

PRESS RELEASE 5th December, 2023

**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL ADOPTS €164.2M BUDGET FOR 2024**

Members of Wexford County Council adopted the €164.2m budget, which represent an increase of €12.9m over 2023 at the statutory budget meeting held at Co Hall on Monday 4th December.

The budget provides funding across the full range of service areas provided by the Council from social housing and road maintenance through to street cleaning, fire services, libraries, burial grounds to parks. The 2024 budget continues to support the strategic, economic and community development programme which is delivering well received positive and progressive developments for citizens throughout the County with a number of projects completed and these are now contributing positively to community life. Other projects are also progressing towards completion.

Some of the areas of note include:

An Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) of 0.253 for the 2024 financial year and represents no increase over the 2023 ARV.

The continuation of the tiered approach for the abatement of rates due by liable persons in respect of vacant properties on the same basis as the 2023 scheme. This initiative by the Council has had a positive impact in terms of regularising the position of vacant properties and has seen a reduction in the number of properties vacant

The continuation of the terms of the Small Business Support Grant Scheme on the same basis as the 2023 scheme. This scheme provides a grant of 10% of the annual rates bill of €30,000 or less, which results in an actual rates reduction for up to 96% of rates payers in the county if they avail of this support grant.

The 2024 Budget also includes additional funding at Municipal District level to provide for additional local developments based on specific priorities in each district.

In presenting the draft budget Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive, Wexford County Council extended his appreciation to the Cathaoirleach and members of the Council for theircontinued assistance and support saying:’ This has been hugely important, and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership as we progress through these unprecedented and challenging times and plan, with an air of optimism, for the future on the delivery of high-quality public services for the people of County Wexford.’

He added that ‘Despite the challenges of presenting a budget for 2024, we very much look to building further on the progress we have made and plans we have in place to develop County Wexford into the future. The Council must and will play a leading role for the development of the county and will work tirelessly to ensure the county will continue to recover from this period of instability and uncertainty and we are very much looking and planning for a brighter and better future for all.’

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editor:**

An update of the status of these key projects for the county is set out in the following summary update:

* Min Ryan Park- open to public since August 2020 was officially opened in 2021. In addition the MUGA and Skatepark have been added and officially opened, further increasing the use and popularity of this strategic amenity for the county.
* Gorey District Park with the enhanced playground, adult gym equipment and coffee shop fully opened to the public in 2023 and has become a much used and well received development in Gorey
* Kilmore Quay Link Road Project completed and opened during 2021 has been instrumental in allowing much needed infrastructural development progress in the area. Plans to develop a Marina Business Park at this location are progressing.
* Forth Mountain Activity Park (Phase 1) - Trails and Car Park completed in 2022 have seen increased use of Forth Mountain as a key amenity and is now recognised by Failte Ireland as a notable visitor attraction. The addition of the Equestrian trails in 2022 have added a unique aspect to this amenity and we are seeing the popularity of Forth Mountain grow from strength to strength with plans progressing to build further on this for the county.
* Forth Mountain Activity Park (Phase 2) Activity Centre Building is in the planning and design phase and will further add to the attractiveness of this increasingly popular amenity in the county. Design and tendering is also complete on the Boat house and ancillary facilities.
* High Hill Norman Park Development in New Ross completed and officially opened by Minister Heather Humphries is widely acknowledged as a hugely positive transformation of a derelict site and has delivered a strategic and unique urban amenity for New Ross.
* New Ross Public Realm (Phase 1: Removal of Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks) The work to remove the oil tank structures on the Quay in New Ross was completed in 2021 and the development of public realm works have been completed. The Emigrant Park was officially opened by Minister Heather Humphries recently.
* Enniscorthy Technology Park (Phase 1) With 3 serviced sites now in place and the construction of the first building in the park nearing completion this project is well placed to deliver economic benefit to the area in the short to medium term. The IDA has recently announced the development of an Advanced Factory on site at the Park.
* Trinity Wharf – 2021 saw the successful securing of major grant funding for this strategic development. In 2023 Construction of Phase 1, the access road and new level crossing began and will be completed in early 2024. Design of the remaining site works, including sea wall, pedestrian bridge and internal site works/services etc will commence in late 2023 following the recent appointment of Design Consultants There continues to be a growing interest in the value of this site as a strategic location for siting and developing businesses.
* Monck Street Enhancement Scheme Phase 1 is now complete and the 2nd phase involving the construction of the roof structure is approaching completion.
* South East Greenway – Work is complete on Phase 1 (New Ross to Glenmore) and was officially opened on 25th July. Works have also recently commenced on the 5.5km section from Ferrybank to Curraghmore. Detailed design work will then commence on the remaining sections including the Red Bridge and Tunnel north of New Ross.
* New Ross Fire Station is complete and was officially opened by Minister Darragh O’Brien on 25th November, 2022.
* Wexford Arts Centre extension was officially opened on 12th November, 2022 by Minister Peter Burke.
* The Enniscorthy Astro Pitch is due to be completed in 2024.
* St Walleran’s Site in Gorey – the masterplan for this strategic site has been completed and the planning process for 173 social, affordable and private housing is underway. The tender process for this project is underway and contracts are expected to be awarded in 2024.
* Templeshannon Regeneration – The site investigation for the pedestrian bridge element of this project was completed in 2021 and preliminary design and bridge options have been identified and are currently being reviewed – funding for this regeneration project is being explored.
* Old Dublin Road Business Park, Enniscorthy – Phase 1 works including footpath, pedestrian crossing, new signage and landscaping is almost complete. Funding for the masterplan is being explored.
* Planning approval has been granted for the new Library and Apartments on the old Murphy Flood’s site in Enniscorthy.

Other projects to be further progressed in 2024 include:

* Market House, Gorey
* John Street Building Regeneration Project (New Ross)
* Acquisition and master planning of 50 acre site for new South East Technical University
* Esmonde Street Gorey Project
* Wexfordia Projects at The National Irish Heritage Park, Hook Lighthouse and New Ross tourism Projects
* Enniscorthy Town Centre & Tourism Project
* Delivery of temporary car park in Courtown
* Oyster Lane Car Park, Wexford
* Wexford Town to Rosslare Greenway
* Enniscorthy Sports Hub
* Curracloe Water Sports Activity Facility.