

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE ON
THE 17th of SEPTEMBER 2015**

PRESENT:	Councillors	Catherine Fitzgerald	In the Chair
	Councillors	William Aird	Paddy Bracken
		Caroline Dwane Stanley	John Joe Fennelly
		Padraig Fleming	David Goodwin
		John King	Jerry Lodge
		Seamus McDonald	Paschal McEvoy
		Jimmy Kelly	Tom Mulhall
		Aidan Mullins	Brendan Phelan
		Mary Sweeney	Noel Tuohy

APOLOGIES: Ben Brennan John Moran

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive, Anna Marie Delaney, Director of Services, Mr. Henry Ritchie, A/Director of Services,

Local Property Tax – Notice of Consideration of setting a Local Adjustment Factor for 2016 LPT

The report of the 8th September 2015 from the Chief Executive was discussed in detail. It was noted that under section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 as amended by Section 5 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act, 2013 a Local Authority may as a reserved function resolve to vary the basic rate of the Local Property Tax within its functional area by a maximum of plus or minus 15%.

The Chief Executive outlined in his presentation the factors to be considered by the members in making their decision with regard to the Local Adjustment Factor for the Local Property Tax. These included:

- Estimate of income and expenditure for the period for which the varied rate is to have effect.
- Financial position of the Local Authority
- Feedback from public consultation
- Financial effect of the varied rate

Each factor was discussed in detail. It was noted that no submissions were received. The members were advised that the government had reaffirmed its intention to continue with 80% retention of all local property tax receipts within the local authority area where the tax is raised in 2016. The remaining 20% of the tax collected nationally will be re-distributed on an equalised basis to local authorities to ensure that no local authority is worse off from local retention of local property tax in 2016 compared to general purpose allocations in 2014.

The Chief Executive advised that the estimated local property tax income for Laois in 2016 is €4,790,302 (€5,028,291 in 2015). The amount to be retained locally (80%) is €3,832,241 (€4,022,633 in 2015). He further advised that The General Purpose Grant (GPG) allocation for 2015 was €7,631,324. Because of its shortfall position, when Local Property Tax receipts are compared to GPG allocations for 2015 this Council will be in receipt of equalisation funding of €3,799,083 for 2016 (€3,608,691 in 2015). This Council will, therefore, receive the same amount in 2016 from the combined Local Property Tax and the Local Government Fund as it received in 2015.

There are approximately 29,000 households in the County. 41% or 11,900 paid €90 in Local Property Tax in 2015, 42% or 12,200 paid €225, 12% or 3,500 paid €315 with the remaining 1,400 paying €405 or more. Table 3 of the report shows the effect of an increase/decrease of 15% on each household. This varies between €13.50 and €47.25 for 95% of householders in the County.

For Laois County Council, the accumulated effect of either a reduction or an increase of 15% is €718,545. There are no alternative income sources available to this Council to meet this shortfall in the event that this Council resolves to reduce the Local Property Tax by 15%.

The report also included details of the level of funding (€380,000) provided to the new Municipal Districts:

Community Projects	€38,000
Speed Detection Signs	€59,000
Footpaths	€85,000
Traffic calming	€133,000
Public Lights	€65,000

A similar level of funding will be required in 2016.

Additional resources are required to review the County Development Plan, enhance our main towns and villages, eliminate dereliction, support our tidy towns committees, complete the roundabouts in Portlaoise, upgrade the Clonminam Business Park, to name just a few.

The Local Property Tax is used to fund or part-fund a range of local services such as road maintenance, footpaths, traffic calming, speed detection signs, public lighting, libraries, parks, leisure centre improvements, playgrounds, burial grounds and grants to communities and tidy towns committees, etc. It is an essential source of income for the Council in providing local services.

The Chief Executive advised that any reduction in the rate of tax would have a corresponding impact on the financial ability of the Council to provide such services whilst an increase in the level of Local Property Tax will enhance the level of services.

On completion of the presentation the various issues raised by the members were addressed by the Executive. On the proposition of Councillor Kelly seconded by Councillor Fennelly it was unanimously agreed to maintain the LPT at the current rate with no variation.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE
AFFAIRS**