**PRESS RELEASE 21st November 2023**

**Proposed Direct Provision Centre at St. Martin’s Road, Rosslare Harbour.**

Wexford County Council wishes to provide clarification and an update in relation to the proposal to develop a Direct Provision Centre at the former Great Southern Hotel on St. Martin’s Road in Rosslare Harbour.

The Council carried out inspections of the work being carried out at the site and identified a number of modifications to the building which were not consistent with the planning permission granted. The Council then issued a Warning Letter to the developer pursuant to Section 152 of the Planning and Development Act. The Council’s legal advisors advised that this was the appropriate response, and that the Council had an obligation to act reasonably and proportionately and on the basis of the evidence available to it. The Council fully intends following through the enforcement process underway.

A second and more involved issue has arisen in relation to whether the proposal to convert the building into accommodation for persons seeking international protection is classed as exempted development. This is a complex issue and Wexford County Council on 10th November made an application to An Bord Pleanála under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requesting a determination by An Bord Pleanála in relation to exempted development status and the proposed intensification and increased occupancy of the building.

A decision from the referral to An Bord Pleanála is awaited.

In these circumstances the Council has been advised that there is currently no reasonable basis upon which it could commence injunction proceedings against the developer under the Planning legislation.

Separately, Wexford County Council received a Section 5 application from Deputy Verona Murphy on 15th November quoting similar grounds on which Wexford County Council made its application to An Bord Pleanála.

The Council has a statutory role to ensure compliance with Planning and Building Control legislation and wishes to make it clear that it intends to use its powers to ensure compliance with the above legislation where non-compliances are identified.

The Council also has a duty to follow due process and to act in a manner that is fair, appropriate, and proportionate and failure to do so could undermine the Council’s ability to perform its statutory enforcement role.

ENDS