# Minutes of the Ennis Municipal District Budget Meeting

# held on Monday 9th November 2021, at 10:30am,

#  in the Council Chamber, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

**Present:**

**Councillors:** M. Howard, M. Nestor, P. Daly, C. Colleran-Molloy, J. Flynn, P. Murphy.

**Officials:** Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Carmel Kirby, Director of Services, Noeleen Fitzgerald, Head of Finance, Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer, Eamon O’Dea, Senior Executive Engineer, Niamh O’Connor, Administrative Officer, Mairead Griffin Assistant Staff Officer, and Lily McInerney, Staff Officer.

Apologies: Cllr A. Norton (Comhairleoir), Leonore O’Neill, Senior Executive Officer.

In the absence of Chair Cllr. Norton, and as Vice-Chair Cllr Murphy was delayed, Cllr. P. Daly was invited to stand in as Chair until Cllr. Murphy’s arrival. Cllr. Daly opened the meeting, welcoming all Members, Staff, Chief Executive and Director of Finance.

Noeleen Fitzgerald, Director of Finance, addressed the meeting and outlined its purpose - to consider the proposed General Municipal Budget Allocation (GMA) for 2022 for the Municipal District of Ennis. She advised that CPG had discussed the budget at length ;

* the Council budget meeting will take place on Friday 26th November at 2:00pm.
* a briefing to full Council will take place in advance, Wednesday 17th November at 2.30pm
* the intention is that the GMA for 2022 will remain at €1,273,000, thus EMD allocation would be €318,250.

Cllr. Flynn queried the equity of equal allocation between all Municipal Districts given that Ennis residents’ combined contribution is proportionately greater. N. Fitzgerald responded that the amount is subdivided equally between all 28 Members of Clare County Council per national legislation.

A discussion ensued on the question of the equity of the equalisation fund, particularly in light of the rates losses incurred in the County, in particular Moneypoint. N. Fitzgerald explained that of the €10m billed for Clare County Council properties, a net of €6.5m is available to the Council under the equalisation rule, and she recommended that Members request Clare Oireachtas Members to seek a change in the system. Following Cllr. P. Daly’s suggestion to invite all Clare Oireachtas Members to join the Budget Meeting of Clare County Council, Chief Executive Pat Dowling advised that though the equalisation model is out of date and no longer fit for purpose, it would not be useful to invite Oireachtas members at this stage as Budget 2022 is now finalised for approval. However, he added there may be merit in doing this at a later stage to potentially influence 2023 and future budgets. N. Fitzgerald recommended inviting Oireachtas Members to a special briefing in Q1/Q2 2022.

Despite the challenges of equalisation and the loss of rates income, on a positive note, Chief Executive Pat Dowling stated that there are strong indicators that the equalisation model will come to an end from 2023.

He highlighted that Moneypoint is now primed for future wind energy and that, albeit the recent pull-out of the Norwegian company, Moneypoint will play an integral part in the future energy narrative nationally.

The GMA budget for 2022 was proposed by Cllr. Mary Howard, seconded by Cllr. Clare Colleran-Molloy. The meeting then concluded.

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**Cllr. A. Norton Meetings Administrator Date**

**Mayor of Ennis**