of the local authority sector.

The HAP SSC has budgeted to process €512m in payments to HAP landlords and expects collect almost €125m in rent from HAP tenants in 2019. Circa 17,000 new HAP tenancies will be set up in 2019. There are currently 57 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 increase further in the coming years.

General Municipal/ Metropolitan Allocation 2019

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 repairs to be carried out during 2019 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

Recruitment of staff within the Organisation will continue and in particular will focus on the replacement of staff following retirements, promotions and departures.

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 2019. The Graph below shows our overall numbers at present and the number of retired staff, which will rise significantly towards the end of 2019.

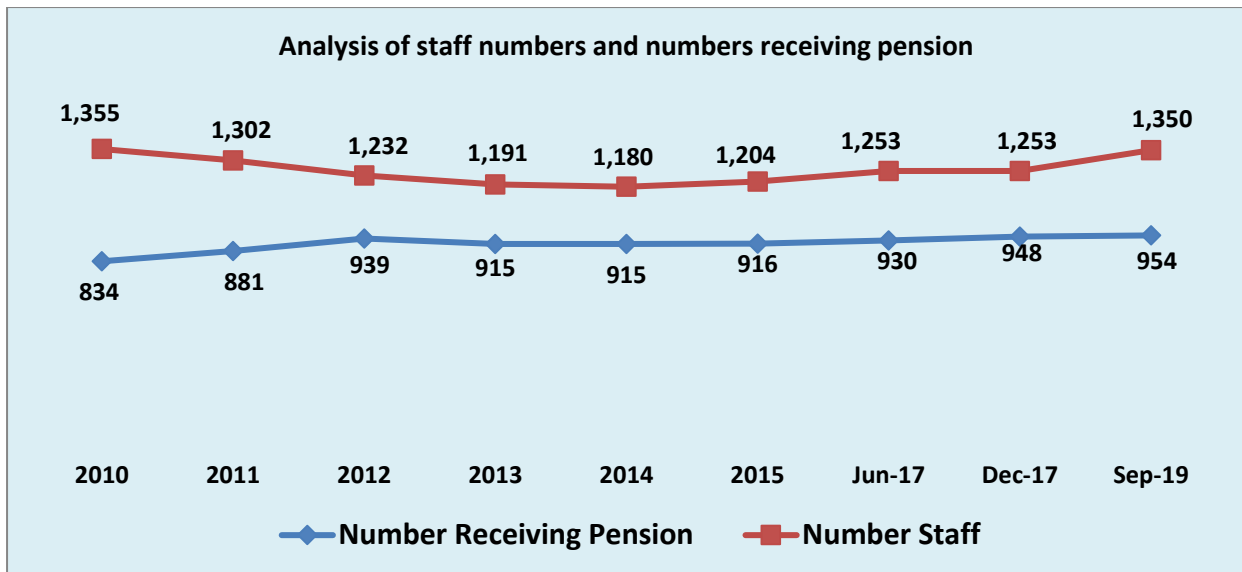


Chart 5: Analysis of staff numbers and number receiving pensions 2010-2019

Business Process Improvement

The Business Improvement Department is a small dynamic team who drive and support the Business Improvement approach in Limerick City and County Council. There are several projects ongoing within the organisation at any one time that use our 'Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve, Control' approach.

'Project 18' is a key business improvement project due to go-live in November of this year. It will serve to embed a Project Management Framework into the Council and provide a system that will monitor all Capital and Revenue projects across the organisation. Time, Scope and Money will be tracked across all projects ensuring that adequate allocation of resources and a tracked response to any changes. It will also ensure that all our projects are connected back to our corporate aims. Upskilling and engagement with staff on Project Management will continue to take place to ensure the approach gets traction in the organisation.

Engagement with the public is a key part of the delivery of Local Government services. With this in mind the Business Improvement Department has also provided training to key members of staff on 'Service Design' which examines how we engage with our citizens in the design and delivery of our services.

As the Business Improvement Department evolves, more emphasis is placed on evidence and measurement to ensure decisions are well informed. We will also continue to work with 'Insight Limerick' to seek key performance indicators to measure the impact improvements within Limerick City and County Council are having on the public.

Having a dedicated Business Improvement team demonstrates Limerick City and County Council's absolute commitment to the provision of responsive, efficient and innovative

services and we will continue to strive to deliver the highest possible quality of service to our citizens.

Irish Water

The Budget includes 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 the recoupment of these costs from Irish Water.

Capital Budget 2019-2021

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 2019 to 2021.

A key element of the Capital Programme over the coming years is delivering on the Limerick 2030 plan. Council members agreed to the raising of a working capital loan in 2014 of €32m and in 2017 approved loans of €170m from the European Investment Bank and Council of Europe Development Bank to help fund this programme. Also, The Rural Regeneration & Development Fund and the Urban Regeneration & Development Fund will provide funding opportunities for the Council to develop strategic projects which were submitted by Limerick City and County Council to the relevant funding Department for consideration in September 2018.

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 2019 to 2021.

Capital Expenditure 2019 -2021	Grant funded	Loan funded	Special Levy Schemes	Development Levy Funded	Revenue Funded	Other (Land Sales / Contributors)
€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m	€m
629.80	461.909	129.63	4.19	9.75	6.71	17.605

Table 9: Summary Capital Plan 2019-2021

Chart 6 profiles the Capital Expenditure for each of the three years:

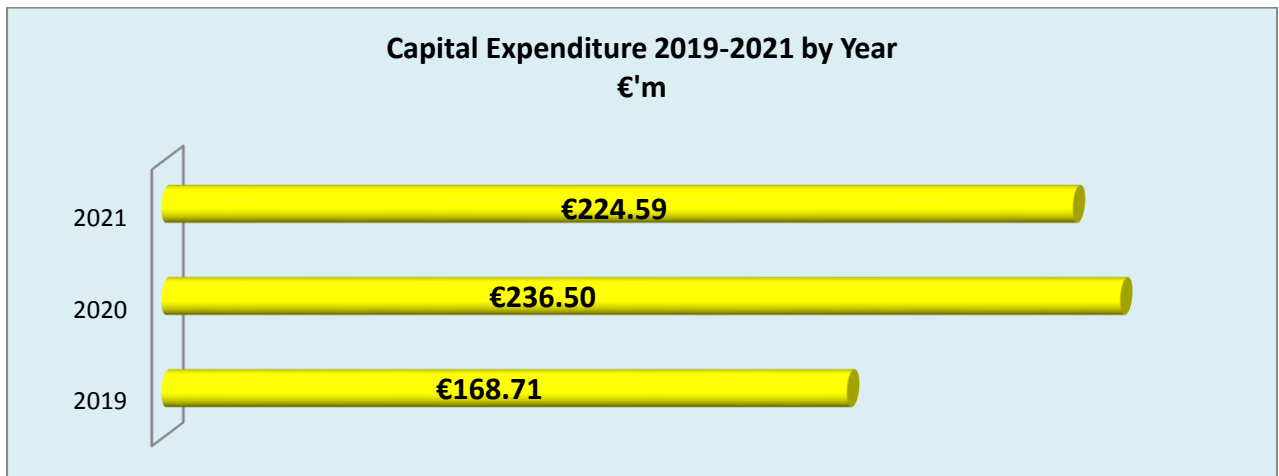


Chart 6: Summary Capital Plan 2019-2021 by year

Conclusion

Budget 2019 marks the end of an historic period for local government not just in Limerick but in the country as a whole. This budget is the fifth since the amalgamation of Limerick's two councils and is the last before we head into the local elections in May 2019.

Limerick's can-do attitude, which has made it one of the fastest growing regions in Ireland, has been led by the Council. Since Limerick City and County Council came into existence in 2014, staff have been flexible in adapting to the changing work environments and structures, while always ensuring the maintenance of quality services with limited resources. Elected members have supported the changing environment and work practices and backed the entire progress through strategic decision-making and strengthening the income base of the Local Authority.

All of this work has been completed against the backdrop of an uncertain economic environment and various challenges posed from social, economic and environmental viewpoints. Despite the uncertainty Limerick City and County Council continues to grow quality local authority services.

During 2018, the Council again had to react to unforeseen events, which demonstrated the professionalism, commitment and determination of staff to manage the impact of these events. These included several severe weather events at the beginning of the year and the joyous occasion of the homecoming for Limerick's victorious All-Ireland senior Hurling Champions in August.

The draft 2019 budget has been prepared with a proposed 1.9% increase in Commercial Rates ARV (Annual Rate on Valuation), and reflects the decision by elected members to increase

rate of Local Property Tax (LPT) by 7.5% for 2019. These increases will enable the Council to further improve service delivery.

Limerick City and County Council will continue to facilitate economic development by progressing key capital projects across 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 foresight, 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 Thursday 15 November 2018.”

The Mayor stated that the Director for Support Services, would provide an overview of the draft Revenue Account for 2019 and the proposed 3-year Capital programme. Following this, he would go through each Division in detail with a summary update of the corresponding Capital programmes.

The Chief Executive outlined that the Members were required by law to consider each division of the Budget and Members would be afforded the opportunity for questions and answers in relation to each division.

The following divisions were considered by the Members:

- Division A – Housing and Building
- Division B – Road Transport & Safety
- Division C – Water Services

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

- Members requested an update on Limerick 2030
- Members referred to various organisations providing housing and the need to ensure there were no duplication of services
- Concern was raised by Members regarding the significant amount of expenditure on insurance claims
- Additional information regarding the breakdown of the Housing Programme for 2019
- Queries regarding the Planning Regulations in relation to the provision of timber frame housing
- Concerns regarding the older part of the city and the impact of the demolition programme within the Regeneration Programme
- Later in the meeting Cllr Galvin (L) stated that the provision for a feasibility study for a public toilet in Abbeyfeale was inadequate and therefore would not be supporting the budget.

In addition, Members asked questions on several aspects of the Annual Budget Divisions A, B & C 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.

Following this discussion it was agreed to consider the following Divisions:

- Division D – Development Management
- Division E – Environmental Services
- Division F – Recreation & Amenity

In relation to Divisions D, E & F the following points were raised by the Members:

- Update on the Cleeves site project
- Request for funding of the Munster Vale initiative
- Tourism and revitalisation of the City Centre

In addition, Members asked questions on several aspects of the Annual Budget Divisions D, E & F 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.

Following this discussion it was agreed to consider Divisions G, H & J:

- Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare
- Division H – Miscellaneous Services
- Division J – Central Management Costs

In relation to Divisions G, H & J the following points were raised by the Members:

- Members queried the Equine project and some Members expressed concern regarding the policy around the control of horses
- Operational costs of the Coroners and the increase for 2019
- Consideration of a local contractor to carry out the removal of horses
- Implementation of horse control in line with Bye Laws
- Members queried the number of dogs in the City that are microchipped
- Some members outlined the requirement for national legislation to be drafted in the area of Horse Control.

In addition, Members asked questions on several aspects of the Annual Budget Divisions G, H & J 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.

Following this discussion, it was proposed by Cllr O Hanlon and seconded by Cllr M Collins to invite the Minister for Environment to a Special Meeting to discuss the issue of horses. The Members also requested that the Minister for Agriculture be invited to attend also.

The Mayor stated that this concluded the review of all Divisions within the Revenue Account. He then asked for a Proposer for the draft Budget, as presented.

Councillor Collins (M)

Cllr Collins on behalf of the Fianna Fáil group acknowledged the monumental work that has gone into the preparation of this estimate and particularly thanked Sean Coughlan, Director of Services and his team for and making himself available along with the Chief Executive to work with his FF colleagues and himself.

Cllr Collins also thanked the Management and staff members of the Municipal District offices along with the outdoor staff who do sterling work in all types of weather and unsociable hours.

Limerick is dealing with a hugely increased budget this year of €689million up from €561m last year. This is significant and indicates just how well positioned we are in attracting businesses to look towards Limerick as a serious contender in where to locate and conduct their business.

Cllr Collins referred to the key objectives of the Local Authority and was pleased to see a focus on housing maintenance, homelessness and the buy into the Rebuilding Ireland project. He referred to the need for further investment in rural towns and villages. Further funding is needed from Central Government to allow the Council to purchase more properties that are lying idle in our villages in particular which will in turn deal with dereliction but provide much needed housing for local families crying out for accommodation.

The equalization of the rents on our local authority tenants is an issue and welcomed this scheme but was disappointed to hear that it has taken 3 years to resolve this issue by our Government.

Cllr Collins stated that "Our message is ...we are open for business and highly competitive to do that". Cllr Collins and his party strive for enhanced local services with a proactive approach to maintenance of social housing stock and continued support to our communities. Fianna Fáil will support the economic development of Limerick through effective marketing and positioning of Limerick as a great place to visit and to do business.

Cllr Collins welcomed the delivery of a cultural programme to make Limerick a recognised cultural hub both nationally and internationally and continue to seek efficiencies in service provision, cost reduction and value for money.

Cllr Collins referred to the delivery of the HAP Programme which is a major and significant contract for this local authority with responsibility for a revenue of €518m.

Insurance and rising pension costs continues to be a major drain on this local authority's resources and these increased costs have to be funded. Rates is one of the main sources of income of this budget.

Cllr Collins stated that as the Fianna Fáil group are supporting an increase of 1.9% in the commercial rate which equates to €1m. This is a significant additional spend which will deliver vital resources in areas such as roads, street cleaning, community, litter management, library service and Tourism Development & Promotion.

Fianna Fáil favour the protection of the small rate payer and the rate payer who pays on time by offering an attractive rates rebate scheme. 94% of properties in Limerick will pay commercial rates of up to and including €25000 in 2018.

Fianna Fáil continue to support small and medium size businesses and have negotiated and welcomed a 9% rebate subject to a maximum of €1000. It is important to note that Limerick's Commercial rates remain one of lowest in the country, with our near neighbours Kerry and Clare in the Top 5. The message is clear Limerick is cheaper and more competitive as destination to do business.

Equally Fianna Fáil welcome the continuation of the Tourism Sector support scheme and continuing the support payment of 4% for the coming year which is welcomed by the hospitality sector.

Fianna Fáil support the Vacant Property Refund Scheme as presented but state that we don't condone or will accept properties deliberately left idle City or County wide.

Cllr Collins referred to a number of capital projects for Abbeyfeale and Newcastlewest. He welcomed funding for the Athletics hub in Newcastlewest and also the provision of a tourist office for West Limerick.

To conclude Cllr Collins (M) said he would like to formally propose the adoption of the budget as presented with the proposed increase of 1.9% in Commercial Rates.

Councillor Collins (M) formally proposed the adoption of the Budget as presented and this was seconded by Cllr Gilligan (J).

Councillor Sheahan (J)

Councillor Sheahan (J), on behalf of the Fine Gael Group, reminded Members that this was the last budget of this Council's term. He stated that over the last 4/5 years that Limerick City & County Council has come a long journey. Cllr Sheahan recalled the amalgamation of the City and County Council and referred to the Authority as a progressive Authority seeking to adopt a revenue budget of approximately €170 million. He referred to other local authorities around the country today seeking the adoption of a budget of €35/40million and stated how progressive Limerick had become.

The inclusion of the HAP Shared Services is a significant addition to our budget. It was with great pride that I read about our 3 year Capital Programme in the Limerick Leader today and great to see that we are making the headlines in such a very positive manner. This shows as a local authority just how far we have come. Cllr Sheahan welcomed the aspirational Capital Programme and is looking forward to being present at these sod turning events. He is proud to be part of a Government that is back on its feet and in a position to spend money.

Cllr Sheahan stated that this is a positive budget and acknowledged the funding received through the Urban and Village Renewal Scheme and the Community Enhancement Programme to provide for upgrade in our community's park and public areas. Cllr Sheahan acknowledged the funding received from SICAP through the LCDC's. Cllr Sheahan referred to the Roads budget which is now back to where it was in 2008 stating that this is a very positive budget.

Cllr Sheahan referred to the budget presented today seeking a 1.9% increase in commercial rates which would represent an overall increase of 8.65% increase in rates since 2016 and was not satisfied with this. Cllr Sheahan stated that this needs to be reviewed and consequently, the Fine Gael Group were not in a position to support the Budget as presented. Cllr Sheahan suggested that a vote be taken on the budget as presented and Fine Gael would reserve their position in relation to the proposed amendments.

Councillor Leddin

Councillor Leddin, on behalf of the Labour Group requested that Sinn Féin clarify where they would fund the contribution of Local Property Tax (LPT) if LPT was abolished.

He also requested that if Fine Gael were not supporting the budget as presented, that they would put forward an alternative proposal.

Comhairleoir ÓCeallaigh, on behalf of the Sinn Féin Group, referred to HAP as the 'white elephant' and how national spending is directed at private landlords rather than local authorities directly building houses. Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh stated that Sean Coughlan, Director of Services met with each party in advance of the Budget and confirmed that the authority operates the HAP Shared Service on behalf of the Government. Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh expressed concerns regarding the housing crisis and asked that the Government tackle this. He referred to HAP as a means of providing temporary housing to suit landlords. Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh expressed concerns regarding the time frame involved in providing housing and in particular referred to Keyes Park which has been approved for housing but it will be some time before the units are built. Cmhlr O'Ceallaigh was critical of the Part 8 process and referred to Palm Court which has been approved under the Part 8 process but it will be 2021 before funding is received for this development. Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh expressed the need for more housing projects and the investment that is required in housing. Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh referred to the need for more housing adaptation grants and how there are people in care centres unable to return home as their house is not suitable.

The following amendment was proposed by Cmhlr Ó Ceallaigh and seconded by Cllr Browne;

Additional income/ Expenditure savings:

Propose an amendment Draft Budget 2019 as follows:

Discontinue Tourism Sector Scheme: D0905	€36,000
Rates 0.1% increase	€55,000
Amend Vacant Property Scheme: Band 3 (Reduce from 25% to 10%) & Abolish 10% band	€87,390

Additional expenditure:

Increase SME Scheme 0.5% : D0905:	€47,222
Increase Expenditure Festivals & Concerts: F0505	€13,000
Increase Expenditure Book Fund: F0204	€10,000
Increase Assessment of Housing Needs: A0201	€10,000
Increase Arts Programme Expenditure: F0501	€20,000
Increase Museum Operations Expenditure: F0503	€10,000
Increase Housing Grants Expenditure A0901	€68,168

The Mayor proposed to adjourn the meeting for 10 minutes to allow the Executive to examine the amendment and confirm if balanced. On the Proposal of Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh & Seconded by Cllr Browne this was agreed.

Upon resumption Sean Coughlan, Director of Services confirmed that the proposed amendments submitted by Cmhlr Ó Ceallaigh and seconded by Cllr Browne were cost neutral.

The Meetings Administrator confirmed that there were two motions proposed regarding the adoption of the Budget and in accordance with Standing Orders the amending motion would be taken first. A Vote was taken on the Amendment as proposed by Cmhlr Ó Ceallaigh and seconded by Cllr Browne and the result of the Vote was as follows:

For

Councillors Browne, Costelloe, Keller, McCreesh, McMahon, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh. **(6)**

Against

Councillors Butler, Collins (J), Collins (M), Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Galvin, Gilligan, Gleeson, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, Mitchell, O'Dea, O'Donnell, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Ryan, Scanlan, Secas, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Sheehy, Teefy, Teskey. **(31)**

The Meetings Administrator declared the Amendment **defeated**.

Following further discussion the Mayor stated that a vote would be taken on the proposal to adopt the Chief Executive's Draft Budget, as presented, as proposed by Councillor Collins (M) and seconded by Councillor Gilligan (J).

For

Councillors Collins (J), Collins (M), Crowley, Daly, Donegan, Foley, Gilligan, Gleeson, Leddin, Loftus, Lynch, O'Dea, O'Donoghue, O'Hanlon, Pond, Ryan, Secas, Sheehy, Teefy, **(19)**

Against

Councillors Browne, Butler, Costelloe, Galvin, Hogan, Hourigan, Hurley, Keary, Keller, McCreesh, McMahon, Mitchell, Cmhlr. Ó Ceallaigh, O'Donnell, Scanlan, Sheahan (J), Sheahan (M), Teskey. **(18)**

There were no abstentions.

The Meetings Administrator declared the Motion to adopt the Budget, as proposed by Councillor Collins (M) and seconded by Councillor Gilligan (J) as carried and it was agreed that the resolutions, as set out hereunder, would be adopted by the same voting:

THAT the draft Annual Budget for the financial year ending 31st December, 2019 prepared and circulated by the Chief Executive be adopted.

AND THAT, the Annual Budget be and is hereby adopted as per Tables A, B, D, E & 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 adopted €0.2677 be and is hereby determined as the General Annual Rate on Valuation to be levied for the several purposes specified in the said Tables, as amended, for the financial year ending on 31st December, 2019, in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

AND 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 2019 — 2021 as presented to the meeting is considered (Item 3 on Meeting Agenda)

The Mayor then referred to items 4,5,6,7 & 8 on the Agenda which were proposed by Cllr Leddin (J) and seconded by Cllr Daly (F).

Cmhlr ÓCeallaigh requested that the amendments to the Support Schemes as previously outlined by him now be considered including his proposal that the proposed rate of payment support of 12.5% for properties less than €500 and reduce the limit to €987. The Meetings Administrator confirmed that the amendment was already defeated as a result of the earlier vote on his proposed Amendments on the adoption of the Budget.

A Vote was then taken on the earlier proposal to adopt Agenda items 4-8 from Cllr Leddin and seconded by Cllr Daly and on a show of hands the Meetings Administrator declared the motion carried.

AND THAT, the proportion of commercial rates refund that applies on vacant properties in 2019 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 2019 (Item 4 on Meeting Agenda)

AND THAT the Vacant Property Refund Scheme 2019 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 as circulated without amendment (Item 5 on Meeting Agenda)

AND THAT the Small and Medium Business Support Scheme 2019 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 6 on the Meeting Agenda).

AND THAT the Tourism Sector Support Scheme 2019 in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 43 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, (Item 7 on the Meeting Agenda) is adopted as circulated without amendment.

AND THAT Business & Retail Incentive Scheme for Vacant Property from 01/01/2019 until 31/12/2019 in accordance with Section 66 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by Section 43 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 subject to finances available, is adopted as circulated without amendment (Item 8 on Meeting Agenda)

The Mayor and Members thanked the Chief Executive, Director of Service and staff for their assistance in the formation of the Budget.

This concluded the business of the Meeting.

Signed:

Mayor

Date:
