Fingal adopts progressive budget of €227m

Fingal County Council has adopted a progressive budget for 2018 which will see an increased investment of €11.3m from last year to ensure the Council keeps pace with the increased demands of a county that has the fastest growing and youngest population in Ireland.

The €227m budget specially targets investment in five key areas of the Council's overall strategy which will ultimately benefit all citizens of Fingal. These are Housing and Homelessness, Economic Development, Services to Citizens, Building Communities and Growing Tourism.

Expenditure on housing and homelessness rises by almost 11 per cent to €61m while the Council's road works programme will increase by nine per cent to almost €26m. Spending on Economic Development and Tourism will also be up by nine per cent to €21m and there is a five per cent increase in community investment.

The Council's planned expenditure of €227,268,000 next year will fund its day-to-day operations as well as contributing to the advancement of Fingal's Capital Programme which will cost €502m over a three year period (2018-2020).

The 2018 Budget represents a spend of €767.25 for every one of the county's 296,214 citizens and is a major stimulus to the local economy. For every €1 spent by the Council, an additional €1.72 is spent downstream in the economy and this means that the total contribution to economic output is over €0.5 billion. The employment impact is also substantial and for every position directly employed within the council, an additional three jobs are supported as a result. This means that the total employment contribution from Budget 2018 is over 4,000 jobs.
Councillors opted to reduce the basic rate of Local Property Tax (LPT) by 10 per cent at a meeting on September 11 which yielded an extra €1.9m in discretionary income and this has been ringfenced for spending in key areas.

This will see an additional €730,000 being invested in library services, community events and facilities and the arts programme and €500,000 being used to fund the Council's initiatives to tackle homelessness. A further €113,000 will be spent on the Council's housing stock, €250,000 will be invested in parks, open spaces and playgrounds with €200,000 going towards additional street lighting and road maintenance. The remaining €116,000 will be spent on tourism promotion and funding for events throughout the county.

For the first time since 2009, Councillors voted to increase Commercial Rates by two per cent. This is the first increase in rates in Fingal since 2009 and follows a number of rate decreases in the early part of this decade. Fingal, which has the highest compliance of rate payment in Ireland at 95.63% for 2016, also retains the distinction of having the lowest rate among the four Dublin Local Authorities.

The rate increase will provide an additional €2.47m in spending for the Council and this too will be ring-fenced for spending across key areas.

There will be an additional €650,000 spent on public lighting, traffic, footpaths and bridge maintenance and a similar amount will be used to fund remedial and refurbishment works on community centres throughout the County. A further €650,000 will used to provide funds for capital works on the Council's housing stock including heating system upgrades and the replacement of items such as doors and windows.

A further €250,000 will go towards economic development promotion and improvement works at the Dublin Enterprise Zone, while €270,000 is to be spent on refurbishing bottle banks throughout Fingal and improvement works at the Council's two recycling centres in Coolmine and Swords.

Within the 2018 Budget, a total of €61.1m will be spent on Housing and Building with €42.7m budgeted for Environment and €42.5m for Recreation and Amenity. Road Transportation & Safety will receive €25.8m and Water Services €20.7m while €21.1m has been set aside for Development Incentives and Controls.

Welcoming the adoption of the 2018 Budget by Councillors, who voted by 30 votes to four in favour, the Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, Paul Reid, said: “This is one of the most progressive budgets adopted by any Irish Local Authority and allows the Council to continue to meet the growing demands of
having to cater for a county that has the fastest growing and youngest population in the country as well as a rapidly growing local economy. This has brought challenges, such as the housing and homelessness crisis, but the extra funding we will obtain from Local Property Tax and Commercial Rates has allowed us to increase our spending by over five per cent and invest more into key areas of our overall strategy.”

Breakdown of the 2018 Budget by key area of expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Expenditure €000</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease on 2017 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Building</td>
<td>61,107</td>
<td>+10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Transportation &amp; Safety</td>
<td>25,857</td>
<td>+9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Supply &amp; Sewerage</td>
<td>20,727</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Incentives &amp; Controls</td>
<td>21,108</td>
<td>+9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Protection</td>
<td>42,728</td>
<td>+2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation &amp; Amenity</td>
<td>42,519</td>
<td>+5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Education &amp; Health &amp; Welfare</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>+13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Services</td>
<td>12,164</td>
<td>-10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>227,270</td>
<td>+5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A copy of the draft 2018 Annual Budget can be viewed at [http://fingal.ie/media/DRAFT%20BUDGET%202018.pdf](http://fingal.ie/media/DRAFT%20BUDGET%202018.pdf)

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NOTE TO EDITOR

Fingal County Council

Fingal County Council is the Local Authority for the administrative county of Fingal. Fingal is located to the north of Dublin City and is also bordered by South County Dublin, Meath and Kildare, and to the east by the Irish Sea. The county covers an area of c. 448 sq. km. Fingal has a population of 296,214, making it the third most populous local authority area in the country. Fingal is Ireland’s fastest growing county having seen its population grow by 8.1 per cent since 2011 and almost double over a 25 year period, from 152,766 in 1991 to 296,214 in 2016. Fingal’s significant economic advantages includes Dublin Airport, fast access to Dublin Port, rail, road, power and telecommunications infrastructure and the availability of serviced and unserviced land for development. Proximity to Dublin city centre and its location on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, ensures continued future growth for Fingal.
The Budgetary Process
The budgetary process is a statutory process, undertaken annually by all local authorities.

The process defines the income and expenditure for the Council for the coming year.

Budgetary policy is determined in consultation with elected members, officials and with consideration to the estimates of funding available through the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and in particular the Local Property Tax allocation. There is also a public consultation process in relation to the Local Property Tax.

The elected members of Fingal County Council have a number of key functions in relation to the budgetary process.

- **Adoption of the Budget**
  Members may adopt the Budget with or without amendment and must approve the sums provided for transfer to the Capital Account

- **Local Property Tax**
  The Members have the power to vary the Local Property Tax Rate (Local Adjustment Factor) by plus / minus 15 per cent

- **Commercial Rates**
  Members decide on the determination of Annual Rateable Valuation which decides the Commercial Rate which is charged to local businesses.

- **Rates on Vacant Properties**
  The members also have the power to determine the proportion of rates refunds which will apply to vacant commercial properties.

ENDS ALL

For further information contact press@fingal.ie