

Budget Commentary

Cllr Diarmaid Ó Cadhla, 13th November 2017

The current presentation of Budget 2018 makes it impossible for members to properly assess the estimates, because:

1. The Budget book was only delivered last Monday.
2. The presentation of figures is such that the affect of any changes is unknown, because how each budget provision is arrived at is mixed between fixed and variable costs, and includes allocated distribution of management overheads.
3. The information provided in the estimates book is incomplete, e.g. on Friday a reply to questions was distributed to members which referred to budget headings not covered in the published figures.

Notwithstanding that there may be requirements to present the financial data according to a pre-ordained format, there should also be other formats available side-by-side to make analysis by cost type possible.

Members should know the breakdown of the Councils finances under such headings as:

- Labour / Employee Costs
- Administration Overhead
- Facilities maintenance
- Discretionary spending – materials broken down etc.

Such data should also be broken down by Municipal District, and the basis for distribution to MDs agreed by members.

Tragically, hidden behind the budget figures is the continued stranglehold of Government on our delivery of key services to the public, principally housing.

It appears, as is evident with LPT funds replacing central Government funding across a range of services, that monies are directed away from public services while Government continues to pay the infamous Promissory Note debts and pander to the powerful vested interests in other ways.

In the future, I request that members be afforded greater participation in development of the budget, including that specific and regular meetings be held at least 3 months in advance of Budget day.

The proposed changes to the CE's recommended budget allocations are an attempt to get some tangible benefit, that we can identify, from the proposals.