

To the Mayor and Each Member

Annual Revenue Budget 2022

Dear Mayor and Members,

The attached budget is presented in the statutory format and has been prepared in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group and taking account of the views of the Elected Members who have been broadly consulted. The budgetary context has moved on somewhat from last year when considerations were dominated by the ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. While not over by any means, the clear ambition of government is the reopening of society and associated economic recovery. This is not to ignore the ongoing challenges, or the lingering human, financial, and broader socio-economic impacts. A degree of uncertainty remains around the ongoing public health challenge and medium-term economic challenges. It remains to be seen if the current supply and inflationary pressures are transitional and if those businesses so badly impacted, can make a full recovery post COVID and without the significant government subventions made available over the past 18 months and continuing into next year.

These very subventions have significantly mitigated the financial impact on local government particularly the Rates Waiver Scheme, the recoupment of COVID expenses and the partial replacement of lost income across a range of goods and services areas. This support, together with the diverse nature of the local economy, continued business expansion in both the FDI and indigenous sectors and the strong pre-covid financial position of the organisation, has facilitated the preparation of a progressive budget for 2022. Members will be aware from previous advice of more challenging times ahead in funding the expansion of services, which will require a greater contribution from other sources of funding. The structure of the budget is mindful of these challenges and leaves open the opportunity to reassign and recalibrate budgetary provision into the future to meet growing areas of expenditure, including the need for additional staff resources to cover increased service level demands and the expanding policy across housing, climate action, active travel, large scale planning applications and associated project management.

Following detailed consultation with Elected Members, the approach to the 2022 Budget has centred on a few key priorities aligned to our Corporate Plan, including:

- The retention and continued investment in front line services to cater for our ever-increasing population and expanding communities
- Maintaining an emphasis on delivering our key priorities including housing, climate action, community infrastructure and planning for the future
- Continue to support proactive community initiatives, community development and in particular, support vulnerable groups and communities

- To strategically use additional financial capacity to invest in the future of the County and support the acceleration of much needed community and economic infrastructure delivery

The Budget for 2022 provides for total expenditure of €281,713,700 which represents an increase of just over 5% on 2021. This increase is primarily associated with increased activity in housing services including HAP which are fully funded, obligations under the national wage agreement, and cost increases associated with new developments. It also represents a range of increases in front line budgets outlined elsewhere and various commitments to accelerated investment in community projects made possible through rates buoyancy, an expected recovery in general income streams and improved debtor collection levels post COVID. The following is a summary of some of the key points, while further detail is provided in the notes in conjunction with the financial tables.

Frontline Services

A key priority of Elected Members is the retention and expansion, where possible, of front-line day to day services. A number of service areas have been allocated additional resources including:

- An additional €429,000 to cover the cost of twenty seasonal workers to assist with litter management, grass cutting and a specific provision of €100,000 to deal with graffiti and back lanes
- Pitch and playground maintenance is increased by €200,000
- The Public Realm Contracts will increase by €150,000
- The Fire Services budget increases by €912,000
- Tree management will again receive an extra €500,000 additional to the annual maintenance budget, to accelerate delivery on our “Living with Trees” programme
- Grass cutting has been increased by €412,000
- Library operations expenditure has been increased by €339,000 as additional support to our recently opened libraries
- Animal welfare is supported by an additional €153,000 as part of our new management arrangements
- Wildflower planting and maintenance receives a further €100,000. The area covered is now 145 hectares.

Housing

While recognising the significant challenges that lie ahead, good progress has been made in relation to housing delivery and in the planning of future delivery. We will agree our five-year delivery strategy under “Housing for All” in December and should approach this proactively and with confidence. COVID restrictions have severely disrupted our planned maintenance and retrofit programmes. These are now back on track and will hopefully accelerate. Capacity across the construction sector is an issue and something we need to keep under review. In line with our programme, €1,400,000 has been provided to further supplement our planned maintenance budget. An additional €1,000,000 has been provided in the pre-let repairs budget in recognition of increased activity in transfers and our ambition to reallocate homes on foot of our right-sizing policy.

Apart from planned maintenance, the other critical aspect of managing our housing portfolio is estate management. €300,000 has again been provided for estate road improvements. We are currently reviewing our approach to tenant engagement, with a view to improving our structures. In the meantime, our annual budget has been supplemented with an additional €100,000 to support initiatives in MacUilliam estate, to be undertaken in consultation with residents. Positive engagement in Balgaddy has already resulted in a specific budget for maintenance issues. This is supplemented in this budget with a fund of €250,000 to carry out significant streetscape improvements and to provide a new school pedestrian access for children to the local school.

Over the coming months we will be finalising our delivery strategy for affordable housing in line with government policy and our ambitions to deliver over 1,500 affordable homes. I will be seeking funding support for a specific delivery unit and plan to have this in place well in advance of initial units coming on stream.

Community Development, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion.

Supporting communities and the support of communities goes to the core of local government. Details of over €3,000,000 in community supports are provided as well as plans for significant additional investment in community infrastructure. In addition, the following new and supplementary support provisions are worthy of mention.

- A provision of €546,500 has been included for social inclusion initiatives. In addition, new provisions have been made for specific initiatives including €50,000 to equip the Clondalkin Age Friendly Centre, an additional €50,000 for traveller supports, €50,000 to undertake an accessible disabled parking audit and €250,000 as part of the Healthy Communities Initiative to be undertaken in conjunction with the HSE
- A complete review of community centres and their operation is underway. A budget of €500,000 has been provided to support the outcomes and recommendations of this study
- New community centres for expanded communities are also critical. €1m has been

provided in this regard to progress new community centres in Newcastle and City West

- The €300k Have Your Say budget has been reinstated, plus an additional €20,000 to facilitate a parallel exercise for youth initiatives under the auspices of Comhairle na nÓg
- The Teen Space Programme will receive a further €500,000 with the reinstatement of this budget heading in 2022
- An additional €500,000 has been provided to support the continued roll out of our pitch strategy. The next all-weather pitch will be developed in the east of the county, with a site selection process to be completed by the year end. This is in addition to the new Airlie Park pitches that will be available from next summer
- A small number of pitches in the Lucan area require drainage improvement works to increase their capacity. A specific one-off budget of €250,000 has been provided in this regard
- A budget of €150,000 has been provided to start a refurbishment programme of our large regional playgrounds
- The success of live events during COVID has been very positive. A new budget of €160,000 has been provided to build on this success in 2022
- While our grant and financial schemes are very generous, two areas have been singled out for additional support. €50,000 has been provided for assistance to communities to undertake local clean-ups and/or approved wildflower planting. Separately, a sum of €50,000 has been provided for specific sports grants for mobile goal posts and pitch side mobile lighting
- A new provision of €20,000 has been provided to explore the development of Halloween festival events including a marquee event in the stadium for families

The whole Covid experience has reawakened an appreciation of our parks and amenities. The plans already agreed for Corkagh and Killinarden Parks represent an investment of over €5m. We will start to see this in stages over the coming two years. The opening of the new €5m park at Tandy's Lane in Adamstown, will be followed by Airlie Park next year. We have used this budget to progress a number of other important projects.

- €650,000 has been provided to cover the full cost of the development of a linear walk along Whitestown Stream in Tallaght
- €500,000 has been provided to implement plans for St. Cuthbert's Park in Clondalkin

- €200,000 will allow for the detailed design of improvement plans for Jobstown and Quarryvale Parks

Supporting Economic Development and Tourism

Our Capital Programme is the main driver of our economic development programme. Where possible we take opportunities to raise additional supports through the revenue budget. This year we continue to provide for the Dublin Mountains Project, the Tallaght Innovation Centre, various Greenway projects, the expansion of Grange Castle and the Business Support Programme. Support funding has also been provided for:

- The continuation of the N81 Enhancement Project that receives €500,000
- The provision of an additional €500,000 to advance the development of the Rathfarnham Castle Stables which has been on hold. I will bring a definitive recommendation to Council on how to proceed, by the year end
- €500,000 has been provided to go towards the regeneration of Clondalkin Town Centre. A plan in this regard will be prepared in conjunction with the preparation of the Local Area Plan in 2022
- The substantial renewal and upgrade of Lucan Village Centre will go to planning before the year end as part of the “Destination Town” designation
- The development of a Heritage/Historical Centre in Tallaght has long been an ambition of the Council. An initial budget of €1,000,000 has been provided for this purpose and a project brief will be agreed with members over the coming month

Conclusion

The Budget as presented is positive and makes best use of available resources, while mindful of ongoing challenges. It is vitally important to make a real difference in supporting communities, while advancing the development of the County. This budget seeks to achieve this in a balanced way. As always, I want to sincerely thank the CPG, the expanded Council membership and particularly Ronan FitzGerald, Head of Finance and his team for the advice, support and hard work involved in the preparation of this Budget, which I am happy to commend for adoption.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel McLoughlin
Chief Executive