

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT WICKLOW COUNTY

BUILDINGS, WICKLOW TOWN

ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 2nd 2019 AT 2:00PM

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**NON-VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,
DECEMBER 2nd 2019:**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon. Afternoon, members, we have, as always a fairly full agenda, so we will do our best to get through it, before we start we are going to take some votes of sympathy.

ADMINISTRATOR: Yes, Cathaoirleach, for Marjorie Dentry, for William Dunne, first cousin of Andrea Dunne and for William Byrne, husband of our friend and colleague, Teresa Byrne.

CLLR WHITMORE: Sorry, chair this is in relation to the suspension.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Shay Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: I would also like to convey my sympathies to the Byrne family on the death of Willie, a true gentleman, fantastic sports March and will be sadly missed in the Roundwood area, deepest sympathies to his wife, Teresa and daughter Sarah and Tracey and extended family.

CLLR DUNNE: I also want to be associated with Willie Byrne, I knew him for a long number of years, both on the sporting field and guy I played golf with for 20 years on Sunday morning at 7.00am and who, as Cllr Cullen alluded to, an absolute gentleman you could ever come across and he will be sadly miss and to his wife, Teresa, and extended families my condolences.

CLLR MULLEN: Again it's condolences to the on the passing of Willie. It would be remiss of me not to mention that Willie was on one of the greatest football teams to ever come out of Wicklow, winning the Leinster junior Cup in 1979, went on to play with Bray Wanderers in the 80s and he was a gentleman on and off the field and my condolences so his family. Stand for a moment's silence.

CLLR WHITMORE: I would like to request the suspension of standing orders to discuss the issue of the closure of St Joseph's in Shankill, the dementia care facility. I am seconded by Cllr O'Brien beside me.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes.

CLLR BEHAN: Same, proposal, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Will we take that? So, will we take that at 4.45pm?

CLLR BEHAN: Well, can we have a time extension, I propose a time extension to ensure we everything on the agenda as it's our last meeting before Christmas.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I have no problem with that, I know the last time I said that that a lot of people in the room went, I have to pick up children from childcare, so yes, we will have a time extension and I have no problem with that, but if we could try and keep the meeting as tight as possible because people do have commitments after 5.00pm. Okay.

CLLR G O'NEILL: I wondered who is paying for the Sinn Fein newsletters to get here every week? I am wondering who is paying for this? [INAUDIBLE].

CLLR McMANUS: The...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, councillor, if we can stick to the agenda.

COUNCIL MEMBER: I would like to make note of that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: To confirm a sign the minutes that Wicklow County Council held on the 4th of November. It's proposed by Cllr Matthews and seconded by Sylvester Bourke. Okay, to consider the disposal of 0.1592 hectares of land situated at Rathdown Lower, Greystones to Marina Village Greystones owner's management company? Proposed by.

CLLR MITCHELL: I would like to propose that, people are waiting to move into their homes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Seconded by Gerry Walsh.

ADMINISTRATOR: Is that agreed? Agreed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: To consider the proposal of around 37 square metres of or thereabouts of lands being the council interest in 6 Connaught View, Bray. Do I have a proposer? Dermot O'Brien. A seconder? Rory O'Connor.

ADMINISTRATOR: That agreed? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed. Item 4, to consider the disposal of a 0.9 hectares in upper Arklow to Votumann Limited in Swords. Do I have a proposer for that?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I am proposing that.

CLLR BOURKE: Can ask for clarification on who Votumann are?

CLLR FITZGERALD: I don't think that is necessary, but that check should have been done before we came here.

ADMINISTRATOR: In accordance with standing orders you have until Thursday to submit questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER: That's right, so I am proposing it, there is no need to give any details.

CLLR GLEESON: Just to clarify that is part of that, it's tidying up title at the local level.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, that is proposed by Pat Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Tommy Annesley. Agreed? Agreed. Okay. Okay, to consider the Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, just two items before we start, just to confirm the 300,000, which is, as explained in the budget meeting, after the difference between what we are getting, what we will be getting from the Irish Water rates and the compensation we are getting from the Department, that was confirmed by the minister last week, we did write back looking for the balance. Just on the recreation, we got confirmation on Friday of five grands, Donard Glen walking trail, the Wicklow long distance video and Wicklow Way and Knockananna walking trails and the Baltinglass cycling project.

So, that is measure 3 which are small grants and those are made by the outer recreation officer With Wicklow Partnership. We haven't heard yet, but we have applications in for measure 3, we have one in from the Northwick will he trails development, the Baltinglass development which will contact the IRDF, the Arklow Costal Walks is in there, the Greystones Beach Access Project. I don't know when we will hear about these, hopefully before the end of the year and then we have measure 3 which is the Arklow to Woodenbridge Greenway Development Phase 1 and the Blueway

Development, which is ourselves and Wexford and Waterford County Councils. I will take the rest as read and I will take any questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Thank you, Chairman. I would like to welcome page 13, item 17, the rural regeneration and development fund, 3.5 million from Baltinglass. I would like to thank and compliment the staff of Wicklow County Council who put this application together, in particular Deirdre Whitfield and all of the others involved in that application. It's very welcome. Could I just ask how the, the first of all we get value for money, it's a lot of money, there is a lot of things need to be doing, so it's going to cover a multitude of items, but I would like to ask that we get value for money and we do get value for money and also how will the financial oversight on that? Like who will oversee the expenditure for that and the various tendering processes that are going to happen? I just want to be wary that everything is well-spent and we get value for money. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: Cathaoirleach, yes, just again I would like to thank the recreation team and the team for the walks money that was awarded at the county the chairman just mentioned in particular the Knockananna community worked hard with them, I they have now moved on to another county but he did Trojan work with the communities in Knockananna, to get the walks money across the line, so hopefully we can work on that throughout the year.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and can I thank the Chief Executive for his comprehensive report again. My questions in relation to the Murrough, it's great to hear about the initiatives and the grant but we know the north easterlies are hitting the Murrough and it's getting worse and worse. There is still people driving up there and as we all know the coastline is falling into the sea. I wonder is there any update on the Murrough and can we stop people driving up it causing more damage to it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you for the report. Just querying that an issue on the environmental section there, it was great to read it, even though I only read it yesterday, about the Arklow Flood Relief lobbying about the bend in the river which has been reversed, but is this the way we are going to receive information, through the manager's report. I just feel that the Municipal District, this issue has been on the cards for two years, it was an election campaign for all of us and we didn't get official notice about it, that we had to read it in the Management Report.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sylvester Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Just a couple of items, Cathaoirleach, I am looking at the capital budget the manager has inserted into the report. I would like a very brief explanation as to the increase in spend on the agricultural health and welfare budget is going from 2.7 million to 7.3 million to 11 million the following year. He may have explained it before but I want clarification own that. Also, I would like to support Miriam Murphy there, the news in the manager's report is very welcome about the removal of the need to take out the bend in the river in Arklow, it's been a big issue in Arklow for a great number of people and so perhaps it could clarify, is that as a result of the

political pressure that was exerted or scientific reason for deciding to obviate the need to take out the bend?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I would like to thank the Chief Executive and the engineers involved with the reversal of the decision to widen the Avoca River as part of the flood relief scheme, it's very welcome and I want to thank my fellow councillors for being so supportive on what ended up as an election campaign issue for me as well. I would like to ask as part of the flood relief scheme, that we still, there is still issues in relation to it and that we work towards getting the access for the river and as much soft engineering incorporated into the flood relief scheme as well but overall I think there is a lot of people in Arklow very happy and I want to thank the Chief Executive for all the work he has done in co-ordinating this and pushing for the correct surveys and stuff to be done for it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Grace McManus.

CLLR McMANUS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you to the Chief Executive for the report. Again I just want to speak on the child homelessness figures which are up now to 71 in October. I think that a lot of the work we do here so important and I don't deny that for a second, but I don't understand what could be more important than, for me the most vulnerable, which is a child who is homeless. I am really concerned with the, every month now the numbers are going up and I want to, I know that we could say that there is a national problem and for sure, I don't know what power we have here, but surely we have some power and some responsibility, I want to flag to members that I have a motion down on this in January, that child homelessness should be an agenda item every month for us until the figure is zero. I am happy to chat to anyone about how we can strengthen that and what we can do together collectively for this, for me it's so serious and I want to ask in that light, is there an update on the Sonas Homeless Hub. I know it was coming, a report was coming in 2019, so if we could get more detail on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you, chair. Just in relation to, I was watching a Primetime Investigates programme there last week on authorised quarries and I was shocked to see what was going on across the quarry. Wicklow wasn't mentioned in it, but I want to know whether the CE has any information on whether there are any unauthorised quarries operating in Wicklow and does Wicklow County Council have any dealings with them and we could examine to see where our process is with that, I think it would certainly be a timely to look at that issue. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you to the Chief Executive again for a comprehensive report. Just a query on the section there, pollution control, page 27 of the report. My query, it's on the septic tank inspection figures and I think my query stems from a debate I heard on RTE Radio yesterday morning in relation to boil water notices, the increase in boil water notices being issued countrywide. One of the issues raised during that debate was the effect of the septic tanks and the effect on domestic water, and the fact that the inspection rate wasn't as it should be. Just wondering would the Chief Executive, are there difficulties in carrying

out these inspection or what is the policy of the council regarding this?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Patsy Glennon.

CLLR GLENNON: Cathaoirleach, thank you very much. I like to join with Cllr Timmins and welcome the funds to Baltinglass, they are much needed. I would like to compliment all of those who were involved in putting the plan together, I would like to thank our local Dail deputies and others associated with it and the people who prepared it including the Baltinglass Forum. These are much-needed fund force Baltinglass, it's been dying on its feet in recent years and while it might not have been council's management's first choice for funds I can assure you it's badly needed and will be well-spent. I would like to be assured that the additional funds whether come in the fullness of time for the Blessington Greenway and for the Glendalough project which was well-advanced in its planning. I want to put that on record. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: My question is around the tourism strategy and in particular Glendalough and unfortunately Glendalough was unsuccessful in the RRDF funding this year and I suppose I want to make sure that we have this on the agenda for the future with regards to funding. I think we all know the importance of Glendalough to this county and I know there was a recent briefing from Failte Ireland at Croke Park and was attended by representatives of this council and I like to see if Failte Ireland are serious about developing the Glendalough experience and the surrounding areas in terms of traffic flow and visitor experience and I think it's something that this council needs to be proactive in making sure is kept to the fore, so I suppose that is my question for the Chief Executive, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you to the Chief Executive again for his report. My question is in relation to the homeless figures and like Cllr McManus, I am looking at last month we had 60 children and 30 families presenting, this month it was 71 and 43 families. I suppose my question is I find it hard to get a grip on what those figures mean in real terms and I am wondering, could we have the figures presented to us with a breakdown of how long those people have been homeless? I know it was discussed at last month's meeting that it's not the same people presenting month in month out, I think that is important, particularly in relation to children, how long they are on the homeless list, so thank you and I would appreciate that going forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Mags Crean.

CLLR CREAN: Thank you. My question is about the housing programme and it's good to see the 400 house planned over the next 2 years, but I am concerned, looking at the rate of increase on the number on our social housing list, when you look at the stats the stats are increasing by 10%, so it's going to have a null effect, so as we house people the list is going occupy, so it makes no difference and it lead me on to the question about pipeline schemes. There were two part 8 withdrawn before the previous council in May at Lott lane and Killincarrig. What is the status with them?

I would like some information on when the start date will come before us again? And then I had a question on page 9, it comes under the acquired

housing body section and it's been there a few times, expression of interest, I want clarity on what that means, it's the last piece of the report and then just in relation to the programme for retrofitting social Housing I didn't find a reference in the report, but I wouldn't mind an update, I have asked for a PQ answer and I got it this week, but it seems local authorities can decide how that money is used, I would see a priority around windows and doors, in addition to fabric and upgrades, my position at the moment is it's for fabric upgrades and windows and doors not just separately windows and doors just to get clarity on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Mine was in relation to the arrears figure for rent in November 19, versus November 2018, there is a jump of 300,000, which seems an inordinate amount to, of an increase in arrears and I really want to draw attention to it, I don't know what the answers are and what the problems are, but it just seems a very high number in a year for arrears and in relation to the Murrough I have been on to the Municipal District and asked them about signage, so they have said they would look into it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Okay, thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just in Cllr Timmins in relation to the Baltinglass, we are meeting tomorrow, that is the interdisciplinary team in relation to roads libraries and community in relation to how we progress the application. The pure roads elements which are the Public Realm, the parking and the planting will be done by roads, there will be tenders sought, needless to say and we will keep an eye on that from a value for money point of view and the same with the court house, so we will be going through the normal procedures and it's kind of a team effort, that particular project now, because libraries are involved, community are involved and roads but we will keep the group together for the duration of the project. In relation to the Murrough, again the barrier will be replaced, or repaired shortly and there is more signage going there. The big issue with the Murrough is coastal protection. There is a study at the moment and, as soon as we get the findings, we will share them with you.

The Arklow flood relief scheme, again the pinch point was decided as a result of the report, which really concluded that it wasn't going to make a huge difference either way in terms of silt deposition, whether that pinch point was taken out, so that was the way that decision was made and we got confirmation of that relatively recently. In future we will keep the Municipal District involved in terms of all stages of that project and the development of the environmental impact assessment report.

Sylvester Bourke, the capital budget in the agriculture and welfare element that is the flood relief schemes, so the Dargle, the Bray Harbour Scheme, that is an estimate of what will be spent on the capital side in relation to that.

Cllr McManus, the homeless figures are what is presented every month. There is a lot of people dealt with as well. When people get a notice to quit they will come in and present and they are advised to do that early, but there is a lot of work done in terms of preventing homelessness, dealing

with the existing landlord and getting them directly into HAP, it's not really the number of children that are homeless, it's the preventions and a lot of work is done immediately when they are come in. In terms of actual homeless, there is 14 adults and 14 children in emergency accommodation and again we are working with those very closely. We have a number of people that we accommodate in our own houses, that would continue to work with until we get permanent solutions for them. So in our own doors in various houses we have around the county there is 25 adults and 28 children and what we have now is the cold weather initiative so that has kicked in and there was nine people there last night from records. So we have the lowest figures in the region, as it happens, as a county, but it's a lot of work with the homeless HAP and our own housing section, but that figure is only for presentation, now if it's confusing we will look at how we present that in the monthly report.

Sonias, we have a provider signed up and there is some work to be done, which will be done hopefully before the end of the year. Relation to unauthorised quarries, I might get your report on that, unless Sean Quirke is here and has the figures off the top of his head, but if not I will get them out to you. Similarly with the pollution control, the septic tanks we have targeted from the EPA which we will follow through on, again unless Sean has any update on that, if he wants to?

SEAN QUIRKE: Just on the quarries, we did give figures to RTE, they didn't use them as it happened but we have served 33 enforcement notices, since the registration of quarries came in. 11 of those are still open, so in other words the 11 were complied with, the ones that are open, of those nine of them have ceased operations, we have one in the under challenge in the high Court and one due for review in January of next year.

CLLR WHITMORE: The other part of that question does Wicklow County Council have any commercial dealings with them? So in, on the programme they were saying a lot of the councils, so the programme was saying that some of the councils, while having enforcement letters and notices out, quarries, they were still using the quarries themselves, are Wicklow County Council engaged with any commercial activities with any of the unauthorised quarries?

SEAN QUIRKE: Well, obviously the ones that have ceased operation we don't have any, so of the two remain, the one in the High Court and the one that is due for review, I would be reluctant to say because I don't know every dealing that happens in every Municipal District, I just can't answer the question to be honest with you.

CLLR WHITMORE: Could you get a report on that, I do think it's important, if as a council we are saying that an activity is unauthorised, I don't think the other hand of the council can be using that facility. I think it's important.

SEAN QUIRKE: The someone that is in the High Court there is a challenge as to whether it is unauthorised or not, so that may or may not be, the High Court will decide that.

CLLR WHITMORE: From our perspective we are saying it is unauthorised because we have brought it to the High Court.

SEAN QUIRKE: We are alleging, it's more procedural, that it's challenged on. The other one that is due for review, our current understanding of it is the

area which was alleged to be unauthorised isn't being quarried anyway. But we will check anyway.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you, Sean.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Okay, thank you. Patsy Glennon and Shay Cullen, in relation to Glendalough, the RRDF was unsuccessful this year and we will get the feedback and apply for that again. I did last week meet with senior representatives from Failte Ireland, the OPW and National Parks and Wildlife and ourselves in terms of commissioning a strategy to look at Glendalough and in particular the visitor centre and what is best option in terms of visit and centre. We are all in the same wavelength. The advantage of that is they have a strategic partnership with them.

So we are going to start on that, we will go down that road as well as the RRDF again. Cllr Crean in relation to the programme we have 1350 units between now and 2021, that was the allocation and the target we were given, it's 350 million, it's a huge programme, but again, as you say, the numbers are still increasing but that is where HAP comes in, in time you like to see more delivery and HAP decreasing but that is the way it operates at the moment. It's still a significant investment in our housing stock. Lot Lane in Greystones, you mentioned there was an issue there in relation to the part 8, about you we did take place on board all of the submissions we got and I think worked on the design again, so there is going to be a better design coming back on that, it is coming back, but again our own architectural team are working on improving the design on both.

It will be back before you. In terms of the fabric upgrade phase 1 is complete and we are starting on phase 2. I will ask Joe to come in on that in a second, that is where we are at. We have staff working on it and there is a lot of work involved in each house in terms of planning out what we need, but we are making very significant progress on it. The arrears, again I will ask Joe to comment on it, but we very our percentage is high, compared to the national average, but again it's something that we just need to keep chasing on a case by case basis and the revenue collectors are working on that. Thank you.

JOE: Just on the retrofit, phase 2 is 100%, it was insulation and it was 100 funded. Phase 2 involves part-funding, roughly around 80%, it depends on the mix and there is a lot more involved and indeed in the retrofit, including the external insulation, some of the older houses didn't have cavities, they had cavities so we will be going back to the windows and doors and the boiler, we included 250,000 in the estimates and it depends then on the allocation after that and that will be limiting factor.

So going back through those, they are a lot more work involved than the original ones. The arrears, yes, as I said in the estimate, we have arrears, we don't write them off, so verbally we hold them as long as possible unless there is no hope of ever recovering them, we don't write them off, so, they are being monitored on a regular basis and for equity purposes we do try to actively manage those. They were the two questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: To consider the Notice of Motions in the names of Rory O'Connor, the one received on the 11st of June and Cllr Joe Behan's received

on the 1st of August.

ADMINISTRATOR: Just before we let Mark in there, the elected members were circulated with reports, of written reports of the Notice of Motion, so I don't know whether you want to read it out again, but all members have it.

MARK: There is a lot in it, if the Cathaoirleach wants to read it again I can go through.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Well summarise it.

MARK: IN the nutshell the concerns are valid, the concerns about our quality are valid and there is a number of activities at a national Government level which are trying to address the issue. I suppose I could shortcut a lot of this conversation by going straight to a briefing note we got from the CCMA, which says:

"A legal letter was received on behalf of a number of coal firms, the coal companies have indicated that if a smoky coal ban is extended they will challenge the new ban and the exist ban on the basis that the state should have to ban the burning of other fossil fuels including wood and peat products. Advice has been received by the Department from the Attorney-General and the ministers working with the Attorney-General to finalise the legally are bust plan which will include our plan, without jeopardising the existing ban."

So, in a nutshell, the Department are doing their best to progress the issue and to progress to a greater ban or a wider ban on Smoky coal. Normally there are powers the local authorities can use, the problem is in order to invoke those powers and to use them there is a quite an effort in terms of scientific analysis and we would only be putting ourselves in a position alongside the Department of facing up to this legal challenge. I am certainly proposing we await the results of that in relation to the headline request of the Notice of Motion.

On the other requests, in relation to the Notice of Motion, I might go through the other items that were mentioned. To provide an information campaign we have placed an advertisement recently in the local press and on our website to remind people of the smoky coal ban and where it applies. Publicly notify all retailers and wholesalers, again we place the add and we do inspections. Update the members of the County Council on the numbers of inspection we can do that, we didn't carry out as much, because the technician retired and we haven't replace him yet, but we have on our RMCII we set ourselves a target of inspections and then formally write to the minister for communications and the Taoiseach informing him of the decision of this council, I would wholeheartedly agree with that, formally write to each member of the Oireachtas, again same thing I would agree with that, that is something we can do and then lastly:

"To seek a formal meeting with the Minister for Health. Again if the members wish we can do that, that is the kind of thing we can do and I am sure it's on the minister's agenda, in fact, we have had communications from the minister, Simon Harris' office, again asking us the same thing to progress our activities which is the inspections of the ban and see what we can do, so

those items I can agree, or I think they are laudable, what I am reluctant to do and my recommendation is that we don't go down the route of trying to introduce our own ban, because I think we would find ourselves in the same, A we need a significant resource to do it, that is a legal resource as well and secondly we would leave ourselves open to the same challenge that the minister is facing at the moment. So that is my recommendation. Lastly the environment SPC can consider the matter and take it further.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Rory O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: So, before I get into my motion I actually want to get into the motion system itself, because if all members can look at when this motion was submitted it was the 11th June which puts questions forward as to how effective our motion system is. As a councillor it lets us bring up topical issues and see if we can agree and put stuff forward so I wonder if we can look into the motion system and see if we can make it more effective in a sense, so just to get into the motion, I think I understand the whole legal concerns and all of that, but I strongly believe that local democracy shouldn't be interrupted by companies trying to put pressure on us saying they are going to bring legal action.

At bit of a bluff, because recently Wexford County Council a few months ago brought in their own ban and I don't think it would be, it won't cost us that much to put a ban forward because a majority of Wicklow already has a ban in place and I think the only remaining area is Baltinglass or something like that. Also, just to put statistics forward of how bad, I understand smoky coal is cheaper than coal, but every year you save is actually, you are not saving at all because the health impacts are making you lose money in a sense, such as in the 1990s, Dublin introduced the ban and they didn't face legal action and 350 fewer deaths were recorded every year from improvements in air quality, so I think this is what local development should do, if we all could it, they can't sue us all, so let's get down to it. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I suppose first and foremost I accept the merits of what this motion is being put forward for, but at best I would describe it as naive and at worst I would say it's to be honest, it's it would be very neglectful of us and it would also be a very dangerous thing to do here, we would be exposing this local authority to the multinational companies that are already held a threat to the Government in regard to the implementation of this at national level, the Taoiseach has stood up in the Dail and anticipated questions on this, I know if you go back to Phil Hogan's time in 2013, there was talk of implementing this, still hasn't come in.

Alan Kelly made promises, 2015 and our current ministers and none of them have implemented it because of the fear of the legal action to expose Wicklow County Council to legal action which the Government haven't stood up to, would be very neglectful of us as public representatives and I think that it's something that will happen, eventually when the Government get a handle on it and I think for us to put our neck out there in the legal perspective, I come in here and I question, like all other members in regards to the legal expenses this local authority exposes itself to over the years and I certainly think this is something that we shouldn't be exposing the

taxpayers of county Wicklow and it's all well and good to say they can't sue us all, but the reality is this Government, at a national level haven't confronted it and therefore I think the taxpayers of Wicklow shouldn't.

In regards to the ban itself, just for the member who brought the motion forward, the areas that have a ban in place are Bray, Greystones, Arklow and Wicklow and Rathnew and it's a vast county, County Wicklow. There is an awful lot of people out there who are suffering fuel poverty, who wouldn't be jumping up and down in delight with this ban being implemented at a national level or a local level, but I think if it's a national level, everyone has to obey the law of the land and I think we should wait for that, in regard to the multinationals threatening to take legal action, not just because of their industry, but they would also expose the timber industry and the peat industry as well. So I think it's something that we shouldn't expose ourselves to, thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: I would like to support Cllr O'Connor here on this, there is a lot of interesting points he raises and as chairman of the planning and environment SPC I would be happy to make this an agenda item for our next environment section of the SPC. Secondly, he raises another issue I would like to support him on as well, calling for the reform of the motions system. I am quite concerned that there is an inequality creeping in, an inequality of notices of motion, because I mightn't be the noisiest councillor in the room, but I feel mine are as important as anyone else's. I had motions which are answered by the top table in print, I accepted that, but I would love to have had them discussed by the top table and all the members discussed them, but I think that definitely we shouldn't be creating a two tier system of Notice of Motion by singling out and elevated one or two from particular councillors at the expense of other councillors. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: In response to that, when we had all of those notices of motion, it was put to each council ore if they would accept the written response they got from the executive and both Cllr O'Connor and Cllr Behan said they wanted them to stay on the agenda, you could have asked for yours to stay on the agenda and it would have as well. So, in relation to this motion, some of it is unfortunately, outside of the remit of the council, so if we are to take a vote on it, some of it, we simply cannot do, so we can either amend the motion or if you want to bring it to the SPC to have it discussed first of all?

CLLR O'CONNOR: What would be amended exactly?

CATHAOIRLEACH: We don't have the legislation to enforce a county-wide ban. It's just outside of our control.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Okay. But why could Wexford County Council?

CATHAOIRLEACH: They may have put a motion through, but I don't think they will legally enforce it.

ADMINISTRATOR: It's probably something that the SPC should have a look and a get their teeth into and get some policy without having a vote today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I can understand that we mightn't vote today, but having seen what the smoky fuel ban did in my own town of Arklow, they made it huge difference to the people, it improved people's health and I fully

support Cllr O'Connor's motion. The difficulty is that there are three non-Irish companies taking an action against the Department and that now has been stalled, the minister has a reason not to put the smoky fuel ban in place, but having seen the difference it made to people, breathing problems and other problems I remember back in Arklow in the 90s you would go down you would think it was raining every night, we were fogged out of it. Today it's a different town and I fully support your motion. The difficulty is Wexford County Council, their ban I don't think can be effective because they haven't got the right to ban smoky fuel in Wexford, so my view is let the Government take on the three companies, who I say are non-Irish companies, take them on and hopefully beat them in the court and if they have the appetite for that, I am sure it will happen. I do support your motion, but I think we might be a bit just premature putting it to the vote. I know what Wexford County Council did and I don't think it's going to be effective down here, they are not going to take people down here with money. It's all right to put a ban through, but if it can't happen. If we were saying I support the motion, I would vote to support the motion, but I think it will go no further than that to be honest with it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: John Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: Again, I like to agree with, echo the words of Cllr Fitzgerald. From a logistical perspective, I want to support this motion, but our Municipal District borders Wexford, Carlow, Kildare, south Dublin, so logistically it's going to be putting businesses at anti-competitive against other counties that don't have the ban, but I want to support the motion, but it's logistically how can we enforce it? That is all I want to say.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

Jennifer Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: I would like to thank Cllr O'Connor for bringing forward this motion. I think it's great, Cllr O'Connor, in your first term you are being so proactive and bringing forward a lot of very good motions and it's unfortunate that some members of the chamber are being judgmental and patronising in their responses to these motions and as a council we should be looking to support rather than put people down at every opportunity. Just in relation to this particular issue, I think if people realise, because I have been doing, I have been looking at this over the last few weeks, there has been quite a lot of media attention about our air quality and if people realised how poor our air quality is they would be bang on our doors to get us to address it. Part of the problem is there isn't a monitoring programme in this country, there is only one in the centre of Bray and it isn't even working at the moment.

So I think the first thing we need to be doing, if we are looking for evidence and data to back up any future perhaps bye laws in this area we need to have the data and maybe as a council we could look to work with the EPA to set up a county-wide monitoring programme. There is a particular problem with air pollution outside schools that is because of traffic and then in the centres of towns because of fuel burning and that is something we could and the SPC could look at that to see if we could bring that forward, because I think that would be very important and using that information to then have an education programme, because I really do believe, if people realised the

damage that is being caused from the fuel they are using or either from things like idling outside their schools in cars, I think people would stop doing it, so I think that is maybe something we could bring forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Stephen Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: I would support Cllr O'Connor's motion in terms of what is in the remit of the County Council to do. There is some good ideas there but we can't control the sale of it. Overall we need to look at our air quality in the county, it's not just smoky fuel, particulate matter from cars really is problem and I think as the Cathaoirleach of the SPC has offered to have this as an agenda item for the SPC, I think establishing an air quality management plan for the county would be a good idea, where we could look at all of the factors that affect our air quality, because traffic and traffic congestion, at particular times of year and at particular weather events can create huge problems. If you walk around the schools, the idling traffic would choke you. The children are lower to the ground, that was one of the problems with lead fumes, they affected smaller people more because they were closer to breathing it in. If Cllr O'Connor is of agreement to let this to go to the SPC we include part of his motion under an overall air quality management plan for the county.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thank you for Cllr Matthews and.

Jennifer Whitmore very helpful. I think we should put it to SPC, but also to do a symbolic vote about the smoky coal here today, just to see if people agree with it or not, because it's interesting from my point of views from, I don't think caring about air quality is naive and that is insulting to everyone who does care about the environment, I just so, I think we should take it to a vote.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Would you be prepared to let me amend to it introduce and enforce a county wide ban on smoky coal. So if that is taken out of the motion. Taken out the first line. Because we can't actually do that, so there is no point in us voting on it.

ADMINISTRATOR: We can't have a symbolic vote. Councillor, we can also write as you have asked there to formally write to the minister for communications.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Do everything else apart from.

ADMINISTRATOR: We can do those three and as you mentioned?

>>: [INAUDIBLE].

CLLR SNELL: We will have to take the bullet points under the motion, so you will have to take out bullet points 1, 3 and 4. I think everything else would be acceptable and I think it probably would have the support of people within the chambers and also the county, but I think Cllr O'Connor would have to agree to withdraw bullet point 1, 3 and 4.

CATHAOIRLEACH: The wording of the motion, the members of the Wicklow County Council hereby resolve to introduce a county wide ban on the sale, distribution and burning of smoky coal." We can take a vote on it, I would like it to go to the SPC, I think the air quality could be looked at that. As the motion stands I can't support it because I am not going to ask the council to vote to do something we can't do, but it would be up to members.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: We don't have the jurisdiction, the amended regs, that is where they are made. Everyone supports it, as the councillor said but we

don't have the authority to do it.

CLLR WHITMORE: Could we say something along the lines of, in the event that national policy enables Wicklow County Council would support the introduction of a county-wide ban?

CATHAOIRLEACH: But, like we are pre-empting what might or might not happen. The thing is the motion is here, either we want to support it or we don't want to support it as its currently standing or we can send it to the SPC and it can come back in a modified form that would be legal for the council.

ADMINISTRATOR: Can we have a proposer Rory O'Connor, a formal seconder for your motion? Anyone?

CLLR MATTHEWS: We shouldn't be having votes on motions that we can't enact or go against the legislation. I think, if Cllr O'Connor would be willing to defer this for a couple of minutes I think we can put together a wording that would be acceptable to everyone in the chamber and would send a message out that the dangers of smoky coal, the advertising L will you hit your mic.

CLLR MATTHEWS: I think that would be, that the motion could be amended to go to a vote, but he returns the risk of many of us not being able to support a motion that wouldn't be legal or within our remit and I would like to support the spirit of his motion you but I can't support.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That would that be acceptable.

CLLR O'CONNOR: That is acceptable.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We will move on to the next motion.

CLLR BEHAN: Before we go off, Cathaoirleach, I wasn't going to anything because I thought it was going to be referred to the SPC. But I want to agree with something that John Snell said, I wouldn't support it as it is now, unless there was some element of protection for people who do suffer fuel poverty in this county and some level of a compensation scheme by the Government if people have to change the way they heat their homes. It's okay, I understand the motivation is absolutely 100% correct, but we have to remember, not everyone is able to invest in the most energy efficient system to run their heating system and there are many people who do rely on solid fuel to heat their homes. So unless something is put into that effect, I couldn't support it, even if it comes back as an amended motion, Cathaoirleach. You just want to make that dear.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Connor and then we are moving on.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Just to move on to what Joe has said. I did my research and normal coal, like smokeless coal is 25% more efficient than smoky coal, so people are actually, as I was saying the health impacts cost them more overall and the fuel allowance also exists at the moment for people to buy it.

CLLR MURPHY: Fuel allowance will hardly buy a bag of coal.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I couldn't hear you.

CLLR MURPHY: I said a fuel allowance is €20.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so we are going to move on to the next motion and you are going to see if you can reword that one, is that it?

CLLR O'CONNOR: Then we will come back.

CLLR SNELL: Also, just to clarify on this, that the bullet points underneath the motion would have been part and parcel of that motion, had it been passed where, to introduce and enforce a county wide ban on the sale and

use of smoky fuel. That is what I was referring to.

Bullet point 3, publicise and notify all retailers wholesalers about the decision of the county-wide ban, that would have to be dropped and bullet point 4, update the member of the Wicklow County Council monthly on the number of inspections carried out, pursuant to the decision. We can't take a decision on that, that is why I am asking for those bullet points to be dropped and also my understanding is that Wexford County Council did not introduce a county-wide ban, when Enniscorthy was referred to as the new Delhi of Ireland in regards to the poor air pollution that it was raised in the Dail by the Fianna Fail party and from that there was a subsequent ban in Wexford town but not on the whole county. The Taoiseach did say that Wexford County Council had the powers if they wanted to pursue a county-wide ban, but they would be exposed as would the Government. To my understanding and I am open to correction by Cllr O'Connor that Wexford didn't implement this at a county-wide level.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you going to amend.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Amend.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So the second one then, the Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr Joe Behan, that in the context of the current housing emergency this council eases the restrictions on one-off housing in rural areas with immediate effect.

CLLR BEHAN: We did get a comprehensive response and basically the answer was no.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Cllr Behan. Director Quirke.

CLLR BEHAN: It's hardly worth the walk, I wasn't going to take too long on it. Seen as it might be his last chance. Hopefully we will be able to agree on something sure.

SEAN QUIRKE: It's terrible to get up for the last time and say no. No, sorry, how about that? Look it, there is a fairly comprehensive response there, we are governed by the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and our own plan, how is that for a bit of yes.

CLLR BEHAN: I will take it. Could I say, I have, if you want to go on, but it was a comprehensive response, Cathaoirleach, first of all, to agree with Cllr O'Connor about someone thing, I submitted this on the 1st of August and we are now on the 2nd of December and particularly for new councillors who have gone to the trouble of putting their motions after the election campaign, it is very, I think kind of discouraging when it takes so long for a motion to be dealt with. Again I would ask that the protocol committee look at this and come up with a suggestion that let's say, after a period of two months or three months, if a motion hasn't been taking a special meeting it called just to deal with the notices of motion.

The reason why I was proposing that we finish our business tonight, even though I don't want to discommode anyone was to try and see if question clear the motions on the agenda, at least we are moving into January with a clean sheet. The point that I wanted to get across in the motion and it was in advance of us discussing the new development plan is that we have a housing emergency in this country, at the moment. We have many people throughout this county who own land or whose parents own land, who,

because of the very tight restrictions on planning, that we are being forced to put into our plan by national Government, but also which we are discouraged or encouraged to put in by the planning staff here and planners all over the country, who effectively, I think, want to tie us into a system where all new housing is going into urban areas and very little, only the most restricted ones are going into rural areas. This is a time when I think we need to relax those rules. People in urban areas are being told they have to accept high densities because we have a housing emergency. They have to accept high rise because we have a housing emergency and we have a huge county in this country and we have land and we have young people who want to build a home on their own family land. Now, we got a letter today from a Senator about this decision that was made by the European Court of Justice in relation to the locals only rule and the fact that the Government are still looking that the ruling because it may have an impact on our county in terms of the restrictions on locals only being able to build in local land. What I am concerned about with that is if you look into the small print of his letter, actually the people who are advising the minister are planners from the Department of the environment and planners from councils around the country, selective planner, I don't know if anyone from Wicklow is on this committee, but we are being cut out of this as the representatives of the people in the rural areas and that is again, it's just another example of where we are being told what to do and given instructions. When we see the new county plan we will see how restricted we are going to be in terms of allowing people in rural areas to have the opportunity to live in their own homeland. So it's really a matter of principle and that is put down in the motion I know we can't get into any more detail, but I like to see whatever we can do to relax the rules being put into the new county plan. That is what I want to propose.

CLLR BLAKE: Joe, believe it or not I would like to support you on this issue today. We don't always see eye-to-eye on things, but certainly regard planning and planning in the rural areas, the difficulty from our point of view, certainly in south Wicklow and west Wicklow has been huge over the years. Secondly we are a shortage of water and sewage, a lot of the small towns and villages we can't build houses for them in our own towns or village, so certainly, Joe, in term was anything that can be done to alleviate the problem of being allowed to build in the rural areas, whether it's a small or big house, or whatever kind of a house, we are often restricted in design of houses, so from our point of view, as someone who was living in rural areas and experience it on a day-to-day bases, I certainly would like to support you in that regard and whatever can be done in the new county development plan to alleviate the problem I will be supporting it. Thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, again I would like to support Cllr Behan's motion, I like to know how we get around it, because no matter what way Wicklow County Council decides on one-off housing, if we ease restrictions, I know in our part of the county in west wick will be we have An Taisce and south Dublin County Council and Irish Water, I find that Wicklow County Council are a bit reluctant to grant, if there are submissions in from any of these groups. I think it's something like ten different groups we have

to inform of a one-off house. I see there last week again, a local girl from, in west Wicklow where she has, an objection went in at the last minute from An Bord Pleanála from a person who is very fond of objecting to one-off housing, so I think it was a little bit beyond. What guarantees do we have, even if we did, as a Council lift restrictions that little bit? Does it make any difference if the other people, these other groups are waiting to dig the boot in, so I think they have to be brought in, but Dublin Corporation and Dublin City Council I think it's a ten-mile perimeter they have an input, from the lake. As I said our planners have to look over their shoulder all the time because these objections from other groups are constant.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I would fully support Cllr Behan in this as well. As someone who comes from the rural area I know only too well the way rural people look after the environment and I think people should be allowed to build on their own land and I also think that the council should be assisting in helping young couples in making those applications for housing I also have an issue in relation to the levies these people are paying on one-off rural houses and what they are receiving for those levy, so I look forward to the new plan and working with Cllr Behan and any like-minded councillor that is prepared to work on the development plan in relation to one-off housing. Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: I would like to support this motion and I welcome Joe's late conversion to the rural planning. I look forward to working with you on helping people in rural areas improve their rights in relation to rural planning, especially in the light of the last council, I wasn't here, but during the presentations we lost a couple of councillors who were also strong advocates of rural planning, so any support that we get from new councillors or older councillors is more than welcome and I certainly support that. It's a very complex area, I work in rural planning all the time and every day of the week, but one of the things we do struggle with is we put into the county development plan that social and economic need trumped everything else. I have to be honest and say that is not always being applied in the planning section here.

People are being refused constantly and they come up with a site that is the only site they have and they are still being refused. We just are to deal with that issue head on and allow these people. What happens is in practice, people put in three, four, five, planning applications and some of them just give up because they think there is no chance of ever getting it, even though we built into the county development plan, social and economic need, subject to the technical issues that they have to overcome, the sighting of the site, traffic, septic tank, all of the technical issues being overcome, but they are still being refused because of the location of the site, answer though it might be the only site they have.

So I think we have to address that and that has to be dealt with and the other point is we just need to, the planning staff are a great group of people, they do a fantastic job here, by need to improve our communication between the whole planning staff and the culture in the planning section and the applicants and the architects. I am not sure how we are going to do that,

but we need to improve that situation and people will tell you that Wicklow is the toughest place to get planning. I know Kildare is catching up with us now and south Dublin is very difficult, but architects will tell you that they have difficulty here. I mean I respect Wicklow is a beautiful county, we have hills every everywhere and we have to deal with that, but I feel the balance is tilted against people, who, at the end of the day, are not looking for a hand out, people tell me, okay, well house me, I am willing to build my own house and they say no, no, okay, get Wicklow County Council to house me. So here are people willing to help themselves and they are not being supported.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Shay Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Thank you, chair. Yes, as other councillors have said and I am fully supportive of the motion put forward. The, I suppose the first thing I would have to say is we are very much restricted by planning guidelines and we can't get away from that fact but I suppose the public perception is that there is a lack of consistency in planning and that we talk about Wicklow, just using an example, we are in a very much a visual county and the visual impact will come up time and time again on applications and I am not going to get into specifics about you we live in a county that is full of hills and so on and we are bounty bound to have visual issues, but things like that seem to be put in the way of applications that sol of the things that have been said, there was a suggestion back last year we were going to have a workshop for architects, that maybe they could be guided in maybe making better applications or making sure that sites were suitable for rural planning. I think that needs to be resurrected because I do think we need to make the architects and agents more involved in the process. There is no doubt about a rural application on the expense it incurs on the applicants. Some applicants could have, to put in three, four, five planning applications. They are looking for different reports, landscaped reports for example, cost them thousands. This type of thing, I don't know, is it necessary, I suppose again we have to look at what we are putting with regards to expense on an applicant. I think we can all play a role in this and, as I said at the start, the reality is we are restricted by planning guidelines and I fully accept that, but I also fully accept that we can engage better in the process and we can make it easier for people who are looking for rural planning. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just to address consistency for a moment, because it has been questioned. An Taisce have about 80% of their appeals upheld and they appeal less than half of 1% of applications in this country, so they are very consistent. In terms of our planners in Wicklow, the figures there are very consistent in terms of decisions upheld by An Bord Pleanála. So I think they are getting it right. I can't support this motion in the current wording, because I don't know what it means. I don't know what it means to relax it, are we could allow a free for all in the countryside for planning? Because it's not clear what is meant by this motion. You need sure tee in the planning situation and you need consistency we have a planning system on rural housing.

There is other guidelines coming on planning, planning guidelines on rural housing. If we are to introduce an interim stop-gap measure on rural housing, it introduces uncertainty into the planning system and another

example of that is where the building heights and densities constantly interfered with by the minister and that delays projects and it doesn't provide certainty for people when they are trying to plan and build, so I don't agree with it for that reason and there is huge environmental costs, there is huge societal and economic costs to rural housing and one of the reasons our N11 is dogged is this dispersed rural housing that we have encouraged and tried to support for many years in Wicklow. That is one of the problems we have.

Rural housing and especially dispersed rural housing, that is what is killing the towns and villages. If this was aimed at revitalising some of our towns and villages, if that is what is meant by rural, if this is disbursed around that there is ha a different matter. But rural housing should be bringing life and vitality back into the opportunities if that was meant by the motion, I could support it, but the way it's written now is vague and seen to be doing something and I can't support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan, are you happy to let this motion go to the planning SPC for further teasing out and development?

CLLR BEHAN: I want us to have an opportunity to discuss it. Obviously the key decisions will be made in the plan anyway so, this is an aspiration at the moment, I would just ask that if the planning SPC, when they are doing the deliberations on the new plan, if bear in mind the importance of trying to ensure that more local people are able to build on their local land and I am not talking just about living in the villages. I am talking about when people own farms, or own land of their own, that their own family would have an easier opportunity to build a house on that land, they get house, but they also are removed from the market and competition for other people who are also trying to buy houses in the towns and villages, so.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We have three other people.

CLLR BEHAN: I don't mind it going to the SPC.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Three others want to come in on this, Cllr Cronin, Cllr Snell, I think we are going to be here until tonight if everyone comments. Cllr Cronin.

CLLR CRONIN: I want to support this motion. Coming from a rural area I often deal with these planning issues, in many of these towns and villages there are no other options for people. I know ideally it would be fantastic if people could live in clustered areas of houses but I think the reality is from any towns and villages there hasn't been any private development in a number of years. In my own town of Dunlavin we haven't had a private estate built in well over ten years, I would say maybe it could be 15 years.

So, if people locally want to build a house, they are told they might be refused, but yet they don't have any other options, because there is no houses for sale in the area. I do think that there needs to be improvement with communications, as Cllr Timmins said, often agents and applicants are willing to make changes but they don't, they don't have the opportunity to discuss these with the planners. I know that there are obviously certain constraints and maybe limitations as to what can be discussed, but I do think if there was more engagement maybe they could come to some sort of agreement with their applications.

My last point is in relation to the development levy. I think, as was said earlier, with my colleagues, applications can be quite expensive, if you have to make amendments or to submit your applications, numerous time, you still have to pay the fees and then on top of that, you have your development levies, I know in rural areas you look around and think what am I getting? I don't have footpaths or streetlight, what to you get for these levies? So I think that also needs to be looked and a maybe that is something we could consider for the future?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I would like to support Joe Behan's motion as well, but I think Cllr Matthews has made a few valid points as well. I wouldn't like to see it become a free for all for anyone to build houses wherever. I do think regeneration of our rural areas and the social houses of people being able to build near their grandparents and parents, that social infrastructure is important, it saves money in the long run because people are enabled to stay in their houses when they wouldn't otherwise be for longer. You have intergenerational communities supporting each other and so for that reason I would support Cllr Behan.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

CLLR SNELL: In regard to something I would like to be brought forward for the SPC. It was discussed by previous councils over the years was the Cork rural house design, it's something that is referred to all the time by multiple local authorities throughout the state. We did talk about in Wicklow, after our own rural house design, something that applicants and architects could go to and refer rather than a Cork rural design. That is something that the SPC should undertaking to do, where they look at what is acceptable and unacceptable to this county. It's the same applications and the same reasons that people keep submitting that are failing, such as simple things as doors, windows, roof design and chimney pots etc. It's something we had within our own grass of this local authority that people could refer to and I would also like to see, when we have our new chamber our offices available to the public, preplanning meetings more readily available to the public.

SEAN QUIRKE: Briefly, we do have a design guide for rural housing, but we have been advised as recently as last week, that the Department will be issuing revised or they are remember viewing the housing guideline, I am not sure if that will be for better or worse, or richer or poorer, but they are doing it anyway. We would expect to have that next year. I think the rest will tease out through the planning process and the SPC.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Before Sean steps away from the chair, we all know this is his last week in the buildings as a member of staff. Sean joined, I think it was Bray Urban District Council, 42 years ago and as a clerical officer and since then over his 42 years he served in planning and went on to be director of transport and the town clerk in Arklow, he is currently the manager in Baltinglass and he is the director in planning and he has also done special projects, so Greystones harbour has probably taken up years of his working life, but throughout all of that time, any time I have had any dealings with Sean I have always found him pleasant. He has a dry sense of humour that is actually lovely, a really good sense of humour. He has always been amenable to having discussions, he does say no probably more often

than I would like, but that is the way it goes. I think he has been a fantastic member of staff and lovely to deal with and I am sure we all wish him very well in his retirement. APPLAUSE.

SEAN QUIRKE: Thank you very much, and we will leave it there as someone said.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We will see you for a drink on Friday. Okay to receive presentation from Ray Jordan from Coillte on the of Avondale Forest Park Project and I think he is joined by Deborah Meghan. Deborah, if you want to make the presentation.

DEBORAH: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you very much for having us here today, my name is Deborah Meghan, I am the Director of Coillte and beside me is Ray Jordan who started for the redevelopment of Avondale, our project we are doing in partnership with Failte Ireland. We welcome the opportunity to give you an update. We have done a few around Wicklow, will you it's a fantastic opportunity to be here to talk about, really from Coillte we find it's a hugely exciting project and long awaited by a lot of people.

Just to remind, a lot of the members here today that Avondale, we will see it as a place of visionary, that goes back to the early days of Samuel Hayes and the laying out of the original forest park, through to the Parnells. When you go in there you will see the old accommodation block, that will be going as part of the development but it does mean a lot to Coillte and we had our 30 anniversary celebrations there earlier on this summer we had a big tea party, we did up the big shed, it never looked so fine and we are looking forward to getting going on this project.

The two elements of this project we want to talk about is first and foremost the house and having it as a place of visionaries, it will be a light touch piece on the house, basically tidying up and taking away the modern technology you see in the house and bringing it back as a living history. So again, taking out the older furniture and bringing back in a little bit fake furniture and bringing in actors and bringing to life the Parnell family, so this is not a museum, but about interacting with the Parnells and the history of the house and having conversation.

So the idea here is really to bring to life the story of the house and the story of Avondale. So that is key part of the project.

Another key element is around nature and wildlife and engaging young and old people alike with nature. A fundamental, we hope it will be one of the highlights of the reimagined Forest Park Project will be a tree top walkway, through Avondale highlighting some of the trees we have in Avondale and trying to engage people in nature, in climate change awareness of that, we will also be doing creative wild play areas, we have a playground and we will move that into the new walled garden, but engaging kids, and doing out and doing what kids do, dimbing on logs and we will make sure they are accessible, family cycle trails and again this whole idea of really making sure that people get to enjoy and relish nature, because I don't know how many people, I run around Avondale regularly with Billy Porter shouting at me at races. We want people to enjoy that as part of the park.

Obviously the key aspect from a Coillte point of view this is going to be our shop window to tell people about forestry and again forestry is a real rural employer, there is 12,000 people working in forestry in Ireland, we have fantastic products and fantastic innovative companies working here in Wicklow and across the country. To talk about forestry and what it means and what the impact on climate change means and we will build a, the bioeconomy and the circular economy how timber as a product is important when we look at address climate change and addressing it. We will look at the old seed store and the back end of the big shed, we are putting in what we are going to call the seed cafe and again having proper food and orientation spaces in there and again part of the design work we are doing at the moment is looking at the walled garden and really bringing it back to life and back into use. At the moment it's very much a green field and very few people have access into the walled garden today, but again we opening that up, again bringing in the pavilion there and some information and bringing in the playground and looking at potentially working with the new operator of the site and putting in proper gardens so they produce some of their own produce in the walled garden so, again totally reinventing and reimagining the walled garden. The project itself I am going to let Ray give an update and now and into the future, if you have any questions Ray and I will be down at Coillte Mount Kennedy to answer them, but maybe Ray will tell you about the project.

RAY: Basically, I know time is restricted so I am not going to go into every nut and bolt and we are under pressure, I hear we are going to finish at 10.00pm tonight, I will be gone out the door quickly. Planning was granted in quarter one of 2019, so I have been given the of a Avondale bus to drive, there is diesel in and it air in the tyres.

At the moment we have the topographical GPR and asbestos on surveys ongoing. Some are complete and some are going on as we speak. Including that we have the detailed design and the civil engineering, or the enabling works, which is a very large package in order that the development can go ahead as is planned and also for anything future that is required.

Architecturally we are reviewing at the moment what has been granted, the planning permission has been granted to see what enhancements. It will be in keeping with what we have originally planned.

Procurement process for an operator, Coillte are not operators of centre or destination like this, so we have gone out to the public and using the public procurement process we are going out looking for an operator that is under the way, it's advertised and an e-tenders at the moment and by the end of January we will hope to have someone engaged in that, which is needed because of obviously minor design changes that are going to have to take place to keep the operator, it's essential that he is involved from day one for people flows and seating arrangements, etc, for canteens or for restaurants. We are actually speaking now with specialists for the aerial walkway or for the elevated walkway, treetop walk as it's normally called, something because it's something which hasn't been done in this country in the past to the scale we are looking at.

It's going to be a first for accessibility, which is the primary focus that we are looking at. Anything that we have, or I have asked for, the first thing is accessibility for all, not just for wheelchair users but people with impaired mobility, old age, old people, people that are on walking sticks, there is, it's the first thing that I ask for, so any reviews that are taking place, that is number one, first and foremost and then after that comes the design and it's based on the accessibility aspect the programme we hope to achieve is in quart one, I can't give an update because of the procurement process, but we would hope in quarter one we would commence the infrastructural and enabling works as we call it. As that is going on, the park will be open, there will be restrictions on certain areas of course for safety reasons, but that we would hope to get that whole package of works under way in March/April of next year. That is the programme there:

That is a headline programme, now, obviously it's a moveable feast, but the primary aim is to keep the end date of November in 2011 as. A soft opening.

CAPTIONS WILL RESUME AFTER THE SHORT BREAK.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I say to members, if the question you want to ask is asked by someone, you don't have to ask it again. Cllr Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, first of all, I fully welcome this, I think it will be great for, not just Rathdrum, but the people of Rathdrum are proud of Avondale, I think Avondale, several times a week, myself, every week and I suppose we kind of think we own Avondale, but Avondale is owned by the people. I just want to thank you for the consultation, you did over the last probably two-and-a-half years with the community in keeping them up to date and we had a night and I seen the presentation then.

I think it would be huge not just for Rathdrum, but for the whole county, it will be huge for tourism and tourism in south Wicklow which we lack the facilities in tourism, it will be fabulous, the one thing I would ask and I forgot to talk to Daithi was in relation to the exit from Avondale, have you engaged with Wicklow County Council in relation to that, where you are going out there at Kingston and back on to the main road, because that road is in a dreadful state, it's probably in a third world condition at the moment and it needs to be upgraded and I am wondering what the timeframe in relation to the council is in relation to doing up that road?

RAY: We would hope to speak with the guys later on at a stage when we get our own house in order I have spoken to some of the lads from the council, the planning of that will take time, but we would hope to get that road and the exit route, there is a new exit route, we would hope to get work done on that, prior to opening.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I am not from Rathdrum, but from Bray, but we use our sites and I am involved with the scouts and we would use Avondale loads, I wanted to commend you on looking at the accessibility issues at this early stage, because it would be cost effective to

going into the plans. Thank you for doing that and to maybe ask that you would look at issues. If you are taking that approach, it would be lovely to see the destination sites at the moment haven't that sensory element of it.

RAY: We have sensory gardens planned.

DEIRDRE: It's what we call the living garden and we need to clear out some of the trees that are in, but again the plan as part of it is looking at a small sensory garden, the linen garden is where he this used to half hang out the washing, of course.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: That is fantastic to hear.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: I am shocked at the words accessibility into the presentation so much. I think you got warned where your audit sense going to be, I won't say by who, but look it, it's for local business, I have been lobbying since this started on the prospect of incorporating a changing room facility. I know we have been before and I know that the tourism, as made, the presentations on our behalf as well, so and, I mean, I know that in the appointment of yourself, so well done on the appointment, you have a very big headache ahead of you, but we are nice people in Wicklow.

I think on the word accessibility, I needed to hear you say that, it's great to hear it. To even be aware of it, but the changing facilities is a little bit different, it's for adults and children and it's something that really needs to be considered really strongly. And that is a programme that is run by Inclusion Ireland.

RAY: We are looking at different rooms for obviously when you say changing room, the designation may not call it a change room, but it will be a room that will be designated for either disabled or non-able bodied people.

CLLR MURPHY: I think this programme should be looked at and maybe contact Inclusion Ireland, because it covers we look with Sports Ireland to ensure an accessibility report on that, but a huge element is making sure that the outdoors are accessible and that is why a key part of this treetop walk is trying to make sure that they are three metres up.

CLLR MURPHY: Young children want to be with their brothers and sisters at all levels.

DEIRDRE: Only challenge we have is the house itself, the house itself will always be limited.

CLLR MURPHY: Hopefully it will be.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you for the presentation. I absolutely support the, Cllr Murphy's proposal, the changing places facility would be very important and because in that there is hoists and there is not just a room that is big, it has a lot of equipment that is really critical for children and for adults to enable them to get out and use facilities like this.

From the presentation it looks like it's going to be a fantastic, I do have concerns that in our sort of efforts to make and to have really high tourism friendly areas, particularly in areas of high biodiversity value currently sometimes we don't get the balance right and by making it too accessible we undermine the biodiversity of these sites and I am wondering is that something that we you have considered and are there areas within that will be no-go areas.

DEIRDRE: The park itself, you have to remember that the park is open, you have 10km runs in there and you don't need to use the same path twice. We are not talking about more but general grading what we have. We are a plan at the moment, we have two foresters looking at a forest management plan for Avondale, again it hasn't had the tender loving care it's deserved so there is a piece of work looking at trees that are there at the moment, we do have some invasive species like the laurel is out of control and we need to deal with that, so we are looking at how the forest evolves for the next century, so potentially, Avondale was set up, a lot of them are test plots so we have red woods and different amazing species in Avondale so something we need to look at for the future of Avondale, should we introduce test plots to Avondale looking at climate change and looking at what trees we should be growing as our climate reacts. So there is a separate piece of work which is looking at the forest itself and the management plan for the forest.

CLLR WHITMORE: Okay.

RAY: You have to realise the area of development is only 40-50 acres. We have over 500 acres sitting there. So you are not going to spoil what is there at the moment.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to take speakers in sets of three and so the next three. So, Cllr Snell.

CLLR SNELL: A social media campaign was started in recent weeks, I think if people had information available to us today and I know that you did meet the public in recent week, I think they would change the name of that overnight, because to me, Avondale seems to be in very safe hands with our two speakers, Ray and Deborah.

Just on behalf of County Wicklow Heritage Programme, I would like to ask you to keep in contact with our heritage officer here in Wicklow County Council, Deirdre Burns because the information can be shared out, we have a broad diversity of membership throughout the county who obviously have a historical heritage on Avondale not just being back, but through the timber and the forestry centre, they had a huge impact, but also through sport and sporting achievements within the county and Coillte, as the son of a person who worked for Coillte for 48 years, I know the impact it had on the county and I want to commend you and I wish you well on this project. I won't go other avenues, but I think it's really welcome and I would ask you to keep in touch with our heritage officer, Wicklow County Council.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Thank you, Chair. First of all, just to thank you to Deborah and Ray and indeed Coillte, I have spoken to Deborah before on my involvement in the Vартry Trails and I want to say that Coillte have been open and their vision for tourism in the county should be commended so I want to thank four that first of all.

My question is, is it envisaged to have a main contractor, or is it possible to incorporate local contraries into this job. Because I found, as I say, with my involvement in other projects that the pride that local people take in their own community and the possibility of having local contractors to have some involvement in that project would be positive for not only Coillte but the county and Rathdrum.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cronin.

CLLR CRONIN: Thank you for the presentation. I think Avondale has great, has great importance in Wicklow and I do think that it will make a huge difference to the local economy and tourism in the area. I just have to three questions. Firstly just in relation to summer 2020. Obviously works are going to be taking place and I am assuming that appropriate signage would be put up to make people aware of what is going on, tourists from different areas that may not be aware of the developments that are happening. Also in relation to summer 2020. There is going to be some disruption, there will be any form of refreshment facilities around there, also the roads around, around of Avondale, obviously, the development is going to, it's going to make difference to the roads and I am wondering have you any plans for road upgrades around the area and following on from the last meeting you had, with the public, will there be another one in a few months' time, maybe six months' time to update them on works that is taking place.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to take those.

DEIRDRE: A quick one on the social media yes, I strongly support Cllr Snell's plan, it should be changed from save Avondale to Support Avondale, we met with Neville Doyle, as soon as we saw the website go out again, I am sure everyone is familiar with these things happen, a website was set up to save Avondale with no information and understanding of the project, we met them within four days and again the tone has changed and we are glad to see that, we support Avondale, because they are interested in the history of the site and that is fantastic, we welcome that support. In the main contractor piece it will be open for public procurement.

RAY: One of the issues is has to go for public procurement. It's not in my hands, it goes out and then it's invited to, any local contractor, anyone is invited to put their name into the hat. I am not going to go to any local contractor, I can't do that. That has happened with the design team, it's happened now with the operator, so all of that is into the public realm.

DEIRDRE: What is important is we will have a number of packages of work, so it won't be one single package, a package of works looking at the whole Seed Cafe and the walled garden.

Obviously the treetop walkway is a specialised installation and I am not sure there is anyone in the country who can design this for us. So again, because it's broken up into the packages it will make it accessible for some of the local contractors that will be our preference are but it comes down to public procurement and value more money, it's a challenging time for budgets and so on and so forth. Just to answer some of your questions on summer 2020.

On signage, when we put signage up and any construction works that will be part of the main contract and on site. With regard to refreshment facilities again we close the cafe as part of this, rather than to offer something that is not full standard, it's to close that off and when the park reopens with a brand new Seed Café to reach high standards of refreshment and catering. I know there is a coffee stall for the park run on Saturday morning and that will run through the summer. It normally does to support the Park Run.

On the roads upgrade we will do that in consultation with the County

Council. On that, on the Facebook page set up recently again our commitment at that meeting is we would have a public meeting in Avondale house in six months' time to give an update and we can use the social media as a way of getting that information out through the local newspapers.

RAY: Just on the social media, the reason it wasn't, there wasn't any information to give out until now, until the design team, the project, the PQS and etc were appointed, it's only now we can give information that there is progress, but you can appreciate the public procurement process is a long process and until such time as we got someone appointed and we had some information to put out there, then we could have had this, but it's just that the website, the Save Avondale popped up out of nowhere at a time when we were at a stage when we could have given news.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: It feels like, it's also a place of visionaries, very exciting stuff proposed there. Very quickly, I wonder in terms of, I was going to ask about operators and will you have to go outside of Ireland, especially for the treetop walk and I am wondering, I love the idea of wild play, just it seem very stimulating and I wonder will there be challenges in terms of insurance?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I think it's very exciting project, it's fantastic to see projects like this being progressed. I have a few questions about the treetop walk as well. And the impact, the environmental impact on the construction of it and also the design of it and maybe it can be department in keeping with the feel of the place and the natural surround that is will be very important, I would hate to see it looking like something that was being transparent transported from America, but then the affordability of it, will there will be a charge for kids or people that want to go in and use this later on and it's insufficient.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Cathaoirleach, yes, just in relation to the traction that the Save Avondale and what it would have got, I think you should do more, you had an information deficit and that gave them traction and the councillors including myself off guard because we had assumed that local people had been properly consulted. So I would like to make that suggestion, going into the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: I was going to make a similar point as regards a charge into the park, but also highlighting a lot of Wicklow's outdoor activity businesses have experienced difficulty with rising insurance costs and I was wondering are you anticipating something similar because of the treetop walk and is that being taken into consideration, will that lead to a charge? I would appreciate a comment on that, but it's fantastic thank you.

DEIRDRE: Insurance is a challenge for every single business and organisation across the country, we are currently not only doing Avondale, but with the RDF funding we are also investing in mountain bike trails and it is a challenge, but again Coillte, due to the size and scale of the organisation, to an element we don't self-insure, but we cover the insurance for a lot of the activities, so again out in wild play area and all of those that will be covered under the standard Coillte insurance as you would be

covered if you go to use the mountain bike trails. With regard to the treetop walk and the Seed Cafe, they will come in under commercial insurances but again having seen some of the treetop walks on the continent, again the risk, the very low risk.

Mountain biking trails are far more risky particularly if you are someone like me, who crashes. I don't think insurance would be our primary concern with regard to the park, Coillte will cover 90% of the park and the rest will come under standard insurance. On the treetop walk, because of looking at the design of the treetop walk, one of the things we have been talking for, they use large, 89% with a little bit of foundations have you to have it and some steel, so they are low impact and what you would be talking about is taking a lot of the laurels, the under story cover there, yes some trees will have to come down, but none of our signature trees, to make it clear, the whole of the treetop walk is to bring it close to some of the trees we have and show them the diversity in the park.

So, again an environmental survey has been pointed out, we have our own, Coillte, an environmental reporting system and assessment we do, all of our Coillte workers will be trained by Coillte on environmental management so, we take that seriously and to make their impactful, but we enhance and make it accessible to people. On a visual grounds again, a lot of the treetop walk will be through the trees so a lot will be very small. From what I have seen, again the whole idea is to minimise it so you can see true it and as little solid structure as you can.

RAY: Bear in mind that most of the timber will weather that it becomes part of the tree scape.

DEIRDRE: On the affordability piece, again this is a significant investment beyond eight million and plus on it. The site itself, again to talk about the commercial aspects. It does need to be able to be self-sufficient and it needs to be able to maintain itself, so people going to walk in the park, there is no charge to walk with the park today, but things like the treetop walk and the interactive experience within the Parnell house there be charges, then the cafe is open, so there will be two of the attractions, because we need to, again there is staff involved and investment costs involved in that those and there will be charges on those, but the rest of the park is the wild play areas and we encourage as many people as possible to go out and play in the park.

And on the social media, on the web page, again we take that on board. Again I think we are called out a little I have been down to Rathdrum, they invited me down there one night and we had the chat and he with had the Parnell Society in and we have started having the conversations but like everything else we were caught behind the curve on that, so it is something we will consider and look at a web page. We obviously have the Avondale page within the Coillte website, we talked to them about getting that updated and do we bring it back to the main Coillte website.

RAY: Deborah doesn't know, but I have a meeting on Thursday with our communications director to talk exactly about this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, listen thank you very much indeed and we look

forward to when it finally opens, now we will receive notations.

>>. ...Joined by John Revel, he is the passenger services manager. We don't have a presentation here today, but we are happy to take any questions that you have and we will do our best to answer them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: I hear Irish Rail provides an important service to County Wicklow. At the moment as we all see, the N11 is very full whereas Irish Rail keeps the rail empty at rush hour, there only be two short trends. In comparison to this, Carlow which is on a single track and outside the Dublin area has three. Kilcoole, Wicklow Town Rathdrum and Arklow are all in the greater Wicklow area. So that should be impacting our rail service and we should be getting a better one than Carlow. Carlow is also a single track.

The most recent resulted in a 10% journey time, Greystones two minutes, Arklow, Wicklow nine minutes, Arklow 12, less reliable timekeeping and no extra trains. It seems to me that Irish Rail want people south of Bray Head to use the car. In Greystones, which is in the Metropolitan area An Bord Pleanála is doubling the houses allowed in our county development plan and will increase the population to well over 24,000 planned size. Irish Rail has no plan I have seen to improve the service south of Bray and that is why I wrote a plan myself to provide eight carriages from Arklow and 50% more to Greystones.

The latter idea has been shown to be feasible by a study so what is needed is an implementation of the plan that I produced, other continental railways, the deal with the issues, which are through the short platforms using technical means which Irish Rail has said it can't do here, but I think it should come up with a plan for it, if it doesn't agree with what I say and we need, the long-term implementation of the service which they specified. I understand these daunt fit the train, but they would fit on the earlier one, which would be 30 minutes later. N11 is jammed and we have to, a lot of that is due to the rail line being empty.

I would also like to see the 9.05 train from Wicklow, the third train in the morning but after rush hour stopping in Kilcoole which is already stopped at by the earlier two trains and there seems to be a complete lack of suggestion from Irish Rail of any improvements, though many are being promoted in Maynooth and Dundalk.

So it was always a long and short distance rail service. That is since its inception and space has to be kept on those to get into Dublin on rush hour. I don't accept that trains are, the dart trains from Bray to Howth should take up the whole track so there is no room for the Greystones and Arklow and general Wicklow train, so I think it's essential that the principle is established and that line should be improved for all trains, so I am pleased to hear what you say on this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I think Cllr Mitchell has summed up, there is a major problem in the south east, we have doubled in size, population wise, but yet I went back through the timetables, they don't

seem to have changed at all. There is two trains in the morning leaving Wicklow town, 6.30am and 7.30pm, packed to capacity at the moment and yet there doesn't seem to be any extra planning in bringing more commuters into the town.

As Cllr Mitchell has said the N11 is chock-a-block and you are talking to someone who enjoys rail, I travel around the country by rail a lot, but it's not a line I would enjoy using in the morning because it's standing room only. What we are seeing is the N11 chock-a-block and I can't wait to get Bus Eireann down here because I think they are going to be in for a lot of hard time.

SHORT BREAK

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you for that, I think Cllr brown have, with the commuting from the them, I have had three specific questions and I would appreciate your responses, I am wondering if consideration has been given to dart stops south of Greystones. This is a rapidly moving community and it would seem, a very minor extension of that, facilitating the station here and provided much-needed transport lanes Party for this area and take quite a considerable amount of cars off that N11 bottle neck.

My second question is we know that a provisional dart service is needed by commuters and I read, which was published earlier on this year and I know there are requirements to retain the service, but I would like to know if the Jacobs report, their six recommendations arising from that report and I would like to know if it could be accosted and if they are progressing these recommendations. My third question is it's really with regard the south and the NTA has included an enhancement of this line under the if it could be provided?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: I think most of my questions have been asked but an another one on the audit, but when is it planned, the plans been fully accessible, to have someone come along and wait and can that be sped up in any way, or, that would be great.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you to Jane and John for coming along. I do have some sympathy with yourselves and Irish Rail, I think we do, our housing strategy and our housing planning have not kept up with the infrastructure requirements and Irish Rail have not been funded to provide the services. I am just wondering, from the carriages perspective, we, I was talking to Hugh Cregan from the NTA and he was saying it would be four or five years, a carriage today, it was probably four or five years before we would see that in actual service, that a, I suppose a reasonable estimate and, I and when will they be delivered?

In relation to, we also spoke with yourselves a while back in the Greystones Municipal District and we were going to give some consideration for a loop and have you considered and what are the outcomes from that. In relation, also building on what Cllr Scott mentioned, are there plans to build any new stations or upgrade old stations, because there are stations that are on the Wicklow Wexford line that are obsolete at the moment and there to be an opportunity to open those up and at least to facilitate travel, what have you had, you will be aware there is a big upgrade being proposed at the moment for the N11?

I think one of the big risks is that this is seen in isolation of our transport solutions with the rail system and you are going to have to work in tandem, that really public transport is the only way we are going to relieve any of the pressure of car usage on the N11. Not only is that bus transport, but also our rail transport has to be absolutely upgraded and then specifically an issue for John. I have been in touch with you in relation to the Kilcoole train station about the possibility of getting a shelter there, CCTV and new carriage facilities because at the moment, the sort of lack of facilities in Kilcoole are preventing that station being used to its full.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you for coming down.

Jennifer Whitmore almost asked my question, but it's, so when we are looking to try and deal with the scenarios in terms of buses and cars and roads and trains, so I find myself wondering, is there a mechanism whereby at the higher levels there is a cohesive, or an opportunity for all the providers to have a conversation together, so if we are talking about the chaos of Wicklow, are you talking about it with other, with Bus Éireann or with TII level, so I am curious about, do those conversations happen at levels where a plan might materialise?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Welcome to the council meeting today to represent Iarnród Éireann. It's not that long ago that most of the councillors were on the door knocking, lock looking for votes and in Wicklow a lot of the housing estates, the biggest complaint I would have got, in that period is the lack of a service in Wicklow. I think there is a six trains going into Dublin every day, if you go north of Dublin, I think any trains coming in from outside, there is about 18 and 20 trains coming today. We are very much disadvantaged in that, is there any plans for extra carriages on the train in Wicklow? And if so, when will that be? The platform, if you need the extra carriages, would a platform be done and would that be done sooner rather than later, because if the plan is for extra carriages, the platform has to be lengthened, so we need do that now, Cllr O'Brien allude to getting from one side of the track to another, a lot of the others are using the train and recently I was out in the convent and a lot of older nuns were saying it was the main reason they didn't use the train.

Just a few minutes ago we had air pollution on our agenda and with Cllr O'Connor and if we had a proper rail service in Wicklow Town a lot of cars would be taken off the N11 which would be important for us for the traffic to flow freer into Dublin. Here in Wicklow town we need extra trains. The

carriages are packed in the morning time. It really is, I am sure you sent people down here to have a look at that. Just on another point, the greenway in Wicklow, we were looking from Wicklow to Greystones, there is a couple of pinchpoints along the track and have you looked into that, because if we could manage to get around that problem, as far as I know from Wicklow to Newcastle is not too bad, they have been there on to Greystones, is not great, if we did manage to get around that, I think we would have one of the best greenways in the country, I really would, so I would like to hear an answer that those questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I represent the Greystones Municipal District, on the 7th of January we had a meeting with yourself and you may have attended that morning along with representatives from Dublin Bus and a number of proposals were outlined and I am not going to go over what has already been said here, the issues facing commuters have been well-aired, particularly in the north of the county. A couple of issues that came up, the Dublin tracking, Cllr Whitmore referred to it, we were looking at the design, that was going through Bray for approval, under the Dart Expansion Plan. Another suggestion I had at the time was look at the option of bringing out the train on the evening before, to have an extra service during peak hours in the morning, then the 20-minute service, you are still under review and you were going to revisit the morning schedule, to maybe incorporate an extra, at least one extra train into that. But overall, looking at a Prime Time special on the commuting difficulties and the packed trains in the morning and your CEO made a statement at the end of that programme to say that the problem is, looks like it's going to get worse before it improves and you were actively looking at a situation where commuters will have to prebook their journey to work in the morning, so that is concerning. Anything that can be done to improve the service in the is welcome:

>>: I am.

CLLR CREAN: I would add about the train stations themselves and conditions and plans around resurfacing. I know the Greystones one in particular, there is a lot of floods, so just on that and then in relation to the cost, I know it's very expensive in Greystones and these were questions that were asked at that meeting on the 7th of January. So I would like to hear it as regards the charges.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: I just have a very quick question, has everyone as everyone has spoken about the transport situation in this part of the country is in dire straits at the moment. If you are a commuter you would know about it, the roads are blocked, there is a not enough trains, it's the perfect storm, it couldn't be any worse. I want you to know, do you ever sit down, go across the spectrum of service providers, with the NTA, with Bus Éireann, Iamród Éireann, the LUAS, whatever organisations are involved and sit down and actually look at this as a proper plan for the future. Or is everyone, just going along, doing their little bit, within their own spectrum without any regard for the bigger picture, because this is what needs to happen here, we need to have joined up thinking, we need to have everyone on board, we need to try and sort out these problems for the commuters, there is talk that the upgrade to the N11 won't even begin until 2027.

That is eight years away, so by that stage, how many more cars are going to be on the road, because there is not enough trains, there is not enough buses and people are and there is not enough jobs in our area, so I want to know, is there a broader picture you all take part in. Thank you.

So, just to start off with Cllr Mitchell, your issues and John will be going into it some more about the differences between getting into from Carlow as opposed to getting in from Wicklow. I suppose we would have challenges in the city centre that we would have more capacity in Houston for getting trains in in the morning, where as we have a bottle neck in Connolly where we are operating at maximum at the moment, so we are not in a position where we can get another train in there at the moment, but that will change as part of Dart Expansion.

As part of DART expansion we will have significant increases to capacity through the city centre and it looks like we will have another platform at Connolly and that will free up some space for extra services, but I suppose just to be clear on and this question is not just Cllr Mitchell's question, but a lot of people have this question about planning and DART expansion and where that, where we fit into that and I suppose just to be clear that we are, we are an operator, we operate and maintain the existing railway that we have and we are contracted to the NTA to do that. We are also contracted with the NTA for expansion projects but they were funded wholly by the NTA through the Exchequer for the likes of DART expansion and track renewals, if they happen. That all comes directly from the Exchequer, we are not self-funded, so I understand the NTA will be with you next month and they will be able to answer these questions, but specific to the Jacobs report, the Jacobs report was undertaken by the National Transport Authority, but it is, it was separate to, we weren't directly involved in that report, now the DART expansion project that is up to 2027 is funded under the National Development Plan that is currently not, a study into the feasibility of what was brought up in the Jacobs report, that is not funded in the funding for DART expansion. That is not to say that won't change, but as of now we don't have funding for that. So I would say that question might be best brought to the NTA. John will talk to you about the 41ICRs and what they will mean from a benefits perspective and so that is kind of really, if you want to take up more of those points, John.

JOHN: Thank you, for the opportunity to come today. As I listen to the questions and there must be 40 questions there, we will do our best to get down through them, there may be some areas to overlap. What does strike me is it's a pity that the NTA are not with us, such is the autonomy that they have in giving us some clear direction. I am a transport operator. It may appear and in some cases I am sure it does, I am also a daily commuter, I commute daily on a packed commuter train each morning and evening. I would love to see more effort put into an integrated transport planning approach, rather than commercial entities, such as Iarnród Éireann, such as Bus Éireann and the private bus operator, such as the Transdev and Dublin Bus looking at our commercial interests. I do see Iarnród Éireann as one of the plays are but not the player. We are part of a solution, but I wouldn't

profess, on any level to be the total solution to public transport, for the commuter. And this is spoken as a commuter.

Jane has spoken about the Jacobs Report. A very detailed report. The difficulty that Iarnród Éireann would have is our level of input into that report, so the report suggests a lot of things, a lot of very nice things, a lot of things that we would love to have and a lot of things that require funding and it just, from an Iarnród Éireann point of view, maybe not from an NTA point of view, but from an Iarnród Éireann point of view, it does pour a little bit of cold water on that. I am not going to say that I can hide behind my Chief Executive, but I am delighted that he is on record as saying things are going to get worse before they get better, but that probably requires a little bit of context. We haven't been able to increase our rolling stock fleet for many years.

Cllr Whitmore I think it was asked me about the length of time it takes from the time a carriage is ordered to the time that that particular carriage is caring people on our network. It's no secret, we have gotten some very good news for what we call the Rotem fleet or the 22,000 class fleet where we have gotten the go ahead at last. It's a pity we didn't get the go ahead three or four years ago, but we have gotten the go ahead to place an order for 41 intermediate cars. What will they do, they are intermediate trains, so they will really serve two purposes for it. The first purpose is to increase in length, the size of trains, so we have three carriage intercity rail cars, so three carriage, the intermediate car with increase that to four or five carriage and the same goes for the for our five cars, they can be increased to five carriage.

On some of our commuter trains that operate two other commuter lines were referenced, Maynooth and Dundalk. Some of the services that operate on those routes have, if you like, two small intercity rail cars combined to create six and seven cars, they can be separated into two trains and each of the small trains can have an addition and carriage put into it. That is the only short-term and by short-term I am talking a couple of years. Short term alleviation to what is a capacity issue that is not just affecting Wicklow, it affects all of our commuter routes although I will say, another councillor, forgive me from jumping from pillar to post, 20 years ago as a young ticket officer does closely resemble what it was 20 years, with one exception a 4.30 service from Connolly station. So with the additional carriages we do see additional capacity, now, I think we are on public record somewhere, Jane of saying that it's confined to the greater Dublin area and focus will be on Maynooth line and the Northern Line, but the way our train sets operate they operate across four or five commuter lines. So trains aren't dedicated to Maynooth or Dundalk, Carlow is also a commuter station that is under my remit and indeed the Wicklow route, so the train sets themselves are interchangeable across the commuter routes we operate. So I do expect to see additional capacity. The bad news is that I don't see that additional capacity coming for a couple of years. It's not four to five years, two to three is not unreasonable and what we have done with the intercity rail cars is because we have the car, because we have the train sets themselves, we do

benefit from not having to start or go back to the drawing board, we can, if you like have the carriages made to the specification that is there today, I am not going to suggest that it's plug and play, but we are not starting from scratch in the sense that it's, we envisage it to be a relatively more straightforward prospect to lengthen our train and we can do that quickly, but that is a couple of years away. Eight carriage trains from Arklow, all stuff from the Jacobs report, not without its difficulty if you are working in the commission for rail regulation, there are some platforms, Rathdrum comes to mind, in terms of platform lengths and yes, there are technical solutions to overcome, trains that are longer perhaps than the platforms themselves, but again those types of solutions are not cheap, they are not easily got, they are not funded and as I say, the short-term strategy is to elongate the trains that are there.

There was a request from the morning Rosslare service happening at Rathcoole. I had a review of the timetable. I don't see that being a big ask, if you take a look that the I will take a head count on the particular train. This is our biggest quarter, if you like. It's and I think there is an opportunity, if we treat it like stations that are there, the equivalent would be gropes, the next station out where we have put, we have put stops in on these stations, I think Kilcoole, probably it's high time we took a look at offering a different service to Kilcoole and maybe even something at the weekend, with the exception of one early morning service out of Kilcoole, we don't do anything on Saturday or Sunday, so we are not even providing the opportunity for people to travel and I think that we should take a fresh look at that. Let me see, there is a lot of reference made to the housing developments. It's not our area, it's not our area, but what I will say is that I don't believe that Iamród Éireann, as a potential stakeholder, a public transport provider is consulted in relation to whether we are in a position to put on additional services to cater for the extra houses that are being built, not unusual by the way, we have the same problems in north Kildare and elsewhere. I agree in terms of not a good enough level of service, I like to think that we can do more, but in the short-term, I am not going to say that we are in a position to do more, we are simply not. We are placing I won't say all of our eggs in one basket, but certainly the short-term eggs are going into the additional 41 cars.

Investment in stations, again the absence of a lift, it's funny, if I was in a chamber in north Dublin they would tell me I don't manage the lifts at all and they would prefer ramps instead of lifts. But significant infrastructure and again there is an opportunity missed by not being sat here with the NTA, who fund a lot of our changes to infrastructure, so I am not able to, we don't have plans, if you were to take Rathdrum, if you were to take places down what I would call the DSE, there aren't plans to install lifts, at those stations.

There was, Cllr Scott, I wasn't familiar with the location, but there was a question asked about are we considering a station south of Greystones, sounded like Charlesland.

CLLR SCOTT: Charlesland.

JOHN: I wasn't familiar with it, I don't know the area, I know Greystones, I used to live in Greystones, but I don't know Charlesland, but I do know that we don't have plans under our NDP or any other forum to develop either a new station or indeed to bring back to life stations that may have existed at a point in time. It's not in our job jar and it's not catered for, Jane, I look at you.

JANE: The only other new station under NDP is at Woodbrook, it's north of Bray, it's the only one that is planned, that is not to say that in the future that might change, but up to 2027, there is no plan for that.

JOHN: In terms of the network being fully accessible, I look at the development of LUAS with envy. Our chairman had a strong hand in the development of the LUAS network which was fully accessible from the start. Regrettably we are a Victorian railway and we aren't fully accessible. Councillor, it is something that I would, I am quite passionate about the need to provide access for all of our passengers I would have had a strong hand in reducing the notice period from 24 hours to four hours, particularly for DART and commuter, but I don't envisage us being a fully accessible network any time soon.

What I do see for our Rosslare trains which do call at Wicklow and Arklow and Greystones and hopefully Kilcoole in the not too distant future is we do provide an onboard staff member who can help with and assist with those with accessibility needs, but in terms of changes to the infrastructure, there isn't a short-term win there I am afraid. Cllr Whitmore, the timeframe, two to three years.

JANE: Just to clarify on that, I think maybe you have been speaking about to Hugh Cregan about the larger order, so there is a larger order for electric multiple units and possibly battery electrics so they are DARTs and they run under wires but that is a whole new order so the tender process is under way at the moment, we anticipate that we will place an order at quarter 4 of next year and that the first of those carriages would be 2024 before they will be in, but again we will be looking. That has to happen in tandem with the wires going up for the electrification, so when that happens there will be benefits to Bray as well, because we will be able to run more frequent service, but the Greystones service is a lot more challenge because of the infrastructure upgrades that would be needed on that, it would be significant. I know there is, within the Jacobs report there is a plan about the long loop in Greystones, but again that is not costed at present, but providing a more frequent service other than that, it would be challenging given the tunnels that are there at Bray Head.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: I would like to throw in, not related to commuting but the car park system you are operating, in Arklow, this time last year, there was a charity concert in the church and on a Sunday afternoon, people coming out from the concert were all ticketed, were clamped, sorry they were all clamped and it was a huge issue. I would like to highlight that it was very unfair, I don't believe anyone got a refund and didn't get any sympathy from the operator of the car park system, you should, perhaps on Sundays look at not charges because people at the church like to be able to use it and can't use it because it's €4 minimum charge to go in for an hour, it's unfair and I

would like you to look at that, the way you operate that.

JOHN: If I can deal with that query quickly because I was only halfway through the list. We do have examples, councillor, for things like events or local community initiatives where we are asked to give up car parking space as a means or a mechanism to support such events. We are not bad at doing that, we need to know about them in advance, in which case we make the car park free of charge and we direct the clamping, or the car park operator to say, no, no, not today. We are given a pass for that, for things like events and.

CLLR BOURKE: Can you pass those details to the Arklow Municipal District office?

JOHN: I am not sure we will do it every week, but you get the picture. If there is an event in the community, I like to think we are good neighbours and we can make, it's not that we can make a contribution perhaps to the event, but we can by offering up free car parking, I do it with my own local station.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You said you were halfway through your list, so if you want to go on.

JOHN: I am sticking with Cllr Whitmore for a moment. We had been in discussion with Kilcoole train station and indeed it has come up a couple of times as well. Yes, high time Kilcoole benefitted from things like a ticket vending machine, I am going to call it standard platform furniture, you know, what I mean in terms of shelter and things like that. I have looked into the prospect of extending the car park, because it's a narrow type car park, it's not fit for purpose. We are not a landowner in the area. Sometimes our holding company, CIE benefits from holding adjacent land, we don't own land at Kilcoole, so the prospect of extending the platform isn't going to be an easy one for us but I have said to you, we will take a look at the platform itself and a vending machine and tag on, tag off, I have commented on integrated transport.

One thing I will say for events, such as the papal visit last summer, the NTA demonstrated, it does have the where with all to bring transport operators together and come up with a co-ordinated plan across various modes of transport, we are just not where we would like to be in terms of everyday planning in terms of integration.

CLLR WHITMORE: Have you been specifically spoken to in relation to the N11 proposals at the moment?

JOHN: I got it. Not anything I am part of. We are dealing with councils and external stakeholder all the time, but that type of initiative would come in under the director for ENDP, I speak with him quite a lot, it has never, it has never really come up. I would have spoken to him about the status of the Jacobs report, prior to coming along here, so the N11 isn't featuring heavily in our plan, that doesn't mean it shouldn't, but I am not aware of momentum.

JANE: We are there to execute the plans by don't create the plans so I would imagine that the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland they would be speaking on that and making sure there is a cohesive plan, but and a number of can councillors have asked that question, if we

have cohesive planning between all the different transport operator, I suppose that is the role of the NTA to provide a cohesive plan and they work with the roads operators on that, the National Transport Authority looks after all of the transport operators, Cllr Walsh was mentioning about our CEO being on the Prime Time.

Now there was a little bit of confusion around this. I think what he was referring to about having reservation only trains was at times that were particularly busy, so we do that at present, if there is a big GAA match on, if there is a big concert on, it will be reservation only, but there is no suggestion that any commuter services would have any sort of reservation, I mean it wouldn't work, nature of commuting is you turn up and go, you go at different times every day, there would be no suggestion of anything like that for commuter, what he is referring to there is particularly busy days, during the GAA season, during the Six Nations, things like that, it's nothing do with commuters having to reserve a seat every day. That is what he meant, but it may have come across unclear on that.

JOHN: In relation to Greystones train station, I can take a look at the surface condition of the platform, particularly if there is ponding and flooding and this sort of stuff. But, I was talking with the local tidy towns there and I have asked these guys if they wouldn't be against, to some effect taking over the station building per se and something for the local community. There are some discussions there, but they are at an early stage and the same group are interested in working with us to make feature of the train station in terms of hedging and putting up portraits of people who were local to Greystones and then I have integration of transport, I think I have come to the end of the list.

JANE: Just councillor, I think it was Cllr Dunne had a query about the greenway we can't answer it here, we would know enough information about it but our colleagues in CIE property would look after license property in greenways but we are positively disposed towards them. We have them all over the country, we facilitate the likes of the great southern trail and the greenway between Athlone and Mullingar, our property department, if you want to send them on email and if they can help in any way, it's feasible for them to do so they will.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you. I would like to say I am not clear from your reply about the 41 rail cars which have recently been ordered. If they are going to come on the Wicklow line or not and my understanding was it would, they may not fit on the second morning train, but that they would fit on the first morning train, which is quite early.

Second, I am disturbed by what you said about the Jacobs report, I was in the planning in 2018 which had the concept of partially double tracking the line, without tunnelling around Bray Head and getting extra trains on with that now, Irish Rail took no interest whatsoever in that. I got a letter back from the Chief Executive which said: "*Thank you for your interest.*"

The NTA fortunately, and to their credit, took this up to engage Jacobs to see what I had put down would be feasible and whether it would produce

50% more trains and unfortunately they did that probably without Irish Rail because they had no interest in seeing more trains could be produced and that is why they went ahead and did it without them and myself and the Hugh Cregan took the DART and were to take it with the consultant doing the report, whose flight was cancelled, just to look at the thing, but I really feel that Irish Rail should have a lot more interest in providing a better service and it's, from what you are saying there, it sounds as if Irish Rail is resisting this report, I know there are complications in it, on speeds and some other issues, but they are identified in the report and I think that from what I hear from you is that Irish Rail is resisting doing it.

We need Irish Rail to want to provide a better service to Greystones, but also as far down as Arklow and Gorey, you need to produce a plan as to how you want to do that. Not to say no or even say thank you for your interest when other people have produced some plans or, indeed it seems to me that you are resisting what the NTA wants to do. That is not good enough for Irish railways you should be promoting a plan, produce the plan and then it's up to the NTA and the politicians to find the money to do it.

This plan, which the partial double tracking doesn't need tunnelling and that is one of the concepts behind what they want do is not to go to the expansion of tunnelling and we need some enthusiasm from Irish Rail, eight carriage trains are provided all over France and Germany and this is a normal thing and they go into platforms which are not eight carriages long and they are dealt with by splitting the carriages, this a normal operating thing in other countries and we need Irish Rail to produce a plan for the Wicklow rail line, what are you going to do and what are you going to get into trains to make it work on this line and do a better service.

JANE: I am sorry if we misled you, we are enthusiastic as providing as much service as we can. We are not resisting this plan, but what I was saying is we can't fund this ourselves and the report, the Jacobs report it needs more detail design, it needs more detailed engineering input and this was something that if we are instructed and advised to do that by the NTA we will be by all means do it, but we don't have funding for it at the moment.

That is not to say that that funding won't become available but it's a matter for the NTA, we can't comment on that, but absolutely, if the NTA want us to do that report, we will do that report if we are funded to do it and if we are funded to make the improvements, we would be delighted, it would make John's and my job much easier if we had more services to provide, so it's incorrect to say we are resisting it, it's just that we are constrained, obviously it's not within the DART expansion plan within the NDA at the moment, that is not to say that will not change, but that is a matter for the NTA next month.

JOHN: I wouldn't underestimate we enjoy a productive working relationship with Hugh Cregan, the fleet strategy which has been developed for Iarnród Éireann has been developed in conjunction with Hugh Cregan and we are well-used to working with Jacobs and Hugh and it's a positive relationship and forgive me if you felt we were resisting.

Far from it. If you take initiatives such as the ten-minute DART that was my delivery, Sligo route going from tree services to weight services, that is my delivery, a half hour frequent service, that is my delivery, it is a very sore point, personally as a transport operator that the infrastructure is so restrictive south of Bray that I can't deliver like I have delivered elsewhere. So far from resisting, everywhere I go, councillor I do my best to grow the business with what we have. So just to clarify that.

The additional carriages will end up on Gorey commuter or Rosslare because the trains are interchangeable, so it's not just the train sets that operate out of Gorey taking into account Wicklow and so on and so forth are confined to that. But there is no, that will have no impact on the 29,000DMU, they are in fixed four-car consistent, or fixed eight-car consistent. Regrettably, because I remember a time when 14 carriage trains used to operate down to Rosslare, regrettably it was a different time in terms of safety. Selective door opening is a feature on rolling stock, it's also helpful if it's added from manufacturer to selectively apply it almost makes it prohibitive in terms of cost.

You had suggested moving the departure time, I am not against that, but it is already a very busy train and if the will of people who use the train on a daily basis, if that is seen as good suggestion we can look favourably on that. That is in recent years how we have developed our timetables and I would be the first to admit, in fact I have acknowledged to the councillor to my right that we haven't done anything to enhance the service south of Greystones.

A double track between Bray and Greystones that is a different railway for me and I would love to see it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: I will be quick you have been answering a lot of questions. What I am guessing is there will be minimal improvements and they will really only serve to play catch up rather than any real forward improvements, particularly in light of any future growth in the county. It seems to me when I look at other commuter counties that they get a lot more investment than Wicklow gets and I do find it frustrating that whilst there is half a billion funding for road improvements in the west of Ireland recently, Wicklow hasn't seen any real investment in public transport and that is where our money should be going. I think you are stuck in middle you like to see a better service but the money isn't coming down to the line. What are your suggestions? How can we make it better?

You are on the coal face, you want to see improvements and you are being held responsible for a lack of investment which is not being made. How with can he work with yourselves and other stakeholders to make improvements and get something done on this? Because, you know, even if we start now, there is going to be a five-ten year, even if billions was put into it now, there would be such a long lead-in time, so how can we start that process, because I don't think it's been started to date.

JANE: I spent three hours in a council chamber in Mayo and they wouldn't

think they are getting an easy deal of it either. I suppose that is a big question and it is true that we have suffered from underinvestment for the last ten years, but I suppose we are not alone in that. I mean the country just didn't have the money to spend and the current National Development Plan I would agree with you, it doesn't really serve Wicklow in the most, in a large way, but I do think that this Jacobs report and if we are to go ahead and do a more detailed design report on that and if that was to be funded, I think it would provide some, particularly to Greystones, it would provide additional services and improve services.

South of Greystones, I would be guided by you, John, on that, it's just, I suppose the geography is so challenge to work on. You will see the last couple of weeks where we had costal works between Bray and Greystones, we have to have people in on harnesses, also the Murrough is suffering from coastal erosion, the environment is our enemy, because it's very challenging for you, but maybe John will have more insight on that.

JOHN: There is a huge constraint, what we refer to as crack capacity is pretty much maxed out. That is where a long loop or second track would allow us to put more trains between Bray and Greystones. South of that, when you come north of Bray, such is the frequency of service, it's not all plain sailing into the city, there is high levels of crossings and we have to manage our frequency carefully to ensure we are not clogging up traffic further in the N11 as well.

But from a service offering point of view, we are really offering up something quite modest in terms of taking a look at a service to Kilcoole for weekends. But in some ways that is how a lot of our services start. They start, they start small and then a demand develops and then a voice for that demand cries out. Cllr Mitchell there, obviously enjoys a good relationship with Hugh Cregan, a lot of what happens is based, I won't put words in your mouth, I won't put words in your mouth, councillor, but I the strength helps. Not and wear in mind they are completing with north Kildare and county Dublin in terms of where houses are being built. I don't think it would take a rocket scientist to exam our timetables and see how service patterns have grown elsewhere and haven't grown elsewhere.

There are two choices: In the absence of infrastructural changes between Bray or Greystones, Greystones beings an interchange, so they run it from Bray to Greystones for commuters to transfer on to the DART, which is not always popular. It might be different in Greystones on a wet, cold breezy morning. But, if commuters tend to like to and rightly so, stay on the train from destination A to B, but putting more physical train sets between Greystones and Bray is next to near impossible at the moment and it's a huge constraint on us I am afraid.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, are for answering the questions as honestly as you could. I think it's fair to say we do need funding and we do need investment in the rail network on the east coast and probably a second track, would be ideal if we could get one. I suppose my question, I think Cllr Mitchell and Cllr O'Brien asked them earlier on, so my question is slightly different. I come from Rathdrum and we have a train station in Rathdrum

and we are 45 years looking to get new lighting on the road in Rathdrum and thanks to the council they are putting in 26 new lights on the road.

We have planning permission, there is over 200 planning permissions being granted for over 200 houses, there is another 50 or 200 in the pipeline and one of the major selling points of Rathdrum is the train station, we make no apologies for that, we are delighted to have the only inland train station on the east coast, but what we don't have is public lighting down to the train station from the corner, it's not adequate and it's not working most of the time and we are only talking about three or four lights and I am wondering is it possible that a few pennies could be found somewhere to put in those lights.

JANE: If it's Iamród Éireann I will come back to you on it separately. This time of year isn't a bad time of the year. If we can do that, it seems like a simple request and we will come back to you on that separately.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Jane and John, thank you very much. Just before you leave, can I just say that in 1983, which is 36 years ago, I was on the Irish Rail commuter passenger group from Wicklow Town asking for rail improvements at that stage we had two morning trains and 36 years later we have two morning trains and I know you haven't had investment for the last ten years but 36 years nothing has changed. The Jacobs report is the first report that has come up with a plan to produce the possibility of a better service and I think Cllr Mitchell has to be commended for putting all of that time and effort in himself to actually come up with something that gave a working framework to try and produce a better service. We will certainly be making representations but you need to go back to the NTA from this meeting and I am delighted to hear from you that they are coming next month, I didn't know that.

Well the month after then. I want you to go back and tell them you are looking for the funding to see if this is viable, because there is no other answer in 36 years there has been no other answer and we cannot let Wicklow, the train, fall into the track into the sea and if we manage to save the track and not let it fall into the sea, we cannot let it be that we have no additional trains in 36 years. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are going to look at item 10. 10 the update on the Comhairle na nÓg, the projects. So we will have Tristan McAll.

CAPTIONS WILL RESUME AFTER THE SHORT BREAK

TRISTAN: So we decided that, we took all of this information on board and we decided that we would create the youth attitude towards drug survey, so I am going to run you through the how, the why and the what of this survey. So, I think if I am not mistaken, you all have a copy of it, feel free to browse through that whilst I am going on. So what? With the feedback we got we understood that drugs and the like were a major concern for the youth in our society today. And we decided as the Comhairle na nÓg, it was our job to enable them in tackling this way any way we could. We decided, and we decided on the youth attitude survey, so the survey, to be specific is not asking what drugs you are taking and what drugs you take specifically, what

we wanted to know was the attitude of the youth towards drugs. So we have designed a 16 question survey which you can all read that has, we are intending to roll out across the county and the survey is in print form as you all have and it's also on line to promote use of access and also help the environment, something that is very important to the youth of today. We aim to survey a minimum of 1,000 young people between 12 and 18 years of age and our main groups to get this out will be youth organisations and schools and what not. We intend to survey young people from each Municipal District and each town, so as to get clear concise information for each of the individual Municipal Districts so they can tackle these problems and get accurate information to their own areas, with which to tackle the problem head on and we intend to present these results to yourselves and other relevant stakeholders once we have them. So the feedback at our AGM was why we chose to tackle this, it feels like it could be involved in the prevention work and myself and Cllr Dermot recently presented at the Bray Drugs Awareness Forum I am not sure if anyone else was there, how did you think we did? Good.

>>: Fantastic.

>>: Good to get food feedback, we presented our findings, our finding thus far, we have yet to finish the survey, but our intentions there were to network with all of the organisations that had an interest in tackling the drugs such as the Gardaí and youth officers and our aim with this survey is to provide accurate information about the drugs because they want to steer people away from drugs but if they don't have the attitudes of the youth towards drugs it will be difficult for them to shape their opinions and give them it's information they need and we intend to provide it. We want to state that Comhairle na nÓg is not the provider, but we intend to play a supporting role to those who are, such as the Gardaí and relevant stakeholders.

So we have some quotes from people who have taken the survey that I would like to read out to you. Drug use is now as common as alcohol in the social lives of youth in Ireland and speaking of someone who attends the occasional social gathering I can say that it's absolutely the case, you as quick see a bag of cans as you do a bag of hash, they are very much intertwined in a youth culture at present and it's something that we really do need to tackle drastic law is, the majority of dealers I know are under 18, academic, from good families who are successful but need money, it's not just the stereotype, often times in the media and in the news, drug dealers are portrayed as these scary individuals who come from lesser socio-economic backgrounds, but often that is not the case.

It's interesting, as the youth we are aware of who the dealers are, we are the in crowd in this regard and for that reason, the information that the youth have is invaluable to the likes of the Gardaí for tackling that bias and aiding them in a, in analysing the data they have. There should be more educational programmes to warn young people about the dangers of all substance abuse, alcohol included, so once again it speaks for itself. The youth are aware of what drugs are, but the specifics of the effects are very hit and miss in terms of concrete information we find and we are hoping that

this information can go on to the relevant sources and they will know what they need to do to help the youth.

So what is next for the survey? We intend to distribute the survey in physical form and online as already stated. We will gather and input the data from the service and produce a report which will highlight the key issues and, as I said, we intend to distribute specific and concise information to each of the Municipal Districts individually so they can have clear concise information as to tackle the issues locally. I will pass you back on to Lynn thank you very much.

LYNN: Then just to finish off, what is next for Comhairle na nÓg this year and next year. Once we publish the reports we will work on the issues that came out of the Youth Summit and prioritise an area of work which can have a positive impact in young people in county Wicklow. Another big goal we have for effect year is to organise an event gathering all three councils, so the older person's council, the youth council and the County Council. So we will focus on one topic that is relevant to people, of all ages in county Wicklow, like transport, we would have three councils and one voice, so we think that could be a really powerful and interesting event that could create some really interesting ideas and suggestions, so thank you for listening.

[APPLAUSE]

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I just say to both of you, having sat through the Irish Rail one, you know what you are in for transport as a topic. Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you to Lynn and Tristan for the presentation. I know we met last three or four years ago, members of Comhairle na nÓg addressed us here when you were preparing the survey on mental health and you came back with the results of that survey which were most helpful and enlightening in efforts to address that terrible problem. You are quite right in what you have chosen now as this topic for the next survey on drugs and one of the questions there, I see it here in, I think it's question number 14, experimenting with drugs is part of growing up, that is, that in itself is alarming. The peer pressure? What is it?

You identified the profile of the drug dealers, it's common knowledge now, every town and village in this country is awash with drugs and it's a huge problem we face. I know the youth have been particularly active in the climate action campaign and you have to be commended on that, but on a micro level this is as important for every town and village. I was alarmed to read a headline in one of the national papers during the summer, around the time of the concerts and the open air concerts, bad batch in circulation, I think there were a number of deaths, but it's as if to say, there is such a thing as a good batch, so the message has to get out there to, to anyone experimenting with these substances, it's Russian roulette, I commend this to you and I look forward to the results of the survey.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McManus.

CLLR McMANUS: I want to say a big well done, I can imagine the nerves were bubbling and you had to wait and listen to us talk.

TRISTAN: After Iarnród Éireann, I think we were doing particularly well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think so too.

CLLR McMANUS: I want to say a big go raibh maith agat. To get a

presentation like this lifts my spirits and is very inspiring. My message is don't undervalue the impact of your work, it's really valuable and it takes real bravery to stand amongst your peers to say I am with you guys but we have a problem here and here is what we are doing about it, to kind of manage that relationship that you are doing so well and then to come out here and meet all of these councillors and be part of this and to try and navigate that world, that takes real courage and I want to commend you guys and the rest of the council, if you will pass it on for me.

The stuff you are doing should be informing our work. I was so lucky, while I was never on Comhairle na nÓg, while I was a young person I was involved here it's helped me so much in this reel, what I want to do is I hope to see you guys coming in and sitting here in the future and your voice will be so valued so well done.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you very much for coming in, really interesting and it's great to see the progress you are take making. My son turns 13 today and this has frightened the life out of me, it's great you are doing it, because you are the only people who could get a valid response from teenagers as to what drugs they are using and what exposure they have and I really look forward in terror probably of what the results will be, but I think it's very important that you are doing that work and that you feed that back, both into us and the local guards, so I would like to say well done and look forward to hearing from you again.

TRISTAN: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: I am going to do something different now, usually they know how much I am in awe of them so I am going to take the opportunity to pay tribute and to give recognition to beyond the members of Comhairle na nÓg, there is the Department director, Michael Nicholson's, Comhairle na nÓg can do its thing and roll over and do great stuff and be left to its own devices but I think this County Council plays a different role and that is very significant, I think to the output and the outcomes of Comhairle na nÓg.

So we have Deirdre Whitfield, but I think some people before have played a proactive role in inviting them to engage in what the County Council is doing. We see that with members here who invite Comhairle na nÓg to nominate a rep to the SPC to contribute to the strategies and development plans and that is something that isn't accidental or incidental, and I think it's, even for the young people in Comhairle na nÓg, that also elevates their sense of value and importance, so as much as I am in awe of them, every time I get to spend a chaotic evening with them I really am proud of how this County Council manages its Comhairle na nÓg and really gets very significant outcomes from it. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cronin.

CLLR CRONIN: I just want to say well done on that presentation. I have to say you both spoke very well, I think some of us in here probably still get nervous every now and again speaking in front of everyone, but I have to say you didn't seem to have any nerves today so well done, it's a very hard thing to do, to get up there and speak in front of everyone, so

congratulations. You are doing fantastic work, drugs is obviously a massive issue, unfortunately it seems to be younger and younger kids are getting involved.

I think awareness campaigns for younger people, but I think also for their parents, for them to realise that that is actually a huge issue and I think we need to get parents involved and the driving force has to be younger people, because you see on the ground what is going on, within your peers, in school, in social settings you know what is going on, so well done, keep up the good work and hopefully we will see you here in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Standing orders. Cllr Whitmore.

CLLR WHITMORE: Thank you very much. I was just sought a suspension of standing orders and it was seconded by Cllr O'Brien, just in relation to St Joseph's dementia healthcare facility in Shankill. I think everyone is aware of the situation at St Joseph's at the moment.

There was an expectation that its funding issues that it was facing would be resolved at this stage, a number of weeks ago they had stated that they were going to have to close their doors after Christmas and it turns out over the weekend they have told any future residents they would be not able to enrolled or attend the facility.

I personally, my father had dementia before he passed, my father-in-law has Alzheimer's and so I absolutely understand the importance of a facility like this to the residents and to the families and I also know that any level of stress in the life of a person with dementia can set them back so much and I would imagine that the stress that those families are going under at the moment is causing incredible concern and upset to them.

So, my understanding is that there is discussions ongoing at the moment. I would actually ask that the council write to the minister and in light of the importance of this facility to, particularly to a number of families in the north Wicklow area, that the minister would ensure that there is interim funding provided to this facility, so that it doesn't have to close its doors after Christmas and that would enable a bit of breathing space to allow the continuation of a sustainable funding discussion to happen. We cannot allow this facility to close, Minister Harris a number of weeks ago said he would not allow this facility to close and we need to make sure that that happens. So that is my proposal, Chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I submitted a request for a suspension of standing orders and seconded by Cllr Mary Kavanagh last night. I did so because of the widespread concern that is shared by everyone in this county whether they have a relative in that facility or not, the concern they would have about the fragility and the vulnerability of those patients and indeed the stress that their families have been put under in the last six weeks.

Now, Cllr Gerry O'Neill and Cllr Patsy Glennon, who isn't here at the moment and myself and I am not sure were there, yourself, now at the last meeting

or not, but at the HSE forum we brought up this question about the threat to Crinken and St Joseph's and that the occasion, the HSE said they were going to enter discussion with the St John of Gods and at Crinken and they were hoping to reach a resolution and the statement that was issued over the weekend has indicated that the HSE is going to continue their day care services.

Now the National Treatment Purchase Fund apparently are a law into themselves, they can agree a certain amount of funding with a facility such as this or reduce it or basically, what it seems to be the case, allow a service to just terminate. And the question I would support what Cllr Whitmore has said we should write to the minister for health, but we should include in that letter, who does he control in this situation? Has he any control over it? He is the minister for health, you would imagine he should be able to control everything that happens. The NTP, the National Treatment Purchase Fund gets funding from the state, so I cannot see how they can be allowed to stall this particular agreement.

The HSE seem to be doing their bit, it's this other organisation which is being funded by Government and I would ask if we are writing that we include a reference to the National Treatment Purchase Fund but there is no doubt in my mind the news that came out yesterday was stressful for those families and given that the minister of health, as Councillor Whitmore said gave a solid, cast iron guarantee that this will service will not be allowed to close, he has taken on a major responsibility now and it will be up to him to ensure that that promise is kept and I am sure that all of us as member was the council will see to it that he keeps that promise.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: I was really upset to hear about this, I listened to a number of interviews on the radio recently between east coast and some of the members of staff of St Joseph's and what came across more than anything is how much at the cutting-edge of dementia care that St Joseph's is, apparently it is a leading light, not only in Ireland, but across the world and it's now being held up as an example of how people in dementia care should be looked after and the therapies that are involved and the success rate is so good that people have even gone from stage 3 diagnosis to stage 1 after a number of months in care in St Joseph's, because of the techniques and the therapies they employ, so to lose this, to lose something that is such a leading light in this area, which is growing because our population is growing and the number of people who will be using dementia care services in future is also growing.

There is 60 residents, 300 people on the waiting list to go in there, there is 100 members of staff. We can't let it go, we can't let it go without a fight. We were given assurances by the minister for health that it would be kept open. We have to ensure that he sticks to his word and that it is kept open and the funding has to be found somewhere, we can find money all over the place for spurious types of spending, so we need to find something to save something that is as important as St Joseph's.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just in support of what the other speakers have said I had the opportunity to visit St Joseph's recently and meet with the staff there and the residents there and I think Cllr Behan has outlined a very important point, because there is actually two issues going on here, so there is the day service funding provided by the HSE, which, as Cllr Behan has indicated, I think minister Harris has been working on that and that may be sorted, the other issue is the National Treatment Purchase Fund and that is a massive issue for St Joseph's and it's actually a massive issue for a lot of other providers, because the level of funding being provided to voluntary funding, compared to the public bodies is staggering in the difference and I think there is a fundamental issue there that probably needs a lot more looking into on top of obviously the St Joseph's issue which is really important right now. I would like to see us get some clarity on St Joseph's here to this council, so we can know exactly what is going on. The current residents there, I understand aren't going to be removed from St Joseph's, but there is a serious waiting list to get into there and families are really struggling to I think it is really important.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, again I want to support Cllr Behan's motion on St Joseph's and he was correct there, it was discussed at the last forum meeting. I want to zoom in on the discussion of these forum meetings I attend, as you know, Cathaoirleach, you were a member of the forum yourself for quite some time and I have been there for five years and on motions like that, whether it be there or another hospital, on whatever side of the hills we have full support from 40 councillors on these forum, on the regional forum and the HSE officials actually, they are in full agreement with a lot of these motions but where does it go from there? It's kind of a bit of a joke really. We had Simon Harris in Blessington again two nights ago for a photo opportunity job, he came out six months ago and he said he was going to build a swimming pool in Blessington within a year, he has a year-and-a-half left and he hasn't got a site. I think he is not responsible. The sooner he take his job in a responsible issue the better.

These are life and death issues we are talking about and within, we can criticise the HSE until the cows come home, but in fact when you are at these meetings and you see how sincere the councillors are and HSE officials on lots of issue, after that, where is the link up between the HSE and the boss man, I don't think he gives a fiddlers about these issues. It seems to me more interested in getting his face in front of a camera. We had him here a while ago he was going to unveil a water tank, an eight-year-old water tank we got in Baltinglass that we got from Kildare County Council.

I would love to see the issues we have in Wicklow and West Wicklow more serious. I fully agree with the frustration of Cllr Behan, he was on the forum a couple of months, but you can already see the issues there. We brought forward a major issue there as regards the drugs and we have huge support within the HSE on our concerns and we hope to bring it to a full council meeting, our concerns and maybe another way of approaching the drug business in Ireland, but it's just pure frustration and I want to absolutely agree with Cllr Behan that I don't know where we are going, that answers

like St Joseph's or whether it's Crookhaven, there is no feedback from the man at all. You know.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Crean.

CLLR CREAN: I will be very brief, I am conscious of the time. I have worked in dementia policy for many years so I could talk on this for a long time, but very briefly, I totally support Cllr Whitmore and Cllr Behan's motion, I think before the general or the local elections there the Alzheimer's Society were calling on candidates to be champions of rights and services of people with dementia and carers.

This was a practical issue we could support them. In fairness to the minister he is the first minister who gave funding for dementia advisors so I would disagree he hasn't been active on the issue, I think there is commitment there, it is actually the National Treatment Fund there is issues around who, accountability and getting to the root of the issue, so that is probably where the focus needs to go, so than the minister, he has given his commitment and the real significant thing about St Joseph's is its dementia specific, the services there, where as the majority of services that people with dementia have to access are not dementia specific, so I think for that reason alone, it's really important that we support that service arriving and I think it's something like 41 services you need at a minimum in a county to really support people with dementia, we have about 13 them so to lose the support in St Joseph's would be bad for this county and wouldn't do people with dementia or other carers any service. Certainly I would support the motion and love to see action on this.

CLLR BOURKE: I think it's unfair for Cllr O'Brien to be excoriating the minister, he was a very successful member of this chamber for years before he was a member of the Dail and I don't think he would like it, if he wasn't here to defend himself.

CLLR O'NEILL: He has promised a swimming pool there.

CLLR BOURKE: If he was here to defend himself it would be fair but when he is not unfair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are talking about St Joseph's in Shankill. So.

ADMINISTRATOR: Thank you, we have the gist of your motion, Cllr Whitmore, if you wouldn't mind sending me an email, if you want to email me whatever reference, you want, Cllr Behan.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are people in agreement with that? Yes. Good. Okay, we are going to defer the update on county Wicklow Age Friendly Strategy until the January meeting and then so item 11 to adopt the Wicklow, the draft Wicklow County Council Corporate Plan. The Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. It is the corporate plan is the road map that will guide us over the next five years in terms of the priorities. There is four main categories, climate change and biodiversity, housing and community, economic development, planning and infrastructure and the final one, organisational development and financial matters.

So set out all the high level goals there, that will then each year feed into an Annual Service Delivery Plan, it will feed into our capital plan, which will be coming early in the new year, our budget for the subsequent year, the Annual Report, the Chief Executive management report, it will be examined

clearly by them and we have been happy their previous corporate plans a it will be reviewed on a continuous basis, but those are the high level actions and they will fit in each year to an Annual Service Delivery Plan. If people want to add anything in between now and the end of the week let us know.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Has anyone any questions? Okay can I have a proposer.

ADMINISTRATOR: It is a reserve function. Cllr Bourke.

COLM: Can I ask a question about the review process? How is that undertaken?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Well, NOAK will undertake it.

CLLR BEHAN: Undertaken by us. Are we going to review this again?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Well we have to adopt it today, if we can.

CLLR BEHAN: Right.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The review, as I say will be done. The way it's set out is the way we will set out the Chief Executive's monthly report. We will then have the Annual Service Delivery Plan which will come towards the councillors so we will be reviewing the process on a year by year basis and a month by month basis. We hope to have that consistent with the all on delivery plan consistent with how it's set out here. It's continuously reviewed.

CLLR BEHAN: It amendable by us along the way.

ADMINISTRATOR: You can at any stage decide by resolution to review it. You can.

CLLR WHITMORE: Can I say thank you very much, there was quite a bit of input from the SPC, the climate change biodiversity SPC into this and it was all taken on board and even the, bringing and making sure the issue was central to, I would like to say thank you very much for that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so are we all agreed to adopt that? Yes. Okay.

Correspondence. No correspondence. Oh, yes, the motion going back to, so you all have it there in front of you, have you read it? It's proposed by Cllr Connor and seconded by Cllr Matthews. Agreed?

CLLR BEHAN: I would like to register my not agreeing to it, because there is no reference to it with regard to fuel poverty or people who are in vulnerable situations. So I am not going to hold up the meeting but I want to register the fact I am not.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to amend it?

CLLR BEHAN: It's already been amended and hasn't been included. I don't want to delay, but just to record it.

ADMINISTRATOR: Is that agreed then?

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Is there an opportunity to put fuel poverty into it? I think it's importance.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to take a vote on it?

ADMINISTRATOR: You can amend the amendment to include, if that is what you want.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Yes.

ADMINISTRATOR: Give it to me.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Just to ensure that...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: Just an amendment along to say that proposals coming from the SPC assessment of this would also consider fuel poverty and any allowances that may need to be made in regard to people suffering from fuel

poverty.

CLLR BEHAN: That is fine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Is everyone happy? In agreement I should say!

ADMINISTRATOR: We are on to motion number 3.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Notice of Motion in the name of Rory O'Connor...

ADMINISTRATOR: Right sorry, go ahead.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If you want to hit your mic.

CLLR O'CONNOR: I think we have all received the emails about the current problems of the schools and I am a bit knackered right now but I will go into it. So basically saying St Andrews has a problem where they don't have a feeder school for the next school. I am writing to the minister.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do we have a seconder.

CLLR BEHAN: I would like to second it and welcome that motion. Many parents have written to us and they are concerned about where their children are going to go, because they support the church of Ireland ethos and he this want their children to be educate in the church of Ireland ethos and there is a responsibility on the Department of education to protect the ethos of minority religious schools, I agree we should write to the minister for education in support of that, those parents.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Really conscious of time, but I do have a comment and I have also had the email, there is five families affected by this. On research I am not sure we are directing our letter to the correct place, on the research I have done and sort of digging deep into PQs on the issue of who was ultimately responsible in assigning feeder schools and all the rest and it seems that it's not the responsibility of the minister for education, but it is in fact down to the individual school's board of management.

So I wouldn't support this motion, in the sense that I think it's going to the wrong direction, I don't think it's a matter for the minister for education, my second concern on this issue is that the nearest secondary school of a similar ethos to St Andrews is in Greystones, we have a huge issue in Greystones with secondary school places at the moment and there is families contacting me daily who don't have places for September next year and are awaiting the results of the patronage study, I would have concerns, this is a complex issue of trying to address school places that is fair and equal to all schools. I would have concerns that if feeder school status was assigned to the school in Greystones it would negatively impact other people living there.

I would like to say if the motion is supported we would amend, I don't support it because I don't think it's going to the right place, but if it is agreed I would like to amend it so that if we are asking the minister to assign a feeder school status to a school in Greystones, that the minister provide sanction to build a secondary school in question to accommodate the extra pupils.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you happy to have your motion amended?

CLLR O'CONNOR: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: I would be happy with this motion here, but the, Temple

Carrig has applied through times during the year to do an extension and because of the uncertainty, which has not been resolved with the opening of the agreement to another secondary school in Greystones, they were refused and it was originally proposed that Temple Carrig is probably about 100 pupils over its limits which was originally proposed for 750 and this will produce quite a crisis unless there is an extension.

So I think that even with the new school, which is going to be built or opened for Charlesland, this in 2020, I think there is a need for this extension anyway and I think we should be requesting that it extension is granted and I believe that the board there would be happy enough to be a feeder school, but certainly we can't just push the people of Greystones out for this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: With the amendment, are people happy to support that? Agreed? Sorry. Cllr Crean.

CLLR CREAN: I am happy with the amendment but I want to make a quick point. It's not the board of the school, that is definite not who makes the decision, with Temple Carrig they would have no resistance to other feeder schools, it really is about the minister making the decision. I don't think, even in terms of legislation, I think the whole idea of feeder schools is not something that they can just agree like that, so the wording of it is probably going to be a no, like they won't be able to. I just think the motion itself rather than sending a motion that is going to not generate a good response, it is good to take action on this, but I am weary of the word, I do support the concept, I do think that people and particularly those living in Greystones and attending St Andrews and the amendment to the extension is important, but the wording, I don't know if they can designate it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I say, also can I say that I understand from other letters and other correspondence I have seen going to the Department of education that even if they come back with a no they come back with a no to tell you who you should be writing to so we can follow it through that way.

CLLR CREAN: Perfect.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Notice of Motion number 4 in the name of Cllr Rory O'Connor. The members of Wicklow County Council replace the current disabled parking signs with a few more signs. If you want to speak on that.

CLLR O'CONNOR: First of all I want to take away your smoky coal and now this. Basically the whole idea behind this is to change people's view on how they see disability in a sense, because I have got letters from people saying that they have been shouted at for parking in the disabled spot, when they have like a son with autism or something like that and it's just to make people change their mind how they see it rather than seeing it as a wheelchair and to make us more inclusive and change people's minds.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay do we have a seconder?

>>: [INAUDIBLE].

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just to be careful, have you seen the responses, the Department of transport sets out the design and dimensions of disabled parking bays and other marking and it indicates that the it shall be indicated, and look located to cutter edge of each pay BA and accompanied by the sign and it's done that way and that is what is covered in the legislation, so if we want to change it we go back to the DTA and chapter 7,

we can do that, these are reviews all the time, so maybe if we feed this information back to them and if it's changed it becomes legal if that is okay.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Okay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Members happy with that? Okay, Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr Scott and I think Lorraine has an answer.

ADMINISTRATOR: If I can speak on it.

CLLR SCOTT: I am conscious that we have gone over time and that a lot of the chamber aren't here for the notices of motion and this comes back to Cllr O'Connor's point at the start about how the whole process of motions are working. I am quite happy to defer this motion until the January meeting so it gets a fair hearing.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Notice of Motion in the name of Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: I can see why there is no such thing as a free lunch today, I am happy enough to defer them, they are not very controversial.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Defer until January. Okay. And then what about the motion 7, 8 and 8...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ferris isn't here, so shall we defer those as well?

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Deferred. So when you say I didn't get through the agenda, I did, okay! Listen I hope you all have a very happy, peaceful Christmas and that we will see you in the new year bright-eyed and bushy-tailed on the 13th of January. Happy new year.