

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 14th November, 2022
in the Council Chamber at 2.30pm (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. George Lawlor, Cathaoirleach**Councillors:**

BARDEN	PAT	DONOHUE	ANTHONY	MOORE	JIM
BELL	MAURA	FARRELL	MARY	MURPHY	BARBARA ANNE
BOLGER	ANDREW	FLEMING	JOHN	MURPHY	BRIDIN
BREEN	PIP	FORDE	TOM	O'ROURKE	JOHN
BROWNE	AIDAN	HEGARTY	JOHN	Ó'SÚILLEABHÁIN	FIONNTÁN
BYRNE	CATHAL	HYNES	DAVID	OWENS	JACKSER
CARTHY	GER	KAVANAGH	WILLIE	SHEEHAN	MICHAEL
CODD	JIM	KELLY	LEONARD	SULLIVAN	JOE
CODD-NOLAN	KATHLEEN	KENNY	DONAL	WALSH	OLIVER
CONNICK	ANTHONY	LAFFAN	GARRY	WHELAN	MICHAEL
DEVEREUX	DIARMUID	MCDONALD	LISA		

Officials:

Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive
 Mr. Eamonn Hore, Director of Services
 Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance
 Ms. Carolyn Godkin, Director of Services
 Ms. Elizabeth Hore, Director of Services
 Mr. Sean Meyler, A/Director of Services
 Ms. Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services
 Mr. Michael Drea, County Secretary

Apologies:

Cllr. Frank Staples

Votes of Sympathy:

The Cathaoirleach offered the sympathy of the Council to the family of Breda Stacey, wife of retired staff member Noel Stacey.

Votes of Congratulations

Cllr. M. Whelan congratulated Tadhg Furlong on captaining the Irish Rugby team in the Autumn Nations Series clash with Fiji.

Cllr. M. Sheehan congratulated all the winners of the Environmental awards.

1. Presentation to the Council – National Broadband Ireland

Mr. Pat O’Toole, National Broadband Ireland (NBI) gave a comprehensive presentation in which he outlined the role of NBI and the process they must follow. He provided an update on fibre to the home in Co. Wexford. Mr. O’Toole advised that there are 22,940 properties in their intervention area and by June 2023, NBI will have 11,168 properties who can connect. He said the NBI spend in Wexford will be approx. €88m. He confirmed that they have 1,124 active connections with 107 pending.

Mr. O’Toole responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members in regard to the following:

- Will areas where current providers are unable to deliver the speeds necessary be picked up by NBI?
- The cost for the entire country and the number of providers?
- Sensitivity around location of towers and pylons.
- Possibility of expediting roll out?
- How do you get into the intervention area?
- Is EU law obstructing us from competing with private providers?
- If a house is built after NBI put infrastructure in, can they connect to a private provider?

Cllr. G. Carthy left the meeting at this point.

2. Confirmation of Minutes:

2.1 County Council Meeting 10th October, 2022

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. P. Breen, the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of the County Council Meeting on 10th October, 2022.

2.1.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001:

3.1 Intention to dispose of land at Bishopswater, Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes, the Council resolved to dispose of land at Bishopswater, Wexford in accordance with the terms of the S. 183 Notice, as circulated.

3.2 Intention to dispose of property at Knockrathkyle, Edermine, Co. Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. O'Rourke, seconded by Cllr. K. Codd Nolan, the Council resolved to dispose of property at Knockrathkyle, Edermine, Co. Wexford in accordance with the terms of the S. 183 Notice, as circulated.

3.3 Intention to lease a plot of land at Coolcotts Wexford.

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. M. Bell, the Council resolved to lease a plot of land at Coolcotts Wexford in accordance with the terms of the S. 183 Notice, as circulated.

4. Audited AFS 2021 & Audit Report 2021

The Members noted the audited 2021 AFS and the 2021 audit report, which were circulated with the management response.

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. J. Moore, the Council resolved to adopt the audited 2021 AFS and the 2021 audit report.

5. Housing Allocation Scheme 2023

Ms. C. Godkin outlined the major changes contained in the Housing Allocation Scheme which was circulated to the Elected Members, and recommended adoption.

Ms. C. Godkin responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members in regard to the following:

- Scope to reassess housing applicants who are excluded from the housing list due to the 52 week income rule but are not currently working due to illness/disability.
- Possibility of giving priority to front line workers through Part V properties.
- Possibility of giving downsizing transfers higher priority than 3rd.
- Priority to be given to applicants with long standing connections to the area.

Cllr. M. Sheehan proposed the adoption the Housing Allocation Scheme and this was seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes.

Cllr. G. Lawlor proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan and agreed by all and the Council resolved to adopt the Housing Allocation Scheme with the following amendment:

Succession of tenancy only when the tenant dies, and the successor must be eligible for social housing and on the rent for 2 years. (Changed from 5 years)

6. Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase

Ms. C. Godkin outlined the main provisions of the affordable dwelling scheme and the reasons why the Council need to adopt a scheme.

A number of the Elected Members raised concerns over the 70-30 split, where 30% of properties are reserved for applicants residing in the Municipal District or within 10km of the affordable property.

Mr. T. Enright acknowledged the concerns of the Elected Members but also emphasised the importance of adopting a policy for submission to the Department. Mr. T. Enright proposed that the policy be adopted with a commitment to review it prior to any allocation.

On the proposal of Cllr. A. Bolger, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan, the Council resolved to adopt the Scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase with a commitment to review the scheme in February, 2023.

Cllr. J. Owens left the meeting at this point.

7. Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023 - 2027

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. M. Bell, the Council resolved to adopt the Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023 – 2027.

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break and at this point.

Cllr. J. O'Rourke and Cllr. C. Byrne left at this point.

8. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive and members of the Management Team responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members in regard to the following:

- Latest update on supports for flooding in Gorey.
- Council's commitment to funding Esmonde St. regeneration after failed RRDF application.
- Timeframe for erosion prevention works in Rosslare.
- Ownership status of Dun Mhuire.
- Does Council have a plan for South Main St.?
- Need for more units to be added to derelict sites register in Wexford.
- Status of boiled water notice.
- Funding for Emigrant Park in New Ross.
- Timeframe for appointment of Town Centre Planner.
- Issues in relation to NTA removing bus routes.

- Issues in relation to title of old fire station in New Ross.
- Update on backlog for pre-planning meetings.
- Timeframe for appointment of contractor for Enniscorthy Sports Hub.
- Renovation works for the old Council Chamber in the Market House, Gorey.
- Compliments to staff for response to flooding in north Wexford.
- Update on pyrite and testing of current suppliers.
- Timeframe for appointment of consultants to address odour issue in Ballyminaun.

Cllr. J. Hegarty left at this point.

- Length of time taken by Eir to respond during recent wind events.
- Compensation for wind damage in Clongeen/Foulksmills.
- Coastal works in Grange, Fethard.

Cllr. A. Browne left at this point.

- Congratulations to Age Friendly team for winning Tele Health award.
- Update on Loci report for Enniscorthy.
- Phase 2 active travel for Enniscorthy – Blackstoops.
- Update on improvements for water supply in Bunclody.
- Provision of housing in Enniscorthy.
- Congratulations on official opening of Wexford skate park.
- Status of 2 derelict houses in Wexford.
- Financial contributions from wind farms and quarries to roads?
- Speed ramps for some villages.
- Line marking on the New Line road.
- Safety concerns at junction of Ballylannon road and New Line road.
- Erection of flood barriers in Rosslare District.

Cllr. B. Murphy left at this point.

9. Minutes of CPG

9.1 Minutes of CPG Meeting 7th November, 2022

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Breen, seconded by Cllr. M. Farrell, the Council resolved to adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the CPG of 7th November, 2022.

10. Minutes of Meetings (For Noting):

- 10.1 New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 14th September, 2022**
- 10.2 Rosslare Municipal District Meeting – 21st September, 2022**
- 10.3 Borough District of Wexford Meeting– 19th September, 2022**
- 10.4 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 19th September, 2022**
- 10.5 Gorey-Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 20th September, 2022**
- 10.6 Transportation & Water Services SPC – 23rd June, 2022**

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald, the Council resolved to adopt the Minutes of the above meetings.

11. Correspondence and Communications

11.1 Letter from Monaghan County Council re motion Citizens Assemblies dated 6th October, 2022.

11.2 Letter from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council re: motion dated 10th October, 2022.

11.3 Letter from Donegal County Council re motion turf policy dated 20th October, 2022.

11.4 Letter from Offaly County Council re motion ambulance service dated 26th October, 2022.

11.5 Letter from Cork County Council re: resolution on waste dated 24th October, 2022

11.6 Email from Private Secretary to Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Eamon Ryan, TD dated 3rd November, 2022

The Members noted the above correspondence items and expressed their appreciation for the responses received.

12. Councillor's Conference Reports

12.1 Councillor Conference Reports

Conference Report - Cllr. G. Laffan, - "A Practical guide to Budget 2023" held in Carlingford, Co. Louth

Conference report - Cllr. F. Staples, - "A Practical guide to Budget 2023" held in Carlingford, Co. Louth.

Wexford London Association Delegation Report – October 2022

The Members noted the reports above, as circulated.

13. Deferred Notices of Motion – Council Meeting 10th October, 2022

13.1 Cllr. L. Kelly

"The Cycle to Work scheme is only applicable where the bicycle and safety equipment is provided by an employer to either a director or someone in its employment. Thus, where an employer-employee relationship does not exist, for example, in the case of self-employed individuals, students, retired individuals, job seekers or those in unpaid work, such individuals can't qualify for the scheme. We ask the Minister of Finance to amend the current Cycle to Work scheme or create a new scheme which will include the above excluded individual/groups"

Response of the Executive

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Finance for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. L. Kelly, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes and carried.

13.2 Cllr. T. Forde

"This council asks that Minister Darragh O'Brien take stock of the current housing crisis in County Wexford and immediately declare the districts of the county a rent pressure zone."

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly and carried.

13.3 Cllr. J. Sullivan

"This council namely Wexford County Council calls on the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage to extend the Defective Concrete Blocks Redress Scheme nationwide with immediate effect to automatically include all Counties in Ireland as the 10% levy on concrete blocks, pouring concrete and other concrete products will apply nationwide and furthermore to include redress for houses whether complete or under the course of construction for concrete affected by Mica, Pyrite, Pyrrhotite, Alkali Silica Reaction or any other inappropriate aggregates or materials."

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. J. Sullivan with an amendment to a 5% levy, seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan and carried.

13.4 Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin

"We ask that Wexford County Council explore purchasing properties for sale that are currently occupied with HAP tenancies."

Response of the Executive:

The Councils homeless unit reviews household circumstances when any homeless presentation is made. In situations where the property is being placed for sale on the open market, the Council can seek approval from the Department to purchase the property where the housing needs of the household can be adequately met, the property is in good condition and the price is within purchase bands.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin, seconded by Cllr. T. Forde and carried.

13.5 Cllr. D. Hynes

“This council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to address the issue that has arising in many instances since the ‘Vision for Change’ 2006 was enacted, where people suffering from addiction are not admitted into psychiatric care and this has led to tragedy on a number of occasions.”

For Information:

A Vision For Change is a Department of Health policy which detailed a model of mental health service provision for Ireland.

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Health for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. D. Hynes, seconded by Cllr. L. Kelly and carried.

13.6 Cllr. T. Forde

"We ask that Wexford County Council implement a 60 day homeless prevention plan for all those at risk of losing their homes or tenancies and also ask that Minister Darragh O'Brien provide any necessary resources to assist with the implementation of such a plan."

Response of the Executive:

The South East Regional Strategic Management Group has adopted a Regional Homeless Prevention & Support Project (RHPSP) which is being operated in all 5 LA's in the region. The RHPSP prioritises homeless preventions by way of applying early interventions, mediation and prevention measures to those seeking homeless services/emergency accommodation. To ensure consistency in how the service is being provided across the region, the following steps are used by all staff that carry out homeless assessments and provide homeless supports.

Conduct a homeless assessment and identify client's immediate needs – “At Risk” following issue of NTQ - Provide support/advice to client re: validity of the notice and ensuring current social housing application information is up to date. Clients that are “At risk” of homelessness do not have an immediate need for alternative accommodation and all relevant supports are offered to them i.e. early intervention, mediation with other relevant third parties e.g. family, landlords other agencies.

Clients who present who are not social housing applicants receive immediate support with completing a social housing application. These applications are processed by the HSSU/Placefinder and are prioritised over all other social housing applications.

Clients will always be encouraged to try and source alternative private rented accommodation and are issued with up to date HAP forms. This does not mean that the HSSU are not also working to find a solution to meet the applicant's needs. The HSSU, utilise social housing allocations, Housing First tenancies, licenced properties and main stream HAP tenancies to provide social housing supports.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin and carried.

13.7 Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin

"This council asks that Minister Darragh O'Brien reintroduce a temporary ban on evictions in the private market to protect vulnerable renters who abide by their tenancy agreements and to ensure they keep a roof over their head and to review this policy on a yearly basis."

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes and carried.

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. D. Kenny and agreed by all, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue to 6pm.

13.8 Cllr. D. Hynes

"I ask the minister for local government to bring in. Legislation to rectify the situation where a whole section of society is excluded from running in council elections due to the fact that working class people who work in Factories, shops etc are unable to run for this council because employers won't allow. Employees the time off to. Attend. Meetings etc , "

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage for consideration.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. D. Hynes, seconded by Cllr. F. Ó Súilleabháin.

Cllr. A. Bolger proposed the following amendment and this was seconded by Cllr. M. Sheehan:

I ask the Minister for Local Government to put attending statutory meetings required by the Local Government Act on a statutory footing to rectify the situation where a whole section of society is excluded from running in Council elections due to the fact that people who are employed in many different sectors are prevented from running for this Council because employers won't allow employees the time off to attend meetings etc.

The amended motion was carried on a majority show of hands.

Cllr. D. Devereux left at this point.

14. Notices of Motion

14.1 Cllr. B. Murphy

"That this Council writes to the Minister for Housing, requesting that the minimum grant funding offered under the Croí Cónaithe Fund launched in 2022 be doubled. This would mean €30,000 increases to €60,000 for the renovation of vacant properties, and €50,000 increases to €100,000 for the refurbishment of derelict properties. This increase in the grant available would reflect the recent rise in the cost of building".

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Housing for consideration.

As Cllr. B. Murphy was absent, this motion wasn't taken.

14.2 Cllr. L. McDonald and Cllr. B.A. Murphy

"Wexford County council calls upon the government to create and implement a national domestic violence register as a further measure to assist in the fight against domestic violence in Ireland"

Response of the Executive:

If passed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Justice for consideration

The motion was proposed by Cllr. L. McDonald, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy and carried.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUISNESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an lá de Nollag, 2022.

Cllr. George Lawlor
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea,
County Secretary