

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of Special Housing Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Tuesday 6th May 2025
in the Council Chamber at 3.30pm (with some remote attendance)**

Attendance:

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

Councillors:

Barron	Vicky	Kenny	Donal	Walsh	Catherine
Boland	Nicky (Online)	Laffan	Garry	Walsh	Oliver (Online)
Browne	Aidan	McDonald	Lisa		
Codd	Jim	Murphy	Barbara-Anne		
Doyle	Craig	Murphy	Marty		
Farrell	Mary	O'Brien	Aoife Rose		
Fleming	John	O'Rourke	John (Online)		
Forde	Tom	Owens	Jackser (Owens)		
Kavanagh	Paddy	Shannon	Raymond		
Kehoe	Pat (Online)	Sheehan	Michael		
Kelly	Leonard	Sullivan	Joe		

Officials:

Ms. J. Carroll, Director of Services
Mr. M. Drea, County Secretary
Ms. C. Godkin, Director of Services
Mr. E. Hore, Director of Services
Ms. Lynda Lacey, Director of Finance
Mr. E. Taaffe, Chief Executive

Apologies: Cllr.'s P. Breen, B. Murphy, A. Donohoe, Ms. L. Hore, Director of Services

Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor G. Carthy opened the meeting by thanking Ms. C. Godkin and her team for facilitating the meeting. Cllr. Carthy stressed that housing remains a top priority for elected members and acknowledged ongoing efforts by the Council's executive team to deliver more homes.

Cllr. G. Carthy outlined the format of the meeting indicating that Chief Executive Eddie Taaffe would outline the Council's position on social and affordable housing, followed by questions submitted by Councillors in advance before opening it up to the floor.

Mr. E. Taaffe informed the Special Housing meeting that:

- Wexford County Council aims to exceed its government-set target of 1,155 social homes by delivering circa 1,500 by 2026.
- To meet the growing need for one and two bed properties, approximately 60% of units delivered will be one and two bedroom units.
- Wexford County Council will increase its acquisition of suitable land for housing development and will consider using Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) to secure land at fair market value.
- In addition to the Ramsfort Park project, affordable housing schemes were announced for Enniscorthy (two schemes) and Wexford with a commitment to provide affordable housing schemes across the County.
- Wexford County Council is exploring serviced sites schemes in smaller towns and villages, helping to support rural communities and local services.
- Wexford County Council will continue to lobby Uisce Éireann for the provision of services in areas like Ferns and Camolin.

The Chief Executive and members of the Housing Team responded to a wide range of queries from the Elected Members regarding the following:

- Do the Executive accept that the current targets for delivery under Housing For All are too low to meet the housing need in our county?
- What percentage of new builds will be 1 and 2 beds going forward?
- What stocks of land do we have available to us to use for social and affordable housing? Are we struggling with a small amount of land?
- What is the number of own builds we have delivered each year from 2022 and what is the plan for 2025 onwards each year?
- What affordable housing schemes have been applied for and what have been funded? Where are the locations and how many units in each?
- What plans do we have for further affordable housing schemes?
- Why can't we target more vacant properties and bring them back into housing stock and do we need more staff in this area to achieve this? Can we have more staff sanctioned from the Department?
- What are our plans regarding Tenant in Situ? How many units do we estimate we will acquire in 2025? Is the funding depleted already? Are we still looking at applications from 2024?
- What can be done to bring creche's which were built in estates but have never been operated back into productive use as residential properties?
- What are the specific obstacles to delivering more social and affordable housing? Is Wexford County Council lacking resources?
- What resources will be provided to meet increased targets?
- Request to write to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage asking that the National Planning Framework approval by the Oireachtas be expedited.

- Wexford County Council encouraged to acquire housing sites which haven't progressed and consider purchasing entire estates for sale as affordable housing.
- Can front line staff be prioritised in the Part VIII planning process to ensure they can acquire housing in the areas they work in?
- Call for a more proactive approach to rightsizing.
- Request that the requirement for two medical professionals to complete grant applications forms be reduced to one.
- Are Wexford County Council salaries competitive in relation to the private sector? Do we need to write to the Minister seeking an increase in salaries?
- What further plans does Wexford County Council have to deal with complex housing cases afflicted by drug abuse and/or mental health issues?
- Can AHB's sell their housing stock when the Council's lien is removed from the properties?
- Why is there no affordable housing planned for Rosslare Municipal District and no land acquisition earmarked?
- View expressed that Wexford County Council's targets for the delivery of one and two bed units is not ambitious enough.
- Is Wexford County Council confident that it has sufficient resources to deliver on increased housing targets?
- The need to provide wrap around services for complex cases was highlighted.
- View expressed that CPO'ing land on the edge of towns is an easy option but will come at the expense of the town centres.
- Request that Wexford County Council consider CPO'ing derelict buildings in town centres to regenerate the towns.
- View expressed that Uisce Éireann is a barrier to development in many cases as local authorities no longer have control over identifying where services should be provided.
- Request that Wexford County Council bear in mind the impact on local communities if they propose to build large schemes in areas. Wexford County Council needs to be cognisant of the impact on existing services and mindful of the need for services and amenities to serve the increased population.
- What is the delay in the delivery of the first phase of houses in the Lyre, Enniscorthy?
- View expressed that Wexford County Council is not building enough houses in Enniscorthy.
- The reduction in the number on the housing list was welcomed as was the increase in Part V entitlement from 10% to 20%.
- View expressed that refusal of planning for housing estates should be a last resort and only considered after engagement with the developer to try and find a solution.
- Can Wexford County Council increase targets when the current Housing for All programme ends in 2026?
- Is there an issue in accessing funding from the Department?
- Request to CPO land in smaller villages to deliver housing as many small villages are on the decline.
- View expressed that housing applicants are applying for housing in more urban areas even though their preference may be to remain in a rural area as they believe they have a better chance of obtaining housing. This in turn is distorting the true picture of the demand for services in rural areas and makes the business case to Uisce Éireann more challenging.
- Update sought on the proposed housing scheme in Bunclody.
- Affordable housing announcement of two schemes in Enniscorthy was welcomed.

- Request that Wexford County Council make Uisce Éireann aware of where it would build if there were services available.

The Members of Wexford County Council thanked the staff of the Housing Department for facilitating the meeting and their hard work.

Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. G. Carthy concluded the meeting by thanking Mr. E. Taaffe, Ms. C. Godkin, Mr. S. O'Connor and the housing staff for their work. Cllr. Carthy acknowledged the elected representative's role in holding the Department of Housing to account but also stressed the importance of holding themselves to account through the work of the Housing SPC.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

Daingithe ar an lá de Bealtaine, 2025.

Cllr. Pip Breen
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea,
County Secretary