

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING (RE. LOCAL PROPERTY TAX) OF SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2016 AT 11.00 A.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RIVERSIDE, SLIGO**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Councillor Baker,
- Councillor Bree,
- Councillor Casserly,
- Councillor Clarke,
- Councillor Gormley,
- Councillor Healy,
- Councillor Henry,
- Councillor Keaney,
- Councillor Kilgannon,
- Councillor Lundy,
- Councillor Maguire,
- Councillor MacSharry,
- Councillor Mulvey,
- Councillor O'Boyle,
- Councillor O'Grady,
- Councillor Queenan,
- Councillor Taylor.

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr. Ciarán Hayes, Chief Executive
- Mr Tom Kilfeather, Director of Services
- Ms. Dorothy Clarke, Director of Services
- Ms. Patricia Guckian, A/Head of Finance
- Mr. Bartley Gavin, A/Director of Services
- Mr. John Moran, Senior Executive Officer
- Ms. Olivia Heffernan, Financial Accountant
- Mr. Donal Tinney, County Librarian
- Mr. Kevin Colreavy, Meetings Administrator
- Ms. Jo-Anne McGonigle, Assistant Staff Officer

CATHAOIRLEACH:

- Cathaoirleach, Councillor Hubert Keaney, presided.

APOLOGIES:

- Apologies were received from Councillor S. MacManus.

TO CONSIDER SETTING A LOCAL ADJUSTMENT FACTOR TO THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX FOR THE PERIOD 1ST NOVEMBER, 2016 TO 31ST OCTOBER, 2017:

At the request of the Cathaoirleach, Ms. P. Guckian, Acting Head of Finance, addressed the Meeting at the outset.

Ms. Guckian highlighted details from the Reports which had been previously circulated to the Members. In particular, the A/Head of Finance referred to the factors the local authority must have regard to:

- The Local Authority's estimation of the income it will receive and the expenditure it will incur in the period for which the varied rate is to have effect.
- The financial position of the Local Authority.
- The financial effect of the varied rate for 2017.
- Feedback from the public consultation period notified for the month of August 2016. There were no submissions received from members of the public relating to the public consultation process which ended on the 31st August, 2016.

Further detailed information had been included in Ms. Guckian's "Report on Financial Position of Sligo County Council" under the headings of

- Projected out turn 2016
- Acute financial matters
- Global revaluations
- Irish Water rates exemption
- Non domestic water billing and collection
- Non H.F.A. water related loans
- Haddington Road/Lansdowne Road Agreements 2016-2018

The following resolutions were submitted to the Cathaoirleach.

1. **Proposed by Councillor D. Bree**
Seconded by Councillor G. O'Boyle

"Recognising the financial burden that the property tax is imposing on families and further recognising the fact that the majority of citizens rejected the candidates and policies of the government parties in the last local elections; and conscious of the fact that the finance raised from the Property Tax has not been used to improve local services; this meeting of Sligo County Council declares its opposition to the government's property tax and resolves to reduce the Property Tax by 15%".

2. **Proposed by Councillor M. Casserly**
Seconded by Councillor M. Clarke

"That this Council will maintain the property tax at the current level".

3. **Proposed by Councillor S. Kilgannon**
Seconded by Councillor T. MacSharry
and additional signatories – Councillor Baker, Councillor Henry, Councillor Lundy, Councillor Taylor and Councillor O'Grady

"That the Property Tax for Sligo County remains as it was for 2015-2016".

Following further discussions with the Members, Mr. C. Hayes, Chief Executive, referred to the difficult financial position Sligo County Council is in. This situation had not been created in the current, previous or year before. He stated that it is a situation that has been arrived at over a number of years and is the most serious in the country.

The Chief Executive indicated that there have been many, long discussions as to the consequences of addressing the financial situation in Sligo County Council. There had also been a demand for an additional €5 million in savings over the next five years. The consequences of having to find an additional €5 million of

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING (RE. LOCAL PROPERTY TAX) OF SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2016 AT 11.00 A.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RIVERSIDE, SLIGO**

savings were now becoming apparent. If the proposal were to go through to reduce the Local Property Tax by 15%, this would result in excess of €750,000 being taken out of the funds of Sligo County Council. This would have further serious consequences for the services being provided and would put at risk the already difficult Financial Plan that has been agreed with the Department.

The Cathaoirleach referred to the seriousness of the situation facing the Council and how frontline services and people in the county are being affected. Councillor Keaney said Members were aware of negotiations which had taken place during the previous two weeks and proposals that were on offer to the Council. The Cathaoirleach said he understood the 'ask' involved was very difficult. However, he requested that Members give serious consideration to the serious financial implications of the decision being made.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

At this time, the Cathaoirleach requested a short adjournment. Councillor Keaney said he had not had an opportunity to speak with all Members prior to the Meeting.

**It was proposed by Councillor D. Bree
Seconded by Councillor J. Queenan**

AND AGREED

"To adjourn the Meeting to allow the Cathaoirleach carry out further discussions with the Members".

The Meeting adjourned at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.35 p.m.

TO CONSIDER SETTING A LOCAL ADJUSTMENT FACTOR TO THE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX FOR THE PERIOD 1ST NOVEMBER, 2016 TO 31ST OCTOBER, 2017 (CONTINUED):

On resumption of the Meeting, the Cathaoirleach said he would like to make a final statement on the matter. Councillor Keaney again referred to the negotiations that had taken place and what had been offered to Sligo County Council. In particular, he referred to a deal from the Department if the Local Property Tax had been increased by 15% in Sligo. This would have meant, for 40% of Residents in the county, an increase of €13 and for another 30% of the population, the increase would have been €33 per annum. He believed that this increase would have secured the Library services in Sligo town, Ballymote and Tubbercurry. Had the Property Tax been increased, it had the potential to improve relationships between County Council Members, the Executive and the Department, the Cathaoirleach concluded.

The resolutions were then taken in the order they had been received and the Cathaoirleach called for a vote on same.

**Proposed by Councillor D. Bree
Seconded by Councillor G. O'Boyle**

"Recognising the financial burden that the property tax is imposing on families and further recognising the fact that the majority of citizens rejected the candidates and policies of the government parties in the last local elections; and conscious of the fact that the finance raised from the Property Tax has not been used to improve local services; this meeting of Sligo County Council declares its opposition to the government's property tax and resolves to reduce the Property Tax by 15%".

FOR: Councillor Bree, Councillor Healy and Councillor O'Boyle (3)

AGAINST: Councillor Baker, Councillor Casserly, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Gormley, Councillor Henry, Councillor Keaney, Councillor Kilgannon, Councillor Lundy, Councillor Maguire, Councillor MacSharry, Councillor Mulvey, Councillor O'Grady, Councillor Queenan and Councillor Taylor (14)

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion **lost**.

As the other two resolutions received by the Cathaoirleach were similar in content, it was agreed to take them as one resolution.

Proposed by Councillor M. Casserly
Seconded by Councillor S. Kilgannon

"Sligo County Council, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 (as amended), on 26th September, 2016, resolved that the basic rate of local property tax should stand varied by 0% for the period 1st November, 2016 to 31st October, 2017 in respect of relevant residential properties situated in the local authority's administrative area. The varied rate shall take effect from the liability date in the year which notification is sent to the Revenue Commissioners".

The result of a vote on this resolution was as follows:

FOR: Councillor Baker, Councillor Casserly, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Gormley, Councillor Henry, Councillor Keaney, Councillor Kilgannon, Councillor Lundy, Councillor Maguire, Councillor MacSharry, Councillor Mulvey, Councillor O'Grady, Councillor Queenan and Councillor Taylor (14)

AGAINST: Councillor Bree, Councillor Healy and Councillor O'Boyle (3)

The Cathaoirleach declared the motion **agreed**.

MEETING OF BALLYMOTE-TOBERCURRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT:

Councillor D. Mulvey, Cathaoirleach of the Ballymote-Tobercurry Municipal District, asked that their Meeting which had been scheduled for 2.00 p.m. would now commence at 1.00 p.m.

Members of the Municipal District present agreed to this proposal.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING:

The meeting concluded at 12.55 p.m.