

Mayor and Councillors,

Please find attached for your consideration, the proposed 2025 revenue budget prepared in the statutory format. This budget, which presents plans for proposed overall expenditure of €391,942,200, reflects the needs of a County that continues to develop and grow with all the associated service demands and infrastructure requirements which that brings. The first budget of the new Council term has the ambition of providing opportunity for all by enhancing key services and local quality of life, addressing the critical challenges of housing, climate action and economic development, and supporting continued investment in infrastructure across the County.

While there are undoubted challenges in meeting these demands and prudently managing our finances, it is recognised that the economic environment is impacting on the cost of living and the cost of doing business and therefore, the current annual rate of valuation and the differential housing rents scheme are being maintained. Even so, and despite a 15% reduction being applied to the Local Property Tax for 2025.

I have endeavored to produce a balanced budget with increased resourcing to improve the impact of key public services including:

- €26,660,800 for housing maintenance to ensure appropriate and efficient service levels for an expanding housing stock, including extra provision for relets and continued planned maintenance funding
- Almost €2.5 million in additional funding for facilities and services to respond to local and regional homeless challenges and to support households to exit homelessness
- €24,905,900 for maintenance of footpaths, regional and local roads
- €24,119,200 for management, maintenance and development of parks, pitches and open spaces, including €4,595,400 for tree maintenance, with extra funding once again provided to deal with emergency and remaining legacy works outside the tree programme schedule
- €13,316,600 for litter management and cleansing
- €12,340,700 for community, sports and wellbeing initiatives and grants
- €2,000,000 extra for the regional fire service

Elsewhere, significantly increased expenditure in Housing (under A07 Ras and Leasing) reflects expanding housing delivery by Approved Housing Bodies, who are mandated to provide up to 50% of new social housing in the Dublin region under “Housing for All” to compliment direct housing delivery by the Council, and additional long-term leased social homes, both of which are supported by the Department of Housing, Local Govern-

ment and Heritage. The provision for housing grants is significantly increased to provide for private vacant home refurbishment and adaptation grants.

The level of funding introduced last year for climate initiatives is being continued as we progress our Climate Action Plan, particularly through:

- Continued investment in retrofit works to improve the energy efficiency of Council-owned buildings, including solar panels in community centres
- Transition to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) from diesel for all our large vehicles by Q1 2025 and continued transition to Electrical Vehicles (EVs) for smaller vehicles throughout the year
- Enhancing our climate leadership through various operational, community, adaptation and innovation grants and actions

Economic and tourism development, along with quality infrastructure and placemaking, all support ongoing investment and future prosperity in South Dublin, measures for 2025 in this regard include:

- Keeping commercial rates at existing levels with no increases proposed in the Annual Rate of Valuation
- Reducing the vacancy rate refund credit to 0% (subject to the Council's approval in accordance with Section 31 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) to strongly encourage occupancy of vacant commercial and industrial premises
- €2,900,000 million for traffic signal, bridge and regional road improvement programmes
- €1,900,000 to fund further enhancements in our towns, villages and public realm, including Clondalkin Village, and additional funding for feasibility studies for Tallaght and Rathfarnham
- Over €1,600,000 to support management and promotion of the extended Grange Castle Business Park and €1,500,000 million for the 12th Lock Masterplan
- €1,300,000 for projects under our Tourism Strategy, including the Hellfire Dublin Mountains project, and €1 million for the Tallaght Heritage Centre
- Specific local initiatives under the business support fund through the Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Development Strategic Policy Committee and continuing supports for small and medium business through our Local Enterprise Office and working in partnership with South Dublin Chamber
- €300,000 to subsidise operational costs under the agreed business plan for the Work IQ Innovation Centre

- €100,000 for an economic plan for Rathfarnham Village in conjunction with the proposed Rathfarnham Castle / Stables project
- Bringing Tradfest to South Dublin and dedicated allocations for a range of seasonal and cultural events including for St. Patrick's Day, Hallowe'en and Christmas and to animate Parthalán Place

Community and voluntary work, together with our investment in social and cultural amenities and programmes, provide a better quality of life and wellbeing in the County and this is recognized in our community, sports, and libraries programmes which will be expanded this year, where possible. Particular areas of investment in this regard for 2025 include:

- €1,600,000 to complete local parks upgrades at St. Cuthberts, Quarryvale, and Jobstown
- €1,500,000 continued investment in teenspaces and playgrounds
- €1,000,000 in community centre management supports
- €650,000 for pitch improvements (including football pitches at Kiltipper Park) supporting sports capital grants
- €500,000 for astro pitches
- €500,000 for sports pavilions and storage facilities in parks and €350,000 for the proposed Whitechurch Sports Facility
- €100,000 (10%) increase in the libraries' book fund and extra funding for Citywest library
- Support for additional cultural and artistic programmes with the Civic Theatre and Rua Red

The input from many Councillors who took the opportunity to engage in pre-budget consultations, has shaped key aspects of the budget, to reflect and address key priorities for our citizens, including providing for inclusive, safe, and sustainable communities, which is critical to underpinning quality of life and opportunity for all.

Along with our commitment to the implementation of our Public Sector Duty Framework and ongoing work on housing adaptation grants, age friendly initiatives, Traveller inclusion and support, integration, sports inclusion, neurodiverse initiatives and many other programs, extra funding is provided for physical works for better accessibility on local footpaths (€400,000), additional ac-

cessibility & Disabled Persons Grant (DPG) works for housing tenants (€150,000), a €100,000 fund for a new equality and access work plan that will include digital accessibility and access audit projects, and €25,000 contribution for the 2026 Special Olympics.

To support the introduction of the new Community Safety Partnership (CSP), funding is available for additional estate management projects, to be identified by Councillors and local residents' groups, in areas including MacUilliam, Balgaddy, Bawnogue, and other estates as required. €300,000 is also being provided for safety works and lighting in parks and open spaces, €100,000 to support expansion of Connect 4 detached street work and €75,000 reserved for initiatives identified and led by the CSP, including to address domestic violence, drug debt intimidation, nitrous oxide and other priorities, as well as to support the work of local drug and alcohol task forces and the junior safety forum.

In addition to the various measures already outlined, additional provision is also being made for:

- Widespread roll-out of solar powered litter bins in town centres and parks, and sufficient resources to tackle graffiti more effectively in local areas
- Columbarium wall and car park improvements at Bohernabreena cemetery
- €250,000 funding for fit-out of new youth facilities in Citywest & Adamstown
- €100,000 for family trails in Sean Walsh Park and Lucan House/Parco Italia
- €100,000 for improvements to pedestrian crossings and local road markings
- Provision for enhanced cleansing of laneways and cycle tracks under the street cleansing service
- €50,000 each for processes to identify and plan improvements for Rathfarnham Village and Tallaght Village
- Examination of the feasibility of additional sports facilities in Brookfield, Kingswood, Tymon, Collinstown and other areas
- €50,000 to further roll out school streets

Our ability to continue to expand key services and to meet the many additional budget requests from members, while also balancing the budget for 2025, was achieved despite the maximum 15% Local Property Tax (LPT) reduction being applied by the Council at the October meeting. This decision has removed up to €11,114,932 in potential discretionary additional funding for

2025 and I reiterate to all elected members that this is not a sustainable ongoing position in the medium-term, given the financial constraints that we will face in many areas. In future budgets within the life of this Council, there will be a need to directly link LPT variation decisions to providing additional services and local projects requested by Councillors.

Organisationally, we continue to expand our workforce to deliver the level of services committed to in this budget and to manage a significantly expanding capital programme. This is reflected by a 12.5% increase on the 2024 projected outturn in payroll costs as well as plans to improve our recruitment profile and processes. There is also ongoing investment provided for key organizational and workplace development, enhancing our connectivity with local communities and citizens and other key corporate and governance measures including managing data access, cyber security, ongoing digitisation of services and debt management.

I greatly appreciate the commitment and the invaluable advice provided by Ronan Fitzgerald, Director of Finance, and his team in the preparation of this budget, and I also sincerely thank the senior management team and all staff for their work and diligence throughout the process.

Finally, the engagement and support of Councillors and the Corporate Policy Group during the budgetary process is particularly acknowledged. The budget presented for your consideration addresses a broad range of priorities that will allow the Council to effectively meet the needs of local citizens, communities, and businesses in 2025, as well as providing the basis for greater opportunities for all in South Dublin over the next five years under our new Corporate Plan.

Accordingly, I recommend this budget for adoption by the Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colm Ward', written in a cursive style.

Colm Ward

Chief Executive