## MINUTES OF STATUTORY BUDGET MEETING HELD IN ARAS AN CHONTAE, PORTLAOISE, ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> OF DECEMBER 2013

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mary Sweeney In the Chair

Councillors Rotimi Adebari William Aird

John Bonham Paddy Bracken Ray Cribbin James Daly

James Deegan John Joe Fennelly Catherine Fitzgerald Padraig Fleming

David Goodwin

Michael Lalor

Seamus McDonald

John Moran

Kathleen O' Brien

Martin Phelan

John King

Jerry Lodge

Paul Mitchell

Tom Mulhall

Brendan Phelan

Mary Sweeney

Caroline Dwane Stanley

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Ben Brennan Lisa Delaney

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Messers Peter Carey, County Manager, Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Ms. Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Ms. Irene Delaney, Administrative Officer, Corporate Affairs, Ms J Bergin, Financial Management Accountant & Ms. Michelle McCormack, Executive Secretary, Corporate Affairs.

## 126. BUDGET 2014

The County Manager referred the Members to the Draft Budget 2014 which had been prepared and circulated. He outlined the process that had been undertaken in relation to its preparation. He advised that the preparation of the draft budget had been very challenging as the task of providing the same level of service with reduced resources is very difficult. He then referred to the meeting held In-Committee on the 19<sup>TH</sup> of December 2013 when all aspects of the draft budget were discussed in great detail.

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance then proceeded to advise the members on a division by division basis of the Council's proposals for 2014. Reductions in payroll costs had been achieved through the management of vacancies, the non-replacement of staff, reductions in premium pay and travel expenses and the retirement of employees. In addition, a number of employees availed of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

He advised that an examination of all expenditure to substantiate the necessity for the current scope/scale of all work programmes across all divisions had been carried out. Every effort has been made to minimise the burden on local businesses and consumers by ensuring that there are no increases in commercial rates or water charges.

The draft budget provides for revenue spending of €53,931,000 which is the amount required to meet the expenses and to provide for the liabilities and requirements of Laois County Council during the year ending on the 31st of December 2014.

The Members collectively and individually complemented the staff involved in the preparation of the budget. After a lengthy discussion, during which all questions raised were answered, the Annual Budget for 2014 was unanimously adopted as presented on the proposal of Councillor John King seconded by Councillor Tom Mulhall.

The County Manager thanked Mr. Gerry Murphy, Head of Finance, Ms. Julie Bergin, Financial/Management Accountant, the Directors of Service and all staff for the efficiency and professionalism with which the draft budget had been prepared. The County Manager welcomed the support of the Elected Members and acknowledged the flexibility of staff during 2013.

## 127. PROGRAMME OF CAPITAL WORKS FOR 2014, 2015 and 2016

The members were circulated with the indicative list of the likely capital projects to be undertaken over the next three years and this was noted on the proposal of Councillor Rotimi Adebari seconded by Councillor James Deegan.

This concluded the business of the mee	eting.	
SIGNED:	CERTIFIED:	
CATHAOIRLEACH		DIRECTOR OF SERVICES CORPORATE AFFAIRS