

**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL****Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2022  
in the Council Chamber at 2.30pm (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. George Lawlor, Cathaoirleach**Councillors:**

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

**Officials:**

Mr. Tom Enright, Chief Executive  
 Ms. Annette O'Neill, Head of Finance  
 Ms. Carolyne Godkin, Director of Services  
 Ms. Elizabeth Hore, Director of Services  
 Mr. Michael Drea, A/Director of Services & County Secretary  
 Mr. Brian Galvin, A/Director of Services  
 Ms. Fionnuala Callery, A/Senior Engineer

**Apologies:**

Officials: Eamonn Hore, Director of Services  
 Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services

### **Votes of Sympathy:**

The Cathaoirleach offered the sympathy of the Council to the families of the following recently deceased:

- The family of John Byrne, General Operative, Enniscorthy Municipal District
- The family of Julia Cullen, mother of Geraldine Cullen, Planning Department
- The family of Margaret (Maggie) Doran (née Kavanagh), mother of Elizabeth Doran, Wexford Borough District
- The family of Pat Laffan, General Operative, New Ross Town Council

### **Votes of Congratulations**

Cllr. J. Moore congratulated Cllr. J. Hegarty on his appointment as Wexford senior football manager. The Cathaoirleach extended the congratulations of the Council to Cllr. Hegarty on his appointment and wished him the best of luck in 2023.

## **1. Confirmation of Minutes:**

### **1.1 County Council Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Carthy, seconded by Cllr. D. Kenny, the Council resolved to confirm the Minutes of the County Council Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.

#### **1.1.1 Matters Arising**

Cllr. M. Sheehan asked that a date be agreed for a Special Housing Meeting.

Cllr. J. Owens asked that the Minister for Housing be invited to attend a Council meeting.

Cllr. T. Forde echoed the call for the Minister for Housing to be invited to a Council meeting. Cllr. Forde also requested a report on Wexford County Council's own front door emergency accommodation.

Cllr. L. McDonald asked that the letter of invitation the Executive said had been issued to the Minister for Housing, be circulated. It was agreed that the letter of invitation will be circulated to all the Members.

## **2. Budget 2023**

### **2.a Local Property Tax – Local Adjustment Factor 2023 (LAF)**

Ms. A. O'Neill circulated a report outlining the changes in the regulations which

came into effect on 18<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr. T. Forde requested that the public consultation period be extended, this was agreed by Ms. A. O’Neill.

**2.b Local Property Tax – Provisional Allocation 2023**

Ms. A. O’Neill outlined that the LPT Provisional Allocation for 2023 (pre local adjustment) is €13,547,516. The baseline figure remains unchanged for 2023 and is the 10<sup>th</sup> year of this baseline figure for Wexford.

**2.c Budget Meetings 2023 – Prescribed Periods**

The prescribed period for the Statutory Budget Meeting is as follows:

All local authorities and joint bodies: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022

The prescribed period for the holding of a meeting of a Municipal District to consider the GMA is as follows:

All local authorities: 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022 to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**2.d Proposed Schedule of Dates**

The following dates were noted and agreed on the proposal of Cllr. J. Moore and seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy:

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Proposed Date</b>
Budget Strategy Meeting – Cross Party Group	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> September at 10am
Decision on LAF for LPT 2023	Council Meeting 10 <sup>th</sup> October
Draft Budgetary Plan Meeting with MD’s	October MD Meetings*
Statutory Budget Meeting	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> November at 10am
*As NRMD October Meeting is outside the statutory period, a change of date will be proposed	

A wide-ranging discussion took place on the LAF and projects relying on LPT funding, including a potential Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

**3. Approval for delegation from New Ross Municipal District to travel to Danville to attend Eugene O’Neill Festival – 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2022**

A long discussion took place on the merits of the trip. The following Councillors expressed concerns or opposition to the trip – Cllr.’s T. Forde, D. Devereux, C. Byrne, J. Codd, D.

Hynes, J. Owens, B. Murphy. The following Councillors spoke in favour of the trip – Cllrs J. Fleming, P. Barden, A. Connick, P. Breen, M. Sheehan & M. Whelan.

Cllr. M. Whelan proposed the approval of the trip and this was seconded by Cllr. P. Breen. The vote was carried with Cllr. L. Kelly abstaining.

#### **4. Annual Report 2019 & 2020 – For Adoption**

The 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan and seconded by Cllr. J. Moore.

#### **5. 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:

- Phase 2 of Rosetown Housing Development
- Energy Retrofitting of local authority houses
- CCTV process
- Utility works at Summerhill
- Pyrite issue affecting family in Ferns
- Odour issue at Custom Compost
- Road works at Ballycarney junction
- Road works at Tomahurra
- Bridge rehabilitation grant
- Public lighting from Ferns GAA ground to village
- Strategic plan for Enniscorthy
- Enniscorthy Technology Park
- Water outage in South-West of County
- Update on Waterford airport
- Update on Broadband
- Emergency accommodation options during weather warnings
- Social housing refusal rates
- Housing For All programme
- Special projects updates
- Pre-planning meeting delays
- Interruptions to water supply in Bunclody
- Active travel projects update
- Water issues at Airfield Road
- Knotweed in Trinity Street
- Requirements and process for holding an event on a public road
- Sewerage scheme in Ferns
- Serviced local authority land

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at this point.

On the resumption of the meeting, the following issues were discussed:

- Lack of emergency accommodation in Enniscorthy
- Works required to Wilton bridge
- Parking ticket arrangements – 1 ticket for all areas
- Demolition of houses in Adamstown
- Delays in relation to ESB works
- Tendering for Mt. Elliot portion of greenway
- Can services be made available on iMaps
- EIP Project extension to Bannow Bay
- Skatepark in Wexford
- Grants for Older People
- Requirements around standard of blocks in County
- Fire service staff housing requirements proximate to stations
- Charging points in private estates

The following left the meeting at this point, Cllr. J. Owens, Cllr. D. Hynes, Cllr. J. O'Rourke, Cllr. A. Browne, Cllr. A. Donohoe, Cllr. F. Staples, Cllr. J. Hegarty, Cllr. B. Murphy, Cllr. D. Devereux.

- Review of safety measures at Kyle Cross
- Consultants role on N25 at Barntown
- Town & Village Scheme update – Brennan's Lane
- Update on appointment of Town Regeneration Officer
- Respond units in Irishtown, New Ross
- Houses at the Bullawn, New Ross
- Housing scheme at Rosbercon
- Turnaround time for DPAs
- Sites available for industry in New Ross
- South-East Greenway naming
- Rent pressure zones
- Recruitment of new planners
- Plans for Glenville Road works
- Offshore wind energy
- Derelict properties and return to use

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. A. Bolger and agreed by all, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 5.30pm.

Cllr. M. Farrell highlighted personal abuse directed at members of her family in a comment posted under an article on the Wexford People Facebook page. Cllr. Farrell said she felt extremely strongly that something should have been done about the comment and felt very disappointed and upset that the comment was still up almost two months later.

County Secretary Michael Drea offered his full support to Cllr. Farrell and condemned the comment and the online abuse. He stated that on-line abuse is becoming a major issue for Councillors and staff and a unified approach is needed to address it. Chief Executive Tom Enright

offered his full support to Cllr. Farrell and also condemned the comments and online abuse referring to it as cowardly acts perpetrated by people who ought to know better.

Cllr. M. Bell and Cllr. L. McDonald offered their support to Cllr. M. Farrell.

The following left the meeting at this point, Cllr. P. Barden, Cllr. K. Codd Nolan and Cllr. M. Whelan.

## **6. Minutes of CPG**

### **6.1 Minutes of CPG Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2022**

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. O. Walsh, the Council resolved to adopt the Minutes of the meeting of the CPG of 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.

## **7. Minutes of Meetings (For Noting):**

- 7.1 New Ross Municipal District Meeting – 08.06.2022**
- 7.2 Rosslare Municipal District Meeting – 15.06.2022**
- 7.3 Borough District of Wexford Meeting – 22.06.2022**
- 7.4 Enniscorthy Municipal District Meeting – 27.06.2022**
- 7.5 Gorey Kilmuckridge Municipal District Meeting – 21.06.2022**
- 7.6 Borough District of Wexford Annual Meeting – 27.06.2022**
- 7.7 New Ross Municipal District Annual Meeting – 27.06.2022**
- 7.8 Gorey Kilmuckridge Municipal District Annual Meeting – 21.06.2022**
- 7.9 Rosslare Municipal District Annual Meeting – 27.06.2022**
- 7.10 Enniscorthy Municipal District Annual Meeting – 27.06.2022**

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Breen and seconded by Cllr. A. Connick, the Council resolved to adopt the Minutes of the above meetings.

## **8. Correspondence and Communications**

- 8.1 Letter from Limerick City & County Council re: motion dated 1<sup>st</sup> July**
- 8.2 E-mail from Niamh Redmond Private Secretary to Darragh O'Brien, TD re: motion dated 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**
- 8.3 Letters from Donegal County Council re: motion dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2022**
- 8.4 E-mail from Mary Butler TD, Minister for Mental Health and Older People re: motion dated 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**
- 8.5 Letter from Department of Social Protection re: motion dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2022**
- 8.6 E-mail from Private Secretary to the Minister of State, Patrick O'Donovan TD re: motion dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2022**

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

## **9. Councillor's Conferences and Training**

### **9.1 List of Conferences/Training – List Attached**

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy and seconded by Cllr. G. Laffan, the Council approved the list of conferences and training events for attendance, as circulated.

### **9.2 Councillor Conference Reports:**

- Cllr. M. Sheehan – Special Conference on Dereliction and celebration of Church Lane Historic Towns Initiative – 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2022

The Members noted the Report above, as circulated.

## **10. Notices of Motions**

### **10.1 Motion Passed at Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment SPC Meeting 16th June 2022**

#### **Motion on Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (DWWTs)**

“Wexford County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to amend the Regulations relating to the registration of DWWTs. This is to allow home owners who missed out on the original registration date of 1st February, 2013 to register and become eligible under the DWWTs Scheme of Financial Assistance for the repair or upgrade of systems that have failed inspections. The Council also calls on the Minister to increase the current maximum grant level of €5,000 in light of recent significant cost increases for remedial works to Treatment Systems”.

#### **Response of the Executive:**

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

The motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Farrell, seconded by Cllr. G. Laffan and carried.

### **10.2 Cllr. T. Forde**

‘This council agrees that the housing delivery targets for the county through the Housing For All Plan 2022-2026, which at best will only deliver 36% of our current need, are insufficient and not ambitious enough for our county.

In light of recent comments made on local radio by the Minister for Housing that Councillors "are not found wanting for resources from the Government," this council request that the balance of this implied funding and additional resources immediately be made available so that we can work to significantly increase our delivery targets and meet the projected need in Co. Wexford."

**Response of the Executive:**

The current Housing for All plan for County Wexford contains a minimum delivery target of 1,155 new housing units to be delivered over the lifetime of the programme (2022 to 2026). This target was provided to the Council by the Department and WCC's expectation is that it will improve on this target as the plan progresses.

The total need for County Wexford stands at 3,187 households. This figure is made up of 1,743 households who are currently accommodated in HAP supported properties and a further 1,444 households who have not had their social housing needs met. The target of 1,155 will meet 80% of the unmet social housing need in County Wexford and 36% of the full need.

This figure includes housing units delivered by WCC, Approved Housing Bodies and turnkey developments.

There are many factors that can affect the delivery of housing schemes. These include planning, water and wastewater services, land and the availability of external design consultant and works contractors.

WCC is examining each scheme on its programme with a view to maximising the number of units that can be delivered in serviced areas in line with the County Development Plan.

Additional resources have been provided under Housing for All and new staff are being recruited and put in place within the Housing section currently.

We are working in conjunction with the Housing Delivery Co-Ordination Office to develop more efficient methods for procuring new schemes that will reduce delivery times including the use of design/build and related tendering processes.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. T. Forde, seconded by Cllr. F. Ó'Súilleabháin and carried.

**10.3 Cllr. A. Bolger**

"Wexford County Council supports the campaign to scrap VAT on defibrillators, AED pads and batteries.

The Irish Heart Foundation has described the VAT as 'a tax on saving lives'. Providing defibrillators largely falls to community and sporting groups, the VAT on top of the purchase of a defibrillator is an additional cost for these groups where a defibrillator and cabinet are priced at approximately €1,900 excluding VAT at 23%.

To remove the VAT on defibrillators, AED pads and batteries would be a benefit to the wider community."

**Response of the Executive:**



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

For information:

Wexford Civil Defence and Wexford County Council Emergency Services are co-ordinating a Community First Responder training event for October 2022 which will be delivered by voluntary emergency services groups including the Order of Malta, John of God, Civil Defence as well as in association with the National Ambulance Service. This training will include basic first aid as well as advice to groups on maintaining a defibrillator device in good working order. Where this training is completed, the Council will share group and defibrillator details with the National Ambulance Service for inclusion on their advance location system, which can be advised to members of the public in an emergency. Regular training will be required to maintain registration with NAS.

The programme is supported by the Regional Working Group for Major Emergency Management and forms part of the Wexford Community Resilience Programme.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. A. Bolger, seconded by Cllr. A. Connick and carried.

#### **10.4 Cllr. J. Fleming**

“That Wexford county council calls on minister for housing planning Daragh O Brien to change the regulation regarding a planning application site notice .when a site is inspected and the site notice is not visible the applicant has to re apply and go through the whole costly planning process again .

I am calling on the minister to change the regulation to when the county council inspect the site and find there is no planning documentation displayed they give a two week notice to the applicant to get the planning notice erected for inspection after that two week period.”

#### **Response of the Executive:**

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

The motion was proposed by Cllr. J. Fleming, seconded by Cllr. A. Connick and carried.

#### **10.5 Cllr. M. Sheehan**

“That this Council agrees to develop and establish a Hardship Rent Relief Scheme to alleviate financial pressures on Tenants in arrears with exceptional and unique circumstances and to be adopted before the 2023 Annual Budget.”

#### **Response of the Executive:**

The current Differential Rent scheme provides for a hardship clause, as follows:

“The Hardship Clause is applicable to households when, in exceptional circumstances, payment of their calculated rent would, in the opinion of the Housing Authority, give rise to hardship to the tenant or tenant’s family. In such cases, the Authority may agree to accept a smaller sum from the tenant for a specified period. Such a smaller sum should not be less than 6% of the total assessable household income.”

The clause is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Rents Section. Often where a household falls into arrears, a payment plan can be agreed that recognises the challenges of the household.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B.A. Murphy and carried.

#### **10.6 Cllr. L. McDonald and Cllr. G. Carthy**

“We hereby call upon Wexford County Council to immediately identify and secure a site to commence preparation for the submission of an affordable housing scheme for the Rosslare District.

We further request the production housing plan for the Rosslare District under Housing for All to be produced at the October meeting of this Council”

#### **Response of the Executive:**

All counties were assessed by the Department of Housing in terms of affordability as part of the preparation process for the Housing for All Action Plans. In the first instance, County Wexford, when considered as a whole, did not meet the affordability threshold to be considered for funding under the Affordable Housing Fund. The AHF would provide the local authority with up to €50,000 per housing unit in order to meet the affordability ‘gap’ between construction costs and the financial limit of the purchaser.

The Council has subsequently contracted KPMG to undertake a sub-county analysis on the main urban centres within each district, including Rosslare Strand in the Rosslare District, to determine whether we can demonstrate an affordability constraint and therefore access the necessary funding through the Affordable Housing Fund.

Once it is established on foot of the KPMG report what areas may access funding through the AHF, the Council will move to identify further affordable housing schemes for development. The Housing Department will also work to support other schemes outside the main Affordable Housing Fund, where land and project costs can be met.

The Council has already commenced procurement for a team to design, build and manage the first affordable scheme in the County, located at Ramsfort Gorey.

The Housing for All Plan for the County, with a breakdown of each district, is currently available on the Council's website. A full list of approved housing projects for Rosslare District will also be presented at the District Meeting.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. L. McDonald, seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy and carried.

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Laffan, seconded by Cllr. L. McDonald and agreed by all, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 6pm.

**10.7 Cllr. BA Murphy, Cllr. A. Bolger, Cllr. D. Kenny, Cllr. P. Breen, Cllr. A. Browne, Cllr. L. McDonald**

"We call on Wexford County Council to immediately apply for housing projects under the Single Stage Approval Process so we can provide essential accommodation."

**Response of the Executive:**

There are 9 schemes that will deliver a total of 221 housing units, which do not meet the criteria for the single stage application, that are being progressed by WCC under the 4 stage process.

The single stage application has specific criteria in terms of the number of units and the overall project scheme cost (25 units and €6m). It is suited to straightforward sites with low risk as the budget has to be defined at an early stage of scheme development and included in the single stage process. This budget is then fixed by the Department. If the approved budget is exceeded, further approval has to be sought from the Department and there is no guarantee of recouping all costs.

In effect, the same amount of work is required for both the 4 stage and the single stage processes but there can be a time saving in terms of the number of approvals required from the Department, and this is typically of the order of a couple of months.

WCC is examining all of the schemes that could avail of the single stage process and will where suitable use this process.

**10.8 Cllr. T. Forde & Cllr. J. Codd**

"As many children in County Wexford cannot secure a place in a secondary school in their local area and are forced to travel to a school in another district, we call on the Minister to ensure that adequate bus services are provided to facilitate all school pupils with transport so that their education will not be hindered."

**Response of the Executive:**

If agreed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for Education.

**10.9 Cllr. J. Fleming**

“That Wexford county council calls on the Electricity Supply board to withdraw the Pso levy charge from bills to financially cash strapped customers whose bills have increased hugely recently.”

**Response of the Executive:**

If agreed, this motion will be forwarded to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications.

For information:

The PSO (Public Service Obligation) levy is mandated by the Irish Government and approved by the European Commission. It is charged to all electricity customers in Ireland and supports the generation of electricity from sustainable, renewable and indigenous sources.

The levy is calculated and certified annually by the CRU (Commission for Regulation of Utilities) in line with relevant legislation. All energy suppliers are required to collect this levy from customers through bills.

**10.10 Cllr. M. Sheehan**

“That this Council calls on the Department of Housing and Local Government to amend the Housing Application regulations to permit Local Authorities the ability to disregard the Annual Average (52 Week) Income rule to accept applications for Social supports in cases that present evidence of exceptional incidents of hardship and/or extenuating medical conditions.”

**Response of the Executive:**

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

On the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. M. Bell, motions 10.7, 10.8, 10.9 and 10.10 were taken together, and carried.

**11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUISNESS OF THE MEETING**

Daingithe ar an

Iá de Deireadh Fómhair, 2022.

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**Cllr. George Lawlor**  
**Cathaoirleach**

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**Michael Drea,**  
**County Secretary**