Planning & Building Control SPC
Minutes of Meeting of 19th January 2026

In the Chair: Cllr. Frank Staples

Present: Mr. Seán Joyce (online), Mr John Kirwan (online), Mr. Patrick Rochford, Mr. Anthony Neville, Cllr. Craig Doyle, Ms. Catherine Murray, Cllr. Garry Laffan, Cllr. Michael Sheehan, Ms. Liz Hore, Mr. Diarmuid Houston, Ms. Deirdre Kirwan, Ms. Deirdre Kearns, Mr. Tom Banville, Ms. Janine Fitzgerald

Apologies: Ms. Mary Browne, Cllr. Anthony Donohoe

Cllr. Staples opened the meeting by welcoming Ms. Deirdre Kirwan, Senior Planner, and a round of introductions followed.

Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting, which took place on the 24th of November 2025, were agreed.

Proposed: Mr. Anthony Neville
Seconded: Cllr. Craig Doyle

Mr. Patrick Rochford subsequently clarified an error in the minutes regarding the discussion around turbine capacity, and it was agreed that the minutes would be amended accordingly.

SPC Work Programme

Ms. Liz Hore gave an overview of the SPC Work Programme for the coming year which includes the following:

1. Planning and Development Act 2024 Implementation
2. Variations to County Development Plan 2022-2028
3. Housing Activation Updates
4. Derelict Property Updates
5. Taking in Charge Programme Updates
6. Building Control Updates
7. Heritage Updates
8. Disability Strategy Review

Ms. Hore advised that the Work Programme would be circulated to Members. Cllr. Michael Sheehan requested that the Town Regeneration Officer be invited to the next meeting of the SPC given the importance of the increase in funding due to be

become available under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant/ Enhanced Above the Shop Grant.

Ms. Hore clarified that Access is under her Directorate and therefore under the remit of the SPC. Cllr. Sheehan raised the issue of the lack of neuro-divergent parking and requested that a consistent, countywide approach be taken to such matters going forward. Mr. Diarmuid Houston advised that the Access Officer, Ms. Caroline Horan, will provide an update on the best practices here. Ms. Hore further advised that the Disability Strategy is due to be reviewed and therefore such matters will be considered by the SPC.

Planning and Development Act 2024 Implementation – Update

Mr. Tom Banville joined the meeting.

Mr. Diarmuid Houston provided an update on the implementation of the Planning and Development Act 2024 and advised that Members will be kept updated on the changes and emphasised the importance of informing the public and the development industry about these changes.

Ms. Liz Hore noted that, under the new legislation, any town with a population greater than ten thousand will be classified as a key town. Therefore, Enniscorthy will be classified as such.

The following matters were discussed and points noted:

- It is not intended to reactivate lapsed Local Area Plans (LAP) in the variations, as has been done by Kildare County Council for example, given the age of the lapsed plans. The previous plans would not have been subject to environmental assessment which is now a requirement.
- The work on the LAPs will hopefully feed into the new County Development Plan.
- The role of the members of the SPC is to act as a conduit for information between the SPC and the organisations that they represent.
- The Chief Executive's Report on the variations will be presented to Members of the Council at a Special Meeting to be held on the 26th of January. If passed by the Members, it is intended to go to public consultation in early February. It was clarified that the Chief Executive's Report will not come back before the SPC.
- It is intended to hold workshops with Agents in the future regarding the new regulations.
- Link to the OPR website to be issued to the group.

Variations to County Development Plan – Update

Ms. Deirdre Kearns provided an overview of the proposed variations to the County Development Plan 2022-2028 that are required on foot of the National Planning

Framework Revised targets for Wexford, which sees the number of units required per annum rise from 1071 to 1622 p.a. to 2034. Ms. Kearns advised that the variations are planned as follows:

- Variation 1 will be to the Core Strategy and will also include revised zoning for New Ross and Enniscorthy.
- Variation 2 will be for Rosslare Harbour/Kilrane and Bunclody.
- Variation 3 will be the Wexford Town Plan and variation.
- Variation 4 will be for Gorey, with the format yet to be determined.

A discussion took place regarding the variations and the zoning of land with the following clarified:

- The emphasis will be on good quality zoning which will allow for the delivery of houses as a matter of priority.
- The key takeaway from a meeting the Forward Planning Team had with the OPR earlier this month is that consultation with landowners is key so as to ensure that what is being zoned has a realistic chance of being developed for housing.
- The Housing Growth Targets are provided for to the year 2034, therefore the variations will extend to that year also.
- The acquisition of land via the powers of CPO will only be considered as a last resort.
- If the Council Members approve the CE's Report at the Special Meeting on the 26th of January 2026 the next step will be to advertise the public consultation in early February.
- It is important that landowners make submissions during the consultation process given the impact of RZLT on zoned lands and both Senior Planners will be available to meet with landowners during this period.
- Submissions will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
- The primary focus of the variations is the zoning of land for housing but if there are submissions relating to the likes of industrial land then this will be considered if there is an overriding need. However, the speedy delivery of houses will take priority when considering zoning.

Taking in Charge Programme

Mr. Tom Banville provided an update on the TIC Programme noting the following:

- New TIC policy in place since 2024.
- Current challenge relates to legacy estates.
- There are 128 applications pending with 28 being in Enniscorthy, 36 Gorey-Kilmuckridge, 20 New Ross, Rosslare 27 and Wexford 27.
- 6 Estates were taken in charge in 2025.
- 8 estates proceeding to TIC in 2026 and considering 12 legacy estates in 2026.

- Prioritisation for 2026 will be:
    1. New estates built that should be compliant with the TIC policy requirements and part of ongoing programme.
    2. Estates that have funding.
    3. Legacy estates starting with the oldest TIC applications
- Funding mostly coming from the bond reserve, but this is quite a small reserve, approximately €1.2m, so additional revenue is being set aside on an annual basis.

Cllr. Michael Sheehan requested that Parkfields Estate be considered as a priority for 2026. Mr. Banville advised that the priority for 2026 will be newer estates and then legacy estates however, funding is an issue. Ms. Hore stated challenges where Uisce Éireann are responsible as there are outstanding site resolution plans which have yet to be received from UE under their work programme.

Mr. Seán Joyce, Cllr. Michael Sheehan and Mr. Anthony Neville, all highlighted the need to deal with legacy estate issues and treat newer estates separately. Mr. Neville asked that WCC be mindful of the timeframes as set out in the TIC Policy and advised that CIF's members do not feel that the TIC of newer estates is a priority for WCC. It was acknowledged by Ms. Liz Hore that there have been issues in relation to efficiency around this programme previously and that it had been noted at a Senior Management Level, however there is now a robust policy in place and staffing vacancies have been filled in the Building Control Section with a key focus on TIC and meetings with each of the Municipal Districts planned.

Mr. Banville clarified that once an estate is taken in charge it is then managed within the relevant district's budget therefore, it falls to the district to maintain the estate. As a consequence, there is increased liability for each district for every estate taken in charge.

Proposed dates for meetings in 2026

Given the extensive Work Programme for 2026 and the legislative planning changes being enacted, it was agreed that the SPC would meet a further four times on the following dates:

1. 20th of April 2026
2. 6th of July 2026
3. 7th of September 2026
4. 23rd of November 2026

This concluded matters.

Signed: Tms Stubbs **Date:** 06/07/26

Chairperson