Planning & Building Control SPC
Minutes of Meeting of 24th November 2025

In the Chair: Cllr. Frank Staples

Present: Mr. Sean Joyce (online), Cllr. Craig Doyle (online), Ms. Catherine Murray, Mr. Patrick Rochford, Mr. Anthony Neville, Cllr. Michael Sheehan, Cllr. Pat Barden (online), Ms. Liz Hore, Mr. Tom Banville, Mr. Diarmuid Houston, Ms. Deirdre Kearns, Ms. Lynda Lacey, Ms. Janine Fitzgerald

Apologies: Cllr. Ray Shannon, Mr. John Kirwan, Ms. Caroline Horan, Mr. Colm Moriarty

Cllr. Staples opened the meeting by welcoming the two new members, Ms. Catherine Murray and Mr. Patrick Rochford.

Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on the 1st of September 2025, were agreed.

Proposed: Mr. Sean Joyce
Seconded: Ms. Liz Hore

There were no matters arising.

Proposed Draft Development Contribution Scheme 2026-2029

Ms. Liz Hore provided an overview of the development contribution scheme and the mechanism for introducing a new scheme. Members were advised that an increase in development contributions is necessary to fund the extensive 3-year capital programme, as approved by the Council Members at the Budget meeting held this morning. The increase is also necessary given the new requirements around climate action and change which has led to a broader remit for WCC in terms of energy efficiency measures.

In relation to the process of introducing a new scheme, Ms. Liz Hore advised that the public consultation period commenced on the 24th of September 2025 and ended on the 5th of November 2025 with three submissions having been made. Ms. Liz Hore gave an overview of the issues raised in these submissions. Mr. Anthony Neville queried if a submission had been received from CIF as it was his understanding that one had been submitted on the 4th of November 2025. Ms. Liz Hore undertook to investigate this matter.

Ms. Liz Hore advised that the next stage in the process would be the preparation of the Chief Executive's Report for submission to the Members of the Council for their meeting on the 8th of December 2025.

The draft scheme was discussed with submissions from the Mr. Patrick Rochford, Mr. Anthony Neville, Mr. Sean Joyce, Cllr. Frank Staples and Cllr. Michael Sheehan which were answered as follows:

- Development contributions cannot be ringfenced for the area in which they were raised given the extent of the approved, countywide 3-year Capital Programme.
- It is the aim of the programme to ensure development on a countywide basis and that it would not be appropriate to move funding from one district for the benefit of another.
- The proposed charge of €25 is per square metre.
- The scheme period would be the 1st of January 2026 for three years.
- The scheme does not allow for a phased introduction for first time buyers.
- Aim of the Planning Authority is to ensure all estates are fully services and the requisite connections available.
- Turbines had previously been charged per turbine however given the increase in size of turbines it is now deemed more appropriate to charge per MW.

Cllr. Pat Barden joined online.

Ms. Liz Hore advised that a development contribution of €25 per m^2 is being recommended.

Proposed: Cllr. Michael Sheehan
Seconded: Ms. Catherine Murray

Ms. Lynda Lacey left the meeting at this point.

Mr. Anthony Neville provided emailed confirmation of receipt of CIF's submission on the 4th of November. Cllr. Michael Sheehan proposed that the submission be taken into consideration and Mr. Sean Joyce seconded this. Ms. Liz Hore advised that as the submission had been made within the requisite timeframe it must be taken into consideration and would therefore form part of the Chief Executive's Report and Recommendation. Mr. Anthony Neville asked that the submission be assessed as sympathetically as possible given that he did not speak on the submission in its entirety at today's meeting due to the confusion regarding the receipt of same.

E-Planning Update

Mr. Tom Banville gave an update on the E-Planning system and advised that 87% of applications are now coming through the portal. The next step is to allow for submissions to be made through the national portal and this switch is being looked at. Mr. Anthony Neville noted a recent change in the system which has resulted in it being more difficult to use. Mr. Tom Banville advised that this was due to a necessary change from the Citizen's Portal to SharePoint and that the matter is being investigated.

National Planning Framework – Revised Housing Growth Targets

Ms. Liz Hore gave a presentation on the Revised Housing Growth Targets and Variation Process to the County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028, advising that variations to the CDP have been requested by the Minister for Housing so as to ensure that Plans align with the provision of additional housing units. Wexford County Council has the 5th highest increase in housing growth targets, going from 1072 annual units under the current CDP to 1622 units per annum to 2034 with flexibility regarding headroom going from 25% to 50%.

Ms. Liz Hore took questions on the presentation and provided answers as follows:

- The figure of 1622 units p.a. does not include the 50% headroom figure.
- Variations will commence with Enniscorthy and New Ross in the first instance.
- Delivery of 1622 units is across all types of residential development, be it private or social housing. WCC's role is as the Planning Authority in the achievement of this target.
- Wexford was the only county in the Southern Regional Assembly where completions surpassed County Development Plan targets in 2024.

Mr. Sean Joyce congratulated the Forward Planning Team on the work done to date and enquired as to what can be done to facilitate applications into actual conversions? Mr. Anthony Neville advised that the main stumbling blocks to development at the moment are connections to Uisce Éireann and ESB networks. If these connections were available there would be a considerable upturn in development in the South-East.

Derelict Sites Update

Mr. Tom Banville gave a presentation on the work of the Derelict Sites Team for 2024 and together with Ms. Liz Hore provided clarity around the following issues:

- Derelict sites are identified primarily through complaints and local knowledge.
- URDF Call 3 Programme is currently being operated successfully to address dereliction.
- The commencement of a rural dereliction programme is being investigated at the moment.
- Three sections within the Council work on derelict property, namely Planning, Property Management and the Regeneration Unit. The sections meet regularly, and it is a collaborative approach to addressing dereliction.
- Powers of Compulsory Acquisition under the Derelict Sites Act are being utilised.
- There is no specific timeframe for escalating a property to compulsory acquisition, it is done on a case-by-case basis given the various different complexities that can arise with any given property.
- If there is engagement from an owner, they will be afforded every opportunity to remedy the issue of dereliction themselves without the need for compulsory acquisition.

- If the Council acquires a property compulsorily and subsequently disposes of it by way of S.183 approval, it remains on the Derelict Sites Register until rendered non derelict, therefore it is inspected by Planning even after it is sold.
- There are conditions in the contracts for sale regarding bringing a property back into use.
- There is no clarity around the proposed collection of derelict sites levies by the Revenue.
- Members should inform the Planning Department if any works change the character of a property or are converted with appropriate permission.

AOB

Cllr. Michael Sheehan requested an update on TIC applications as mortgage companies are now requesting letters regarding TIC status before the sale of a property concludes. Cllr. Sheehan also enquired as to the local infrastructure housing activation fund to assist with developments that would otherwise be cost prohibitive and could this funding be used for existing unfinished estates.

Ms. Liz Hore confirmed that two meetings had been held with the Housing Activation Unit and that WCC is looking at assisting the unit. Mr. Diarmuid Houston confirmed the funding could not be used for unfinished estates, there was a previous housing resolution fund for that purpose.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

Signed:

Cllr. Frank Staples
Chairperson

06/07/22
Date