

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN ÁRAS AN
CHONTAE ON THE 22ND SEPTEMBER 2014**

PRESENT:	Councillors	John Joe Fennelly	In the Chair
	Councillors	William Aird	Paddy Bracken
		Caroline Dwane Stanley	Catherine Fitzgerald
		Padraig Fleming	David Goodwin
		John King	Jerry Lodge
		Seamus McDonald	Paschal McEvoy
		Jimmy Kelly	Tom Mulhall
		Aidan Mullins	Brendan Phelan
		Mary Sweeney	Noel Tuohy

APOLOGIES:	Ben Brennan	John Moran
-------------------	-------------	------------

IN ATTENDANCE:

Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive, Kieran Kehoe, Director of Services, Julie Bergin, A/Head of Finance, Ian McCormack, A/Director of Services,

Local Property Tax – Notice of Consideration of setting a Local Adjustment Factor

The report of the 17th September 2014 from the Chief Executive was discussed in detail. It was noted that under section 20 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 as amended by Section 5 of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act, 2013 a Local Authority may as a reserved function vary the Local Property Tax by +/- 15%.

The Chief Executive outlined in his presentation the factors to be considered by the member in making their decision with regard to the Local Adjustment Factor for the Local Property Tax. These included:

- Estimate of income and expenditure for the period for which the varied rate is to have effect.
- Financial position of the Local Authority
- Feedback from public consultation
- Financial effect of the varied rate

Each factor was discussed in detail. The feedback from the public consultation was noted. The members were advised that the government had confirmed its intention to move to 80% retention of all local property tax receipts within the local authority area where the tax is raised in 2015. The remaining 20% of the tax collected nationally will be distributed on an equalized basis to local authorities to ensure that no local authority is worse off from local retention of local property tax in 2015 compared to general purpose allocations in 2014. The Chief executive advised that the estimated local property tax income for Laois in 2015 was €5,028,291 and that €4,022,633 would be retained locally. He further advised that the Council would receive an equalisation amount of €3,608,691 to ensure that the overall amount allocated in 2015 would be the same as 2014.

The members were advised that 11,900 (41%) households in the county paid €90 per annum, 12,200 (42%) paid €225, 3,500 (12%) paid €315 with the remaining 1,400 (5%) paying €405 or more yearly. The value of a 15% increase / decrease varied between €13.50 and €47.25 for 95% of householders in Laois.

The financial impact of a reduction in the LPT was outlined. The Council would not receive any additional government funding to make up the shortfall. As the Council did not have alternative sources of income to meet the shortfall a reduction in the local property tax would have a corresponding impact on the financial ability of the Council to provide services such as road maintenance, footpaths, public lighting, libraries, parks, playgrounds, burial grounds, grants to communities and tidy town committees, etc. The members were advised that the main discussion nationally was on reducing the level of the tax. Keeping the local property tax at its current level would only allow the Council to provide services at the same level whereas an increase of 15% would give an additional €754,244 to the Council to spend. This would allow it to continue to fund public enhancement schemes and progress valuable infrastructure improvements.

On completion of the presentation the various issues raised by the members were addressed by the executive. Councillor Lodge proposed to maintain the LPT at the current rate with no variation and this was seconded by Councillor Mulhall. It was proposed by Councillor Dwane Stanley to reduce the LPT by 15% and this was seconded by Councillor Fleming. The results of the vote were as follows:

	Yes (to maintain)	No (for Reduction)
John Joe Fennelly	Y	
William Aird	Y	
Noel Tuohy		N
Mary Sweeney	Y	
Brendan Phelan		N
Aidan Mullins		N
Tom Mulhall	Y	
Jimmy Kelly	Y	
Paschal McEvoy	Y	
Seamus McDonald	Y	
Jerry Lodge	Y	
John King	Y	
David Goodwin		
Padraig Fleming		N
Paddy Bracken	Y	
Caroline Dwane Stanley		N
Catherine Fitzgerald	Y	
Total	11	5

It was agreed to maintain the local property tax for 2015 at the same level as 2014.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH

CERTIFIED: _____
**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE
AFFAIRS**