

**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council  
held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 – 2.30 p.m.  
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Wexford.**

**Attendance:**

**In the Chair:** Cllr. K. Doyle, Cathaoirleach.

**Councillors:**

P. Breen;	M. Byrne;	G. Carthy;	K. Codd Nolan;
A. Connick;	T. Dempsey;	M. Doyle	A. Donohoe;
M. Farrell;	W. Fitzharris;	J. Fleming;	T. Forde;
J. Hegarty;	D. Hynes;	R. Ireton;	P. Kavanagh;
W. Kavanagh;	G. Lawlor;	L. McDonald;	J. Moore;
B.A. Murphy;	M. Murphy;	J. Mythen;	L. O'Brien;
J. O'Rourke;	F. Ó Súilleabháin;	M. Roche;	M. Sheehan;
F. Staples;	J. Sullivan;	O. Walsh;	T. Walsh;
M. Whelan.			

**Officials:**

Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive;  
Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services;  
Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services;  
Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services;  
Mr. J. Carley, Director of Services;  
Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance;  
Mr. P. O'Gorman, Senior Executive Officer;  
Mr. S. Howell, Senior Executive Architect;  
Mr. P. Collins, County Secretary.

**1. Confirmation of Minutes:**

- 1.1 County Council Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.
- 1.2 Special County Council Meeting – 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2019.

On the proposal of Cllr. B. A. Murphy seconded by Cllr. M. Murphy and agreed by all, the Council approved the minutes of the meetings as outlined above.

**2. Filling of Casual Vacancy following the resignation of Oisín O'Connell:**

At the outset the Cathaoirleach welcomed ex-Councillors Oisín O'Connell and Anthony Kelly to the meeting. He also welcomed Marie Doyle.

Cllr. G. Lawlor took the opportunity to pay tribute to Oisín O'Connell as he hadn't the opportunity to do so at the previous meeting.

Cllr. J. Mythen then proposed Marie Doyle to be co-opted to fill the casual vacancy arising from the resignation of Oisín O'Connell and this was seconded by Cllr. M. Roche and agreed by all.

Cllr. M. Doyle then took her seat and introduced herself to the Council, giving a brief description of her background. She is a mother with an 8 year old son, living in New Ross all her life. She has had a long time interest in politics. She believes in an Ireland of equals and is a proud republican and socialist.

She studied social science in college and is the first female Sinn Fein Councillor on Wexford County Council. She will be the only female member of the New Ross District. She also noted that she will be the youngest Councillor and highlighted the disconnection that there is with the young people and politics. She knows the great work that goes on at the Council and is looking forward to working for the betterment of people in County Wexford.

The Leaders of all of the political parties then welcomed Marie Doyle to the Council and wished her well on her co-option to the Council.

Members of the New Ross District including the Chairman John Fleming also welcomed Marie Doyle to the Chamber and looked forward to working with her as part of the New Ross District.

The Cathaoirleach also welcomed Marie Doyle and looked forward to working with her.

The Chief Executive Tom Enright then welcomed her on behalf of the Management and Staff of Wexford County Council and offered her any help and assistance that she may require. He also welcomed Anthony Kelly back and wished every success to Oisín O'Connell in his future.

### **3. Proposed disposal of land under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001:**

3.1 Proposed extension of lease of lands at Castlebridge to Castlebridge Community Development Co-Operative Society Limited

3.2 Proposed extension of licence of lands at Clonroche, Co. Wexford to Clonroche Development Association

3.3 Proposed lease of lands at Newtown Lower, Crossabeg, Co. Wexford to Killurin Rowing Club

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, the proposed disposals, as submitted to the meeting, were approved.

### **4. Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8, of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended):**

4.1 LAC 1807 – Proposed development of new seating, planting, street furniture and street lighting in Templeshannon. Undergrounding of existing overhead services and removal of existing poles. The removal of the existing footpaths along Templeshannon. The resurfacing and relining of the Templeshannon Road. Introduction of a one way traffic flow southbound through Templeshannon. Diversion of all traffic across Enniscorthy Bridge southbound onto Shannon Quay. Additional pedestrian crossings in Templeshannon and along the Shannon. A new roundabout at the junction of the Spring Valley Road and Armstrong's Range. Other miscellaneous works.

Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services, advised the Council that a number of objections had been received in respect of the proposed development and they had been incorporated into the report, which had been discussed at the Enniscorthy Municipal District meeting in December 2018.

The recommendation of Enniscorthy District was not to proceed with the project, as presented, mainly due to the impact of the proposed one-way traffic system would have on Templeshannon. The Director recommended that the Council proceed with the plan as presented, but noted that, if the scheme was rejected, the Special Projects Team will review the current proposals and come back to the Enniscorthy District with a new set of proposals.

Cllr. P. Kavanagh stated that the traffic management was the issue with regard to the current proposal and he also sought a commitment that the money for the scheme will be ring-fenced. This was agreed by the Chief Executive and Director of Services.

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Mythen seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy it was agreed by all to reject the Part XI, as proposed.

## **5. Rebuilding Ireland 2016-2021 – Wexford County Council Progress Report**

The Progress Report had been circulated to the Members. Mr. P. O’Gorman, SEO Housing, highlighted the main points in the Report. In particular he noted that 419 houses had been allocated in 2018 and the Council hoped to maintain that level of housing allocations in 2019. He also expected that the figures on the Housing List should fall to under 2000 when the figures are reviewed again in June 2019.

Councillors then asked a number of questions including the following:

- The number of acquisitions in rural Wexford and the number of acquisitions scheduled to be acquired in 2019
- a breakdown of the figures between urban and rural
- the number of Council houses that are vacant
- the number of offers refused by applicants – it was noted that 89 applicants (21.2% refusal rate) refused offers of houses in 2018 and Mr. O’Gorman set out the main reasons for this. The Chief Executive noted that sometimes people are on the housing list to avail of housing supports and are not interested in LA Housing.
- 14 vacant houses in Gorey at present
- Leasing buildings from landlords
- Too much reliance on the private market
- Not building enough public housing
- HAP and RAS are not the answer to the housing problem because it doesn’t provide homes
- The number of Part V new builds in 2018 and the number expected in 2019. Mr. O’Gorman advised that he expects there to be 51 Part V housing coming on stream in 2019.
- The cost to the LA to build houses and why is the cost so high. Mr. O’Gorman advised that the Council goes out to public tender for all houses and he thinks that value for money is on a par with the private sector. Mr. Shay Howell, County Architect, advised that land costs are included in the price along with building costs. The Council houses are of very high quality with good services e.g. heating which may be expensive in the

first instance but reduces heating costs for the tenants on an ongoing basis in the future.

The Cathaoirleach echoed this view that the houses being built are of good quality which leads to lower maintenance costs for tenants in the long run.

## **6. Rollout of Housing First Initiative in Co. Wexford**

A report on the rollout of the Housing First Initiative in Co. Wexford had been circulated to the Members. Mr. P. O' Gorman, SEO, Housing, presented the main points of the Initiative. He noted that the Initiative, which will put supports in place to help deal with serious housing issues, including homelessness and rough sleeping, will begin in April 2019. The Initiative will also have extra staff, including a full-time senior Psychologist for the South-East. Members welcomed the initiative.

Following a number of questions, Mr. O'Gorman advised that it was unlikely that housing for clients being dealt with under the Initiative would be distributed across the county - it was most likely to be located in Wexford Town where there are services available for these clients.

## **7. Co. Wexford Vacant Homes Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2021 Update**

A comprehensive report, giving an update of the Co. Wexford Vacant Homes Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2021 had been circulated to the members. Mr. O' Gorman, SEO, Housing, then set out the main items in the report.

Members then brought up a number of issues related to vacant houses, including the following:

- Ineligibility for the Repair and Leasing Scheme
- The unwillingness of the banks to engage with the Council in relation to vacant houses in their possession
- The time lapse between the purchase of a house and the letting of a house
- The time lapse in a rented house becoming vacant and for housing maintenance and repairs to be carried out.

Mr. O'Gorman responded that the timeframe was normally 2-3 months but sometimes legal issues delay the purchase of the house and the keys are not available until such time as the legal issues are dealt with.

Discussion then took place on a survey of vacant houses in four pilot areas in the County. Mr. O'Gorman advised that the way the Council is funded also has an effect on repairs. He noted that if the repairs cost in the region of €7000-€8000 they are done locally but above that amount they require department approval for funding for voids. He noted that there were 45 voids in 2018.

The Chief Executive advised that the CCMA have raised this funding issue nationally and he noted that the release of funding is starting to happen more quickly. Mr. O' Gorman advised that no two cases are the same. Often, the Council has to bring rented properties up to standard where unauthorised works have taken place. Mr. Shay Howell, Co. Architect gave an example of attic conversions which have to be brought up to standard

even though they appear to be in good condition on the surface. He noted that there are generally reasons behind delays of this kind.

### **8. Choice Based Letting – Pilot allocation in Co. Wexford**

A comprehensive report on the new Choice Based Lettings Scheme had been circulated to the Members. Mr. P. O’Gorman, SEO Housing, highlighted the main features of the new Scheme, which were noted by the Members.

At 4pm Cllr. F.O’ Súilleabháin arrived.

### **9. Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 – Initial Analysis of Need**

The report had been circulated to the Members and Mr. P. O’Gorman presented the main points of the report, including a summary of an assessment of traveller housing needs. He also gave a timeline of the various steps in the process, advising that it was likely that the Programme would come before the Members in July 2019.

Discussion then took place regarding a number of issues including

- The results of the recent accommodation needs survey of all travellers in Co. Wexford, which showed that all of the travellers surveyed opted for social housing as their preferred housing option.
- the need for in-depth study of traveller sources of income,
- Councillors also raised a recent case where the travelling family wished to be rehoused in a halting site. Mr. O’Gorman advised they have now changed their minds and wish to be rehoused in social housing.
- The Cathaoirleach asked that the traveller accommodation project beside settled community which was tried in Marconi Park not be repeated as that project did not work out.

At 4.10 p.m. Cllr. A. Connick arrived.

### **Votes of Sympathy:**

The Members expressed their sympathy to the families of the following recently deceased:

- The family of Noel Roche, husband of Diane Roche, Corporate Services
- The family of Michael Leahy, father of Dermot Leahy, Agricultural Scientist, Environment Dept
- The family of Scott Doran, Bridgetown
- The family of Stephen Lawlor, the Hide Out, Tomhaggard, Wexford.
- The family of Kathleen Kearney, Selskar St. Wexford.
- The family of David Hamilton, The Bull Ring, Wexford Town.
- The family of Tommy Harrell who has been involved with the London Wexford Association for many years and was involved with the Fr. Murphy’s Hurling Club in London for over 50 years. Cllr. R. Ireton advised that a new London Wexford Association committee is now in place.
- The family of former Councillor Martin Ryan, Barntown, Wexford.
- The family of Joe McGuinness, Carcur Cottages, Wexford.
- The family of Jack Murray Adamstown.

- The family of Johnny Roche and the Rowe family, JKL Place, New Ross.
- The family of Majella Murphy, Garrydaniel, Monamolin, Gorey, Co. Wexford.

### **Vóta Comhghairdeas:**

Déan na Comhairleoirí comhghairdeas ar na ghrúpaí/dhaoine liostaithe thíos:

- Rodney Goggins who reached the finals of the Senior Irish Masters Snooker Tournament in Kildare.
- The Wexford Senior Hurling Team for their victory over Kilkenny.
- The Oylegate Junior B Hurling Team who won the Leinster Final.
- The New Ross Pantomime Society celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Enniscorthy Rugby Club who have reached the semi-finals of the All Ireland Junior Cup.
- The extension of the right to vote for female voters in Local Government elections, which was achieved 120 years ago.
- Soccer referee, Michelle O' Neill, who has been selected to officiate at the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019.
- The town of Gorey which will celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the charter establishing the town.
- Wexford Ploughing Association who launched the 36<sup>th</sup> European Ploughing Contest which will take place in Springpark, Ballinaboola in March 2019.

The Cathaoirleach then invited Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, to address the meeting regarding a Working Group to be formed to deal with the issues at Rosslare Port, as agreed at the Special Meeting of the Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019.

The Director recommended that the Working Group would have a countywide brief; that it would comprise of the Members of the CPG (which would include the Chairmen of the four SPC's and the Cathaoirleach) in addition to one member of Sinn Fein and one Independent sitting on the committee.

The Director also advised that it was his view that the Working Group should form as quickly as possible and bring their report to the March 2019 meeting of the Council or as soon as possible thereafter. The Director recommended that this would necessitate agreeing a narrowing of the brief to the following:

The Working Group will look at Rosslare Europort

- to consider and recommend to WCC what its position on the strategic development of Rosslare Harbour should be.
- to consider and recommend on the implications of the potential cessation of Irish Ferries services at Rosslare Europort.
- to consider and recommend on measures the Council should take to support the operations of Rosslare Europort.

The Director envisaged that the Working Group would identify and consult with the stakeholders and invite them to meet with the Working Group to hear their concerns and their views on the important issues facing Rosslare Europort. Finally, the group will be serviced by the Chief Executive and personnel from the Economic & Planning and Transportation directorates.

Following discussion it was agreed that the following members should serve on the Working Group:

Councillors M. Sheehan, L. O'Brien, J. Mythen, T. Walsh, G. Lawlor, L. McDonald, F. Staples and the Cathaoirleach K. Doyle.

## **10. Local Elections 2019**

At the outset Cllr. F. Staples made a statement regarding his recent illness and thanked the Chief Executive and Council Officials, his colleagues and family and friends for their support over the past number of months while he was in hospital. During the period of his illness, he learned the stress that his depression caused not just to himself, but also to his own family and the need for support for the families of people suffering from depression. He used the opportunity of today's meeting to affirm that he will be standing for re-election in the forthcoming Local Elections.

The County Secretary then circulated a report with regards to maps, register of electors, split polling stations and a draft submission for reform of electoral registration process and this was noted by the meeting.

## **11. GDPR Guidelines from Data Protection Commission**

Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services, referred to the Guidelines from the Data Commissioner which had been circulated to the Members; he highlighted a number of important points in the Guidelines, as follows:

No.1 – the guidelines now supersede the form issued by WCC recently. The Council no longer requires forms to be completed by Members for their clients. The consent to elected Members from their constituents to represent them is inferred.

No. 2 – the Members are Data Controllers and each Member should have a privacy statement in their offices or on their websites. The Council is in the process of drafting a privacy statement for each Member which will explain how the information that they obtain about their clients will be used.

The changes outlined were welcomed by the Members.

Cllr. G. Lawlor advised the meeting that he had received a letter from the Senior Inspector in the Data Commissioner's Office regarding an alleged data breach for a period preceding the GDPR and he outlined the case in question.

Cllr. J. Moore had attended the Members G.D.P.R. training course last week and he advised the meeting that individual Councillors are Data Controllers. He raised concerns about the vulnerability of Members acting as Data Controllers and was of the opinion that Members require support from the AILG and LAMA in terms of training, management of records and adequate indemnification in case of data breaches.

Cllr. J. Moore proposed that reps of LAMA and AILG raise these issues with the organisations and this was seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy.

Cllr. P. Breen, representative of the AILG advised that the AILG is taking this issue very seriously and will provide training in the near future.

The Cathaoirleach advised that arising from today's meeting the issues raised should be brought to the AILG and LAMA respectively and he noted that the case brought to the Council by Cllr. G. Lawlor is a good example of the need for protection of Council Members in their new role as Data Controllers.

The Director advised that, if Members receive any similar letters re data protection breaches from the Data Commissioner that the Council would give as much advice as they can. Members should contact either the Director or the County Secretary in this regard.

The Director also advised that the review of the Councillors Role and Remuneration taking place at present provides a good opportunity for Members to highlight this matter at a national level, in particular the need for good insurance cover for Members.

## **12. Annual Service Delivery Plan 2018 (Quarter 4)**

**13.** Mr. E. Taaffe, Director of Services, presented **the** Annual Service Delivery Plan 2018 (Quarter 4), which was noted by the Members. He then advised the Members to email the Directors individually if they had any query in relation to the Plan.

At 4.30 p.m. Cllr. J. O'Rourke left the meeting.

## **14. Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive's Report was considered by the Members. The Chief Executive and Members of the Management Team responded to Members queries arising from the report including the following:

- Update on the advance enterprise centre in New Ross – Director T. Larkin expects the centre will commence in 2019. He expects to make a formal announcement in March 2019. He advised also that this development may need planning permission.
- Criticism of the IDA website – Cllr. G. Lawlor advised that there was nothing about Wexford on the IDA website for the South East. Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Tipperary were all included on the website, but not County Wexford. The Chief Executive advised that he had brought this matter up with the IDA and they have assured him that this will be rectified.
- Significant increase in the number of callouts for forest and grass fires in 2018.
- The delay in getting pre-planning meetings. Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Service agreed that the delays for pre-planning were too long, but he had reviewed this area and found some administrative problems which will be sorted in the near future.

He advised that there was a new system in place since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and he is looking at some further changes in that matter. He advised that the Planning Dept is adequately staffed and he had recently received an extra engineer for Building Control and Enforcement.

Cllr. M. Byrne advised he had staffing concerns for building control and enforcement and it had led to costs previously and he was nervous that this would happen again.



- The Wexford Broadband Strategy: Director T. Larkin advised that there are extensive broadband services in the towns and villages of County Wexford. He stated that WCC is not a provider of Broadband – the Council’s role is to identify problems and issues and to help providers to deal with those issues, where appropriate.

The Cathaoirleach asked that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to run until 6pm.

- Planning application in respect of a logistic company which was refused twice – Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services advised that he was not aware of the second refusal. He noted that there were technical difficulties with the first application, but he felt that these issues could be overcome. He would be happy to meet the company to try to resolve these issues.
- Council support for rural broadband provider in Gorey.
- Update on the position of the Healthy County Programme
- Wexford County Council’s Event Management Guide.
- Greenway at Curracloe - further meetings are due to take place with the Dept. with regard to the greenway at Curracloe
- Compensation for the roads being affected by heavy vehicles on the building of the Enniscorthy by-pass particularly around Oylegate. The Director advised that the local roads had been looked at and that it is likely that the repairs will be carried out
- Accessibility to the Local Authority buildings

#### **15. List of Councillors’ Conferences and Training**

- Conference Report – Cllr. M. Byrne to Open Government Partnership Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia, 17-19 July 2018.

The list of Councillors Conferences and Training and the Conference Report by Cllr. M. Byrne were proposed by Cllr. P. Breen seconded by Cllr. M. Whelan and agreed by all.

#### **15. Minutes of Meetings:**

On the proposal of Cllr. J. Mythen, seconded by Cllr. A. Connick, and agreed by all the Members present, the following minutes were noted and approved:

- 15.1 Borough District of Wexford 19.11.18
- 15.2 Gorey Municipal District 20.11.18
- 15.3 Enniscorthy Municipal District 19.11.18
- 15.4 New Ross Municipal District 14.11.18

#### **16. Deferred Notices of Motion:**

##### **16.1 Cllr. L. McDonald:**

“That this Council noting the recent Cervical Check Scandal, calls upon the Minister for Health and An Taoiseach to acknowledge, support and respond in detail to the demands of the Standing4Women\* campaign. These include: Legislation and policy on mandatory open disclosure independent of the patient safety bill, provision of a start and end date and full disclosure on the 1800 smears yet to be audited, and a breakdown of the new

packages being negotiated with laboratories carrying out smear slide analysis including mandatory site audits”.

Cllr. McDonald advised that the motion had been superseded by events. However, she wished to amend the motion as follows:

- to acknowledge that the Minister for Health has published the Implementation Plan for the recommendations set out in the Scally Report
- to urge the Minister for Health to put in place the recommendations contained in the Implementation Plan as quickly as possible.

The amended motion was seconded by Cllr. Mary Farrell and agreed by all.

### **16.2 Cllr. T. Walsh:**

“That Wexford County Council commission a sociological study to examine those areas of County Wexford that are considered ‘very disadvantaged’ by multiple reports over many years, with a view to devising a plan to break the cycle of generational deprivation recurring in those areas”.

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes and agreed by all.

Following discussion regarding the areas of disadvantage in County Wexford and that certain communities lacked the capacity to put in grant applications to avail of the SICAP monies, the Cathaoirleach noted that many of the issues brought up in the discussion of the motion were under the remit of LCDC. He suggested that it would be worthwhile to get a report from the LCDC for the Members and then to invite WLD to the Council Meeting to present the report. This was agreed by all present.

### **16.3 Cllr. F. OSúilleabháin:**

"That this Council acknowledges Co. Wexford’s rich cultural heritage and will establish the post of Heritage Officer (with possibly a Conservation or other role if deemed necessary/appropriate) in 2019".

The above motion was proposed by Cllr. F. OSúilleabháin seconded by Cllr. J. Mythen and agreed by all. Director of Service, Mr. T. Larkin clarified that the post of Heritage Officer is only part-funded by the Heritage Council.

At 17.55 Cllr. K. Codd Nolan left the meeting.

## **17. Notices of Motion**

### **17.1 Cllr. T. Forde:**

““We ask that Wexford County Council seriously consider and take steps to end the over reliance of privately run bed and breakfasts or hotels for emergency accommodation. We ask that Wexford County Council recognise the unsuitability of the current emergency accommodation model and to examine the possibility of acquiring and using more actual

houses that could be operated by the council or in coordination with other housing organisations for the provision of emergency accommodation."

**17.2 Cllr. T. Forde:**

"We call on Wexford County Council to formulate and to make public a written mental health policy for housing which may include a clear protocol when dealing with tenants with mental health concerns and to include mental health issues as a priority in the allocation of housing"

**17.3 Cllr. G. Carthy:**

"That Wexford County Council immediately re-install the vehicular access to the beach at Seaview, Kilmore. This commitment was given to the local community and the emergence services in May of 2018 and to date has not been acted on".

The above motions were deferred to the next meeting of the Council.

**18. Sealing of Documents**

The Sealing of Documents as submitted to the meeting was noted by the Members.

**19. Correspondence and Communications**

The following correspondence was noted by the Members:

- Email for the Private Secretary to the Minister for Justice and Equality
- Email from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Health regarding delegation

**20. Any Other Business** None

**This concluded the business of the meeting.**

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County Secretary

Daingithe ar an                      lá de Feabhra, 2019.

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Cathaoirleach