Housing & Community SPC

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday, 2nd September 2026

In the chair: Cllr. Jim Codd

In attendance: Cllrs. Barbara Ann Murphy, John Dwyer, Vicky Barron, John O'Rourke, Joe Sullivan; Mr. Michael Wall, Mr. Douglas Taylor, Mr. Stephen O'Connor, SEO, Ms. Aoife McGrath, A.O, Ms. Michele Browne, S.O.

Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2026 were adopted on the proposal of Cllr. J. Dwyer, seconded by Cllr. V. Barron.

Matters Arising

Mr. M. Wall asked for a list of the approved Housing Bodies. Mr. S. O'Connor undertook to arrange this.

Mr. O'Connor introduced the new staff member, Ms. Aoife McGrath, who has recently started as an Administrative Officer and will be leading the Homeless Supports Services Unit.

All members present welcomed Aoife and wish her well in her new role.

Cllr. J. Codd, on behalf of the SPC, wished to congratulate Cllr. Forde and Cllr. O'Brien on the recent birth of their son.

Allocation Scheme

Mr. S. O'Connor circulated a copy of the Allocation Scheme to the members and advised them on its contents. Mr. O'Connor wished to emphasize that the assessment of housing needs regarding bedroom requirements is based on 1966 housing legislation, which the housing authority is obliged to follow.

This led to a general discussion on the changing dynamics of society today and how these cannot be reflected under the scheme. There was consensus that this needs to be addressed, and a motion will be drafted in this regard.

Mr. O'Connor detailed the Categories of Special Priority to the committee and explained the procedure for room allocation for children in shared custody/access arrangements. Following a short discussion, Cllr. V. Barron requested that the committee be informed of the exact document requirements and proofs needed in relation to shared custody/access arrangements. Mr. O'Connor advised that he would revert with this information.

There was a discussion on housing lists, the methodology used to close an application, and how this is communicated to applicants. Effective communication is required. The councillors were concerned that applicants were being removed and losing their place on the list without their knowledge.

The production of a FAQ document was identified as a means of communication, and short videos were also highlighted as being useful. Mr. O'Connor advised that Wexford County Council is currently in talks with a media company about revised communication methods.

There was also concern about the current income thresholds. Discussion continued regarding the categories of special priority. Mr. O'Connor clarified that there is only one housing list; there is no separate disability list, and priority for allocation of properties is based on the time spent on the housing list. The conversation continued around universal design and the need to ensure a pipeline of suitable properties.

There was a brief discussion about the influence of outside agencies on the housing authority. Mr. O'Connor advised that the local authority is the only housing authority. Following a discussion on applicants with a history of antisocial behaviour and former prisoners, Mr. O'Connor stated that further clarification was required, which he would obtain and forward to the committee.

Rent Calculation

Mr. O'Connor circulated a document providing short examples of differential rent calculations for different household makeups and incomes. This document was shared to illustrate how the Differential Rent Scheme works.

Correspondence

Letter received from Safe Homes Ireland, thanking the committee for facilitating their presentation to the SPC meeting in February.

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Update

It is hoped to have a draft for the SPC shortly. The next step will be to share with HSE and gardaí before going to full council meeting.

Cllr. Dwyer raised a query regarding acts of a criminal nature occurring on council property and the potential penalization of occupants who may not be the perpetrators. Mr. O'Connor advised that damage to windows and doors is the responsibility of the tenant, while structural repairs will be carried out by the local authority.

Motions

1. That Wexford County Council calls on the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to introduce a strengthened "infrastructure-first" approach to residential development, whereby the planning, funding and timely delivery of essential community infrastructure and public amenities are integrated into the development of new and expanding residential areas.

   This should include appropriate provision for schools and childcare facilities, public and active transport infrastructure, community and recreational facilities, green and open spaces, healthcare and other essential local services, with such infrastructure delivered in tandem with, and where practicable in advance of, significant residential occupation.

   Furthermore, Wexford County Council requests that local authorities be provided with sufficient funding, powers and planning mechanisms to ensure that the provision of housing is accompanied by the development of sustainable, connected and properly serviced communities.

Proposed by Cllr V. Barron and seconded by Cllr. J. Dwyer

2. This council calls on the Minister for Housing to amend the Housing Income Threshold Regulations to allow housing applicants " who exceed the housing income threshold have their income averaged out over their time on the housing list rather than removing them summarily and losing their time on the housing list"

Proposed by Cllr. J Sullivan and seconded by Cllr. J. Dwyer

3. This council recognises the need for enhanced supports for individuals experiencing homelessness and substance dependency within our county and acknowledges that some members of this vulnerable cohort face significant barriers in accessing and maintaining accommodation and support services.

   This council further recognises that a harm-reduction approach, including supported accommodation models such as wet hostels where appropriate, can provide a pathway to greater stability, improved health outcomes, and increased engagement with support services.

We ask that this council engages and works collaboratively with relevant stakeholders, including the HSE, approved housing bodies, homelessness services, addiction support services, community and voluntary organisations, and any other relevant agencies, to explore the feasibility and potential development of a wet hostel and associated support services within the county.

We ask for an assessment of local need and potential service demand for such a facility and to develop a strategic proposal and implementation plan for consideration by Council.

Proposed by Cllr. Tom Forde; seconded by Cllr. AoifeRose O'Brien

It was decided that Cllr. Forde be invited to address the SPC on this motion

4. That this council resolves to review and amend our Scheme of Letting Priorities that would consider and include an applicant's employment status as part of the criteria for the allocation of social houses

Proposed by Cllr. Michael Sheehan; seconded by Cllr. AoifeRose O'Brien

It was decided that Cllr. Sheehan be invited to address the meeting on this motion

5. That this council calls on the Minister for Housing to conduct a full review of the Housing Act with a view to taking into account, conditions of impairment and recognising evolving needs in responding to modern healthcare diagnoses, when assessing housing need for both allocations and transfers of public housing stock.

Proposed by Cllr. J. Dwyer and seconded by Cllr. V. Barron

Following discussion on the motions, Cllr. J. Codd suggested that Mr. Paul Delaney from Cornmarket be invited to the next meeting to address the committee about the work ongoing in the Cornmarket centre. Ms. S. O'Connor that a representative from the HSE also be invited to the meeting.

AOB

Ms. R. Fitzmaurice inquired whether consideration could be given to exploring options for downsizing within developments while keeping residents in their communities. Mr. O'Connor advised that a review is currently ongoing, and as a housing authority, we would support this.

There was a discussion about the upkeep of council properties. Mr. O'Connor stated that the upkeep of non-structural elements is the responsibility of the tenant, while structural maintenance falls under housing maintenance.

Cllr. B.A. Murphy raised a recurring issue regarding waste bins at traveller-specific accommodation in Bunclody. Mr. O'Connor noted that this is currently receiving attention. Remediation for screening and planting issues can be discussed with the HLOs.

Cllr. B.A. Murphy discussed the potential upgrading of the "Tigins," as they are currently not fit for purpose. There is a possibility of drafting a motion to request funding on a pilot basis for upgrading the "Tigins" to modern standards, including kitchen insulation. Further discussion on this issue led to the suggestion that the upgrading of the "Tigins" be put forward as a specific project for funding.

Cllr. J. Dwyer noted that New Ross still has not had any affordable housing developments, while all other municipal districts have benefited from this scheme. Mr. O'Connor explained that the scheme is currently developer-led, but plans for a council scheme are forthcoming, and the council is willing to engage with any developer regarding affordable housing opportunities. Mr. Douglas Taylor stated that he would bring the committee's comments back to the Southeast Regional Branch of the CIF.

Mr. S. O'Connor presented information regarding a new National Housing Plan for Wexford, which establishes specific targets for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the plan includes a target for affordable housing, aimed at significantly increasing supply. The new housing plan offers analysis and forecasting for development in Wexford through 2030, with a departmental target that Wexford aims to surpass. Mr. O'Connor will provide an update on housing figures to the SPC once the submission is finalized.

Cllr. Codd proposed that the SPC convene a meeting to discuss this plan. Mr. O'Connor noted that it would need to be a special meeting and should occur promptly due to tight deadlines. Cllr. Barron recommended that the details of the plan be circulated to members in advance for their review. It was agreed that a special meeting of the SPC would be held on Friday, September 25th, at 2 PM.

Date for next meeting