

**WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of Special Meeting of Wexford County Council  
Held Monday 22 February, 2021 (via MS TEAMS)**

**Attendance:**

**In the Chair:** Cllr. Ger Carthy, Cathaoirleach.

**Councillors:**

<b>BARDEN</b>	PAT	<b>FARRELL</b>	MARY	<b>MOORE</b>	JIM
<b>BELL</b>	MAURA	<b>FLEMING</b>	JOHN	<b>MURPHY</b>	BARBARA-ANNE
<b>BOLGER</b>	ANDREW	<b>FORDE</b>	TOM	<b>MURPHY</b>	BRIDIN
<b>BREEN</b>	PIP	<b>HEGARTY</b>	JOHN	<b>O'ROURKE</b>	JOHN
<b>BROWNE</b>	AIDAN	<b>HYNES</b>	DAVID	<b>O'SUILLEABHAIN</b>	FIONNTAIN
<b>BYRNE</b>	CATHAL	<b>KAVANAGH</b>	WILLIE	<b>OWENS</b>	JACKSER
<b>CODD</b>	JIM			<b>SHEEHAN</b>	MICHAEL
		<b>KENNY</b>	DONAL	<b>STAPLES</b>	FRANK
<b>CONNICK</b>	ANTHONY	<b>LAFFAN</b>	GARY	<b>SULLIVAN</b>	JOE
<b>DEVEREUX</b>	DIARMUID	<b>LAWLOR</b>	GEORGE	<b>WALSH</b>	OLIVER
<b>DONOHUE</b>	ANTHONY	<b>MCDONALD</b>	LISA	<b>WHELAN</b>	MICHAEL

**Officials:**

Mr. T. Enright, Chief Executive, Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services Ms. A. O'Neill, Head of Finance, Ms. A. Byrne, A/Director of Services, Ms. C. Godkin, A/Director of Services, Mr. D. Minogue, County Secretary, Mr. M. Drea, SEO, Mr. N. McCabe, A/SEO , Mr. S. Howell, Senior Executive Architect, Ms. M. Donoghue, A/O, Mr. M. Doyle, EE

**Apologies:**

Cllr. L. Kelly, Cllr. K. Codd Nolan

**Vote of Congratulation**

The Council congratulated the Mahoney Family from Glynn Barntown and the Cullen Family from Blackwater, following their 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placings respectively in Ireland's Fittest Family competition.

### **Presentation by Housing Staff**

The Cathaoirleach opened the meeting and welcomed the attendance, including members of the media and the public, before handing over to Mr. N. McCabe, A/SEO Housing to make a PowerPoint presentation to the meeting.

Following the PowerPoint presentation, Chief Executive Tom Enright summarised the presentation and also identified to the Members some of the challenges involved in the provision of appropriate accommodation to homeless persons.

### **Members Questions:**

There followed a wide-ranging and detailed discussion regarding the provision of housing services by Wexford County Council. During this debate, Members raised a large range of questions and suggestions including the following:

- Part 8 Planning for Council-owned lands to make them ready for social housing development
- Encouragement of the renewal of privately-owned derelict or semi-derelict properties through Repair / Renew Scheme
- Provision of additional social housing in New Ross town
- Funding and completion of outstanding housing adaption grant-aided works
- Circulation on monthly basis of statistics regarding maintenance works sought / completed
- Standard of repairs achieved when pre-letting works are being carried out
- Addition of further contractors to the panel of approved housing repair contractors
- Use of choice-based letting to speed up allocation process
- Procedure to be followed when seeking homeless accommodation
- Master Plan for St. Waleran's Gorey
- Development of Affordable Housing in Gorey and Enniscorthy
- Extent of Council's reliance on HAP and Leased properties to meet housing need
- Clarification of number on housing list
- Request for increase in no. of void properties being returned to letting standard
- Completion of housing development in Bridgetown

- Council's use of "single stage process" in seeking Dept. approval for social housing development
- Availability of St. Joseph's Centre Bishopswater for emergency accommodation
- Council's Housing Programme for 2021 and coming years
- The suggestion of rent break in lieu of pre-letting repairs
- Funding of Council's multi-annual Energy Retro-fit Programme and achievement of 2030 energy targets
- Provision of "out of hours" emergency number for homeless persons
- Use of a "crash bed" facility to meet emergency homeless need
- Emergency accommodation for female applicants
- Implementation of the Wexford Vacant Homes Strategy
- Affordability issue – raising of current social housing income thresholds
- Opportunities for cooperation between private developers and Approved Housing Bodies
- Circumstances where homeless applicant may be refused accommodation
- Damage caused to properties by emergency housing applicants
- Use of "licence" when offering temporary accommodation
- Expansion of Social Housing Programme into small towns / villages with water / waste water capacity
- Training for tenants in use of new heating technologies such as heat pumps
- Subsidised sites for young social / affordable housing applicants
- Maintenance of roads/footpaths in local authority housing schemes
- Increase in HAP rates to match those of neighbouring counties
- Impact of Covid-19 on availability of housing officers
- Length of time taken to re-let a property following it becoming vacant
- Impact of mental health and addiction issues on tenant's ability to manage tenancy

Members of the Housing Team responded to the queries raised above.

On the proposal of Cllr. McDonald, seconded by Cllr. D. Hynes, it was agreed that the Council would document a step-by-step process for the management of homeless presentations.

It was further agreed that the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Mr. Daragh O'Brien TD would be invited to attend a meeting of Wexford County Council at the earliest opportunity to respond to some of the issues raised above.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.**

**Daingithe ar an      lá de Márta, 2021.**

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***Cathaoirleach***

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***County Secretary***