

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**Minutes of Meeting of Wexford County Council Held on Monday 24th November 2025
in the Council Chamber at 10:00am (with some remote attendance via Microsoft Teams)****Attendance:****In the Chair:** Cllr. Joe Sullivan, Cathaoirleach**Councillors:**

Barden	Pat	Farrell	Mary	O'Brien	Aoife Rose
Barron	Vicky (Online)	Fleming	John	O'Rourke	John
Boland	Nicky	Forde	Tom	Shannon	Ray
Breen	Pip	Kehoe	Pat	Sheehan	Michael
Browne	Aidan (Online)	Kenny	Donal	Staples	Frank
Byrne	Patricia	Laffan	Garry (Online)	Staples	Robbie (Online)
Carthy	Ger	McDonald	Darragh (Online)	Walsh	Catherine
Codd	Jim	McDonald	Lisa	Walsh	Oliver
Donohoe	Anthony (Online)	Murphy	Barbara-Anne		
Doyle	Craig (Online)	Murphy	Bridín		
Dwyer	John	Murphy	Marty		

Officials:

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

Apologies:

Cllr. Paddy Kavanagh, Cllr. Jackser Owens

1. Opening address – Mr. Eddie Taaffe, Chief Executive

Mr. E. Taaffe thanked the Councillors for their attendance and their consideration of the budget book. Mr. Taaffe advised that Wexford County Council's current budgetary position is sound but warned against complacency and stressed the importance of continuing to focus on efficiency.

2. Draft Budget Overview – Presentation

Ms. L. Lacey gave a presentation which outlined the following:

- Backdrop to budget 2026
- Funding position for 2026
- Budget 2026 income and expenditure summary
- Expenditure and income movement overview
- 2026 Budget decisions to be made, including:
 - Section 1 – 2026 Decision on Local Adjustment Factor for LPT
 - Section 2 – Commercial Rates 2026 & ARV
 - Section 3 – General Municipal Allocations
 - Section 4 – Rates on Vacant Properties
 - Section 5 – Small Business Support Scheme 2026 (SBSG)
 - Section 6 – Conclusions/Recommendations

Mr. E. Taaffe thanked Ms. L. Lacey for her comprehensive presentation and outlined the following challenges facing Wexford County Council:

- The requirement to provide sinking funds for our assets.
- Controlling staff costs for indoor staff.
- Tackling dereliction and active land management.
- Need for additional staff to deliver the housing capital programme.
- Impending loss of Uisce Éireann contribution towards the Central Management Charge (CMC) which will result in the CMC being spread over a smaller number of departments.
- Increasing costs associated with cyber security.
- Fundamental review is required of how we fund our Roads programme with a need to focus more funds on the programme.

3. Draft Budget 2026

Consideration of Statutory Budget Tables

Ms. L. Lacey then brought the Members through each line of the budget tables and together with her colleagues from the Management Team responded to queries from the Members on a number of elements of the Draft Budget, as follows:

Division A

- Why are we incurring expenditure on HAP operations if this service is led by another local authority? Why is there a decrease in expenditure?
- What does the €280,000 for tenancy management under A0402 cover?

- There was a suggestion that a €2 levy should be charged on housing rents for maintenance costs.
- Query when the housing rent committee last met and how many housing units does Wexford County Council own.
- Request for a breakdown of the €1.8m under A051 and query if it is fully funded by the Department.
- How many estates does the budget under A401 cover? Is it just Council estates? View expressed that €81,000 wouldn't deal with the issues in one estate.
- Query if the housing rents scheme of €1.1m is just rent from new properties.
- Is there a decrease in the take up of HAP?
- Are housing grants (A0904) fully Government funded? Did we look for an increase in funding?
- Increase in expenditure on homeless services was welcomed.
- How much is being paid to De Paul for the Ozanam House service?

Division B

- Disappointment expressed that there isn't significant additional funding for roads.
- Why has the winter maintenance budget under B0204 reduced from €10,000 to €8,113?
- Request to consider an increase in the funding of road safety.
- The public lighting cost was queried.
- Why is there no budget for traffic management and maintenance?
- Why has the cost of the School Warden Scheme reduced?
- What is the breakdown of the costs under B0902 and B0903?
- What is the gap between what we need to spend on roads and what we are spending on roads?

Division C

- Will the expenditure under C01, C02, and C03 reduce with the transfer to Uisce Éireann?
- How long until the transfer to Uisce Éireann is completed? How long will this be a budget item for Wexford County Council?

Division D

- Is the RAPID scheme still in operation (D0602)?
- Increase in expenditure on social inclusion welcomed (D0603).
- What does D0601 cover?
- Does the increase in the funding for Forward Planning take into account the variations to the Development Plan?
- Is the social inclusion funding in addition to the LCDC funding?
- Increase in tourism promotion funding (D0501) welcomed. How is this spent? Are we adequately selling ourselves?
- What is the income of €933,000 under Justice, Home Affairs, & Migration for and why wasn't it included in last year's budget?

Division E

- What does the landfill operation cost entail?
- Is the funding under E1501 targeted at the worst affected areas by flooding?

- Request that the budget be increased under E0602 as some of the bins are getting very dirty looking.
- What does the maintenance of burial grounds (E0901) entail?
- Observation that the shortfall between the income and expenditure on Development and Environment is significant and query as to how this is funded.
- What do litter control initiatives (E0502) consist of?
- Does the Civil Defence funding cover the cost of providing a new headquarters?
- How many tidy towns groups is Wexford County Council paying their IPB insurance for?
- Is there a rationale for the reduction of the income in the landfill?
- Why has the funding of water safety operation (E1005) reduced?
- Are we making a provision for the columbarium wall in Enniscorthy?
- Request for a breakdown of income from court fines in 2025.
- Increase in funding for climate change and flooding (E1501) welcomed. What will the increase be spent on? What was this budget spent on last year?

Division F

- Is F0505 the funding of the Fleadh, and if so, how long will it be included in the budget?
- Request for a breakdown of the budget for parks, pitches, and open spaces (F0301).
- Is there a provision for an additional €20,000 for Wexford Walking Trails?
- Is Bunclody pool included in the funding under F0103?
- What is the breakdown of F0302 and F0402?
- What leisure facilities are included under F0101?
- What is the increase under F0402 for?
- Is the arts and amenity grant funding a separate line item?

Division G

- Why did the coastal protection funding decrease by €10,000?
- How many dog fines have been issued?
- Request for an increase in the funding of the dog warden service (G0404).
- What land drainage areas does G0101 cover?
- What other animals are covered under G0405?
- Is the increase in the dog warden service budget to cover staffing?
- What schools are being provided with school meals (G0507)?
- View expressed that the dog warden should be able to issue fines.
- Is there a figure for what we are receiving from the Department under G0302?
- Is there any recoupment from Uisce Éireann for land drainage costs?
- Why was income from grants higher last year under division g?
- What does the other income of €1m under division g consist of?

Division H

- What is the breakdown between refunds and irrecoverable rates (H0303)?
- What is the reason for the significant increase in the cost of the register of electors (H0401)?
- Is there an overall figure for legal fees for Wexford County Council?
- What is the reason for the increase in other income under division h?
- What is the breakdown of H0302?

Draft Schedule of Charges

- Request that the €530 annual fee under 7.3.1 be charged monthly for piers that aren't accessible 12 months of the year with Carne given as the example.
- Query why there is no commercial rate options for car parking in Wexford or Gorey (5).
- Who takes down finger post signs if they are no longer used? Who collects the money for finger post signs?
- The cost of graves was queried with the view expressed that the cost of graves in Crosstown and St. Stephen's cemetery are being subsidised as they are charged less than other areas of the county. There was a request for consistency in the cost of graves across the county.
- Ms. L. Lacey advised that it was agreed at the Gorey Kilmuckridge Municipal District meeting that the cost of pitch hire in Gorey town park would be reduced to €30 per hour and the cost of hiring the dressing rooms reduced to €5 per hour.
- Request that the boundary for street parking in New Ross be extended further out of the town centre.
- Request for a sliding scale of household waste charges.
- Cllr. B.A. Murphy proposed that there should be a universal cost for a single grave plot across the county of €1,000, and €2,000 for a double plot. This was seconded by Cllr. O. Walsh. Cllr.'s T. Forde, R. Shannon, M. Sheehan, C. Walsh, and J. Codd all opposed the proposal. Mr. E. Taaffe proposed to revert with a report outlining the costs per graveyard and setting out options for the members. Mr. Taaffe committed to providing the report by the summer of 2026, noting that it must go the SPC for discussion.

Decision on Rates Abatement Scheme (vacant properties)

Recommendation to retain tiered basis with bands as follows:

- Apply 60% relief for all properties with annual rates to €2,000
- Apply 50% relief for properties with annual rates over €2,000 and less than €10,000
- Apply 30% relief for properties with annual rates of over 10,000

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. P. Kehoe, the Council resolved to adopt a scheme for the abatement of rates due to it by liable persons, or classes of liable persons, in respect of vacant properties in accordance with the provisions of Section 9 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019. The scheme provides for a tiered abatement of rates of 30%, 50% or 60% on vacant premises as provided for in Section 9 (1) of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act of 2019 for the financial year ending 31st of December 2025.

Recommendation – adopt landlord/property owner scheme, as per draft abatement scheme (in accordance with Part 9 of the Local Government Act 2001).

On the proposal of Cllr. B.A. Murphy, seconded by Cllr. P. Kehoe, the Council resolved to adopt a landlord/property owner grant scheme, as per the draft abatement scheme in accordance with Part 9 of the Local Government Act 2001.

Agreement of proposals for Local Rates Schemes for SMEs

Recommendation - retain existing Small Business Support Scheme.

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. B. Murphy, the Council resolved to retain the existing Small Business Support Scheme in accordance with Part 9 of the Local Government Act 2001 subject to an amendment of dates so that standing orders must have commenced by 1st June and be paid in full by 15th December.

Adoption of Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV)

Recommendation – Retain ARV of €0.253

On the proposal of Cllr. P. Breen, seconded by Cllr. O. Walsh, in accordance with section 6 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 as amended, the Council resolved to adopt the Annual Rate on Valuation of €0.253 applicable in the calculation of the amount of the rate under Section 4 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019, as amended.

Adopt 2025 Budget with or without amendment

Having considered the Chief Executive's Draft Budget of Wexford County Council for the year ending 31st December 2026, and subject to the provisions of Section 103 of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended, on the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. J. Fleming, the Council resolved to adopt the Draft Budget for 2026 without amendment.

4. 3 Year Capital Programme 2026 - 2028

On the proposal of Cllr. M. Sheehan, seconded by Cllr. G. Carthy in accordance with Section 135(2) of the Local Government Act, 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, the Council resolved to adopt the Capital Programme 2026 – 2028.

Cllr. P. Breen wished his brother-in-law well following his recent surgery.

Cllr. G. Carthy complimented the Director of Finance and her staff for their work in preparing the budget.

Cllr. M. Sheehan complimented the Chief Executive on the 3-year capital programme and complimented Cathaoirleach Cllr. J. Sullivan on his chairing of the budget meeting.

Ms. L. Lacey thanked the members for adopting the budget and thanked Mr. S. Begley, Ms. A.M. Colfer, Mr. D. Noonan, Ms. L. Berney and her team for their efforts in drafting the budget. Ms. Lacey also thanked the Management Team for their support.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUISNESS OF THE MEETING

Daingithe ar an

Iá de Nollaig, 2025.

Cllr. Joe Sullivan
Cathaoirleach

Michael Drea,
County Secretary