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STATUTORY ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING HELD AT  
WICKLOW COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW TOWN  
ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25th 2019 AT 10:00AM

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J SINNAMON

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J SINNAMON

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**NON-VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,  
NOVEMBER 25TH, 2019:**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Morning, everyone. I did say to the CPG, I hoped we wouldn't be like Dun Laoghaire where they finished at the 2.00am in the morning as everyone's eyes glazed over. I will just let the votes of sympathy first of all.

ADMINISTRATOR: For Vera Webster, mother of our friend and colleagues Allyson Manahan and for Ita Coleman mother-in-law of our friend and colleague Declan Murnagh.

VINCENT BLAKE: Can I include Kevin O'Mahony known to Michael Mulhall.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: May perpetual light shine upon them and may they rest in peace.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so maybe the Chief Executive you like to say something first.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Very briefly and I will allow Brian to give a presentation of the issues in detail, but you have your book, the budget this year has not been without its challenges. We have the ongoing issue in relation to the Local Property Tax, where we only keep 80%, we also have to self-fund housing, as you know. We are down on NPPR and IPB dividend, we have extra pensions cost, particularly pay restoration, extra staff, we have a loss of 600,000 between the difference in Irish Water rates and the compensation we are receiving up to now. We have increased recycling costs, we have no library fines, that is a national issue. Now the LPT as you know was increased by 10% that does help. We had a rent review in relation to housing and we have some extra income there, we did get compensation from the Department in relation to the pay and pensions and the pay restoration, so we are in a position that we can keep the 1.7 million for discretionary funding for the Municipal Districts, we can provide the match funding for the grant schemes, 450,000, there is a provision of 250,000 for climate adaptation and we have additional funding for central heat, boiler maintenance, repairs to our housing stock and a fabric upgrade.

Increase in regional and local road funding mainly due to extra grants.  
Increase staff and library, increase book fund and in fire services.

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Increase in playground maintenance costs. Just in relation to the 600K, we lost in the Irish Water rates, I know the Department were working with them in relation to compensating us 300,000 in relation to that. We haven't got it yet, if we get it next week or the week after I would be proposing to put it into housing maintenance it's an area we need to keep a focus on in terms of pre-letting repairs and getting the houses back to the highest possible standard and also moving towards planned maintenance. We have the rates incentive scheme and Brian will go through that in a minute. We are also looking at the vacant properties, but maybe if we go through the issues in detail and with the various directors and the various different sections and we will take any questions then, if that is okay. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Brian.

BRIAN GLEESON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thank you, Chief Executive. The first slide there, I will just give an overview of the areas we will cover today. I will give an overview of the budgetary process and the planned expenditure and income from 2020 and the financial challenges we are facing next year. I will then outline the new and additional expenditure we are proposing in 2020, the funding to the Municipal Districts and the main expenditure and income changes to the 2020 budget in comparison to the current 2019 budget. We will then look at the commercial rates and in particular the areas of the ARV for 2020 at the proposed vacancy relief percentage for commercial rates. We will then finish up with a view of the budget by division which each director of service. The budgetary process, there is four main stages to it, the first stage is the Local Property Tax rate review and variation, as you are well aware, in September the council voted to increase the rate by 10% and that brought in an extra 1.7 million for the budget. The second stage was the Municipal District Budgetary Plan which includes the Municipal District meeting. That took place over the last month.

The third stage is why we are here today the adoption of the annual budget and the fourth stage is after the budget has been adopted in early 2020, after we received the final allocations for the year, the planned expenditure for the year will be outlined by, for each Municipal District in respect of direct and indirect expenditure.

Budget decisions that we have to make here today, there is three main decisions. Obviously the adoption of the budget and then to decisions in relation to commercial rates for the coming year, we have to agree the new annual rate of valuation, the ARV, that is following the completion of the rates evaluation process, we have a new ARV to be decided and also to decide on the percentage of rates relief to be applied to vacant premises in the coming year. The 2020 budget provides for expenditure

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of nearly 116 million, which you can see from the slide there. It shows a breakdown of how that is distributed across the individual divisions. This increase was mainly achieved to increased grant funding received in the areas of housing and roads, it's also been achieved through additional income from rents and Local Property Tax and it should also be noted that 46 million or 40% of the budget relates to pay and pension costs, so we have no discretion in that particular area.

Obviously as we are planning to have a balanced budget the planned expend future must be matched by income. Main categories are as follows:

Local Property Tax, 13.7 million. That includes the extra 1.7 million that is taken from the 10% increase, commercial rates, nearly 32 million, I will go through that in a little bit more detail later on in the presentation. Goods and services, over 35 million, that covers the area of rents income, parking charges, our payment from Irish Water in relation to the SLA agreement, planning fees and fire charge, etc. Then we have grants and subsidies of approximately 35 million, mainly in the area of housing and roads, but I would also include other income we get in such as LEO funding. We have a number of challenges we are facing in 2020 on the financial front, I will go through them, as follows:

The restricted sources of funding, as has been flagged on numerous occasions, the Local Property Tax review has been postponed until 2020, so now new additional properties have been built since 2013 will be brought into the net until budget 2021. Also, in relation to commercial rates, as part of our re-evaluation process, legislation in the forms of a rates limitation order prevents local authorities from increasing their income in the year following re-evaluation. So the ARV we are putting forward today we do not have the authority to adjust that either upwards or downwards, I suppose it is what it is, I will go through that in more detail, but the legislation prevents us from increasing that. We are also seeing a number of areas of reduced income. Heretofore we have received compensation from the Department in relation to Irish Water, the fact that Irish Water hadn't been rated, up to now. We had provided an evaluation of our water infrastructure and that was approximately 2.2 million, that funding will cease from 2020 onwards and will be replaced by direct funding from Irish Water in the amount of approximately 1.1 million for rates, so we are down approximately a million. I will go through that in more detail later on. No IPB payment will be payable in 2020, so that is a reduction of 142,000. Our NPPR income has also reduced, we received 1.1 million in 2018 on NPPR, our budget for 2019 was 700,000, we expect to bring in probably about 600,000, so we have budgeted for 300,000 in

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2020, that is a reduction of 400,000, so it's a diminishing area of income, but that across the board in all local authorities, so it's not specific to Wicklow. As the Chief Executive mentioned library fines were abolished this year, so that income is lost as well and we have seen a reduction in income on, in the area of recycling as well. We also have seen increased service costs across the board, some examples would be we have more playgrounds so we need more maintenance in relation to that. Recycling charge, unfortunately the cost of recycling has increased.

Our pre-letting repair costs have increased, we do pre-letting both in house and use of contractors and the costs, mainly of the contractors, has increased and also the demand of trying to turnaround as much of the houses as possible.

Other areas where we are expanding the work in other areas, include climate action and energy initiatives and those areas have been applied additional funding in that regard. We have also seen the requirement to provide match funding for a number of projects under the National Development Plan, the normal percentage would be 25% and we have been successful in a number of projects under a URDF, rural regeneration and a lot of the smaller schemes, Clara Town Village CCTV funding all require match funding and we have had to make were provision in the budget of approximately half a million towards that. The annual cost of the National Pay Agreements this year, the additional cost is 600,000 to the budget, we received funding from the Department in compensation of half a million, so we have to find 100,000 of our own resources to fund that particular cost. Obviously each year our pension costs go up, new retirement, additional people retiring and the extra cost in 2020 will be approximately 400,000.

Due to increases in areas of income and grant funding we have been able to provide new and additional expenditure in 2020. These were outlined in your books but I will go through a few of the examples. Additional funding for central heating installation, boiler maintenance and housing repairs. Increased funding for the provision of fabric upgrade works, increased provision for housing the homeless and CPGs. Additional funding for regional road work, additional staffing for libraries and an increase in our book fund. Increased funding for the fire services and additional staffing in the areas of IT, roads, planning, customer care, finance, climate action and outdoor staff. We are introducing a Wicklow free wi-fi plan, that is across all five Municipal Districts, whereby there will be certain locations will be hot spots, where the public can use free wi-fi. New funding initiatives in relation to climate action, new allocation in relation to the match funding requirements, which I have mentioned and retention of the

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public realm discretionary funding for Municipal Districts of 1.7 million and also retention of the community Grant Scheme at the level of 200,000.

Last few items there, I mentioned were as a result of the decision to increase the Local Property Tax by 10% in September. The decision made by the council is that that money would be ring-fenced for specific initiatives. That 1.7 is broken down as follows. Match funding requirement 452,000, community grant scheme, in order to scene it at 200,000 it was increased by 48,000. The Public Realm Municipal District Fund 964,000, that was to keep the overall fund at 1.7 million and also ring-fenced amount for climate action initiatives and energy initiatives of 260,000, which brings you to the 1.7. So that funding doesn't go into a black hole, it was ring-fenced for specific items within the budget. In relation to the 1.7 million, that has been allocated to the Municipal Districts for 2020, it's broken down into three main areas, the general Municipal allocation, which was agreed at the Municipal District meetings is 245,000, Public Realm discretionary funding is 964,000 and also the IPB capital redistribution payment of half a million goes towards footpath repairs within the Municipal District areas.

I will just go through the main expenditure variances within the budget. It might be hard to read. This is outlined on page 9 of your budget report. You might find it easier to read the actual figures. I will start off in the area of housing and just to be aware, these are variance, so these are increases and decreases on the 2019 budget, they are not the full budget provision, they are the variation on 2019. So to tart off in the area of housing, the first area refers to pre-letting provision, from 900,000 up to 2 million. Housing and boiler maintenance, an increase of 260. Additional surveys and works 63,000. Central heating provision 50,000, fabric upgrade works an increase of 124,000 and remedial works provision 150,000. They have been provided, through the additional rent income following the rent and review that took place this year. Other areas in housing where we have seen increases include housing of the homeless, 150,000 and Disabled Person Grants 244,000. That is to do with extra funding that we expect to receive, so it's an in and out process, you will see an increase in the income and on the other side an increase in the expenditure, it's what we refer to as an extra item, so we have a number of contra items I will refer to during the presentation.

Just a final one there, the payment and availability agreements, I have seen a large increase of 2.3 million, that is also extra income to pay for that. That is where more leased units are expected from approved housing bodies next year. That is the trend that is, we are seeing more developers saying par 5s to the approved housing bodies. In the area of



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roads, the local Footpath Renewal Scheme, this was flagged at the Local Property Tax meeting that there was a fund from special development levies that was used over the last number of years for a footpath renewal scheme. That fund has now ceased, it's exhausted so the funds are no longer there, so we see a reduction of 300,000 in expenditure in that area. Public lighting, an increase of 215,000. That is to match the demand in relation to that area. Regional road general improvement works, nearly 1.6 million, that is in relation to specific improvement grants, where applications have gone into the Department in relation to three specific projects, Laragh/Glendalough junction, Cunningham's corner and the Ballinaclash area, we are awaiting funding in relation to those applications. We also see increases in local roads general maintenance works and surface dressing respectively 263,000 and 289,000, that is extra funding in line with what we have received in 2019. Under the area and division of development we see extra funding for the implementation of a foot strategy, 100,000, that is for match funding with regard to leader funding that we would have received for that particular project. We have also received flag funding for agriculture strategy and we will also have a maritime strategy next year. New rates 150,000 of additional cost I will explain that later in the presentation and a National Development Plan which we have flagged already, 452,000 for match funding. Under the area of the environment, fire service operations has seen an increase of 160,000, that is mainly in the area of staffing for retained firefighters and small provision for capital equipment.

The cost of recycling, bottle banks has increased by 90,000. That is to do with the costs trebling since May of this year, so the actual workload hasn't changed it's just the price of actually implementing that initiative. Climate actions, ring-fenced amount of 260 from the Local Property Tax and other areas under recreational and amenity we have library services operations up by 400,000, that is mainly in the area of staffing, which was agreed under a workforce plan. We have also increased the Library Book Fund by 50,000. Our spend on libraries is under the national average at present so we want to try and increase that. Healthy Ireland Fund that is the Contra entry, we are expecting an additional 120,000 of income in and we will be spending that on that initiative and just other areas of IT, that is 168,000 of an increase, it relates to additional staffing in IT and also extra costs relating to annual maintenance and licenses.

Rates write off we hope to see a reduction of 1.65 million to do with three particular parts, the introduction of a rates incentive scheme, D listings that would have occurred during the evaluation, by the evaluation office and also a reduction in our vacancy relief rate. Finally pension cost, as I have mentioned already have increased by 400,000, but our insurance

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premium has been reduced by 200,000 this year, which was as a result of some of our money being pumped into footpath repairs to reduce the premiums. On the other side we have income variances as well. Under housing we have seen an increase in our rental income projected at 3.1 million for 2020 following the rent review implementation. As mentioned already, we are getting additional funding for homeless grants and disabled person grants, RAS will see a reduction of nearly a million euro.

That is following the trend in 2019 where we are seeing reduced units in relation to the area of RAS, as mentioned the P&A agreement, we expect to receive over 3.3 million of income on that. Roads, Contra entry, that is the special development scheme, so we see a reduction of income from the capital account to 300,000. We hope to receive 1.6 million from the Department in relation to special improvement grants and also hope to receive additional funding on NTA schemes of approximately 200,000. On the area of development, Airbnb enforcement we see an amount of 159,000, that is in relation to funding, we hope to receive towards new staff in that particular area, we hope to employ three staff in that area. The vacant site levy reduction of nearly 300,000, subsequent to the budget being approved last year, we received notification from the Department that the vacant site levy, only 10% of the income can be retained in the revenue budget and 90% has to go to the capital budget, so we expect to receive half a million of the vacant site levy in income in 2020, but 450,000 will be moved to the capital fund with only 10%, 50,000 being included in the revenue account, so that is the reduction there, so in real terms we are increasing our vacant site levy, but it's all going towards the capital account. Under environment recycling centres, less countries are accepting recycling imports, so reducing income in that particular area. As mentioned before, the library fines has been abolished so a reduction of 60,000 in income, Healthy Ireland Fund, increased funding is expected in that regard, Irish Water compensation which I have mentioned, 2.2 million, which we have received each year from the Department will cease from 2020 onwards, National Pay Agreement compensation, we will receive 500,000 from the Department whereby our costs are 600,000, NPPR I have mentioned, we will see a reduction on the budget of 400,000 and our IPB dividend is down 142,000. Two main areas of income, 1.7 million Local Property Tax and 4 million in commercial rates, which I will explain, but doesn't actually, I suppose benefit the bottom line, it's, they are in and out and offsetting additional costs. A couple of slides now on the commercial rates. There is an increase of 4 million on the 2019 figure. I suppose it's split into two components, as I mentioned already, we are losing 2.2 million from the Department, following the valuation of Irish Water. We have 1.6 million, that will go towards offsetting that. That leaves us with a net loss of 600,000, as the



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Chief Executive has said, we have had intense discussions and negotiations with the Department and then in turn with DEBRA on this matter and we are hoping to receive 50,000 of that shortfall of 600,000, we are still awaiting confirmation from the Department in that regard, but we are hopeful.

There is another amount of 2.4 million. This is based on new legislation brought in in the summary it's an amount set by the minister on the advice of the evaluation office in respect of covering possible future losses arising from appeals made to the evaluation tribunal. So, that has to go towards a capital reserve, it's basically a rainy day fund to cover any future losses two or three years down the road. So it's, I suppose it's of no benefit to us, it's basically in and out, on both side of the equation for the budget. As I have said it's a contra entry. Commercial rates 2020, the rates limitation order, prevents any variation to the ARV for the year following the rates re-evaluation. The ARV for 2020 is set at 0.217. This is basically taking the rates income amount of 32 million and dividing by the total evaluation figure we have received from the evaluation office of 147 million. The good news is that this is a decrease on the indicative ARV that was provided of 0.228 and therefore rate payers will see a reduction of approximately 5% in their bills for 2007, compared to the estimates that they would have based it on, using the indicative ARV of 0.228. So that is good news.

Rates Incentive Schemes. Our existing scheme, we have had in place for the last number of year, the Small Business Rates Incentive Scheme will continue. This is a grant of 5% of the rates bill up to a maximum of €250. That applies to commercial properties with rate bills up to and including 10,000 and that covers nearly 90% of rate payers who are eligible to apply for that particular scheme. We are also proposing the introduction of a new scheme for new businesses that reoccupy a vacant premises. This will encourage new commercial venture, the reoccupation of vacant properties and it will assist in job creation and help to improve the streetscape of our towns and villages across the county. The scheme will see new businesses receive a 50% grant in year one and 25% grant in year 2 based on their rates bills. It will relate to vacant premises, or premises that have been vacant for a period of 12 months or more and also the new businesses can't have traded in the county within the previous 12 months. This particular proposal was presented to the economic SPC about a month or so ago and fully supportive of the initiative.

In line with that, we are proposing to recommend that the rate of refund for eligible vacant properties is reduced from 100% to 60% for 2020, as

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this complements the introduction of the new rates scheme for new businesses and it would improve the streetscape of the towns and villages. In any event, this is come, the new legislation passed in the Dail provides for a maximum figure to be set by the minister. That hasn't been set by the minister, but it will be coming in for budget 2021, so we are getting ahead of the game here. That figure could be 80% or 60% or 50%, we don't know, but we are proposing to go with 60% in Wicklow. This also reduces our expenditure by nearly 800,000. And, I suppose just to give a picture of where it stands in comparison to other local authorities, there are 14 other local authorities in the country, provide vacancy relief, less than the 100% figure, this ranges from 90% in Kilkenny, Mayo and Wexford and down to 10% in Limerick. And the average relief applied across the table is 57%. So that concludes the main part of the presentation. You now plan to go through the budget by division, starting with housing and roads. So you can see housing we are proposing expenditure of 28.2 million, income of 30.9 million and you will see the details of the housing expenditure on page 94, 107, 10 and also roads we are proposing 27.3 million and 16.6 million and the details can be found on pages 95, 110 and 112 for roads.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, members, the two directors of services, Joe will give the presentation on housing and then Colm on roads and then we will take questions on those two sections of the budget before we move... just questions, okay.

JOE LANE: Thank you, I have the estimate, normally we ask the questions now.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so Cllr Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Thank you for the presentation and take to the staff for the work they have done in regards to the whole budget. Certainly, it appears we do have additional funding for the coming year and certainly for the years we did spend here when we are cutting back on a regular basis it's a welcome situation that we are now increasing, or have an increase in our expenditure for the coming year. Just a couple of points before I go into the, a couple of questions in regard to the housing aspect of it. In your presentation you did mention the fact that the IPB have a reduction of, I think it was 140-something thousand, but we are saving 200,000 in insurance so there is a profit there of about 60,000 that in regard.

I do welcome the Rates Incentive Scheme, but to us living in the rural part of the county a Rates Incentive Scheme for being back old buildings into operation is not going to happen to a great extent. And certainly, the situation then where we are going to actually charge 60% for vacant properties, this is something now, I know you said that in regard to the fact that the Department are talking about bringing it in as well, but it's going to be a significant impact that we didn't see coming, with regards to

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it, all down the years we have had a write off in rates for properties that were vacant and you are talking about 800,000 of an expected income, it looks like a very precarious figure to be looking at in terms of having to balance the budget.

So I would be concerned that a lot of properties out there that are vacant, that will actually give us a great difficulty in terms of being able to access that 800,000. In terms of the housing aspect of it, when we agreed to the increase of 10% in the Local Property Tax and it has been outlined in regard to the fact that there is some improvements in regards where we are going to spend that money, but it appears to me the vast majority of that 1.7 million is actually going into the housing section. And, we see out there at the moment, an awful lot of houses that need to be repaired, but they are very old houses, they are houses of 50, 60 years of age that are costing a huge amount of money to bring it up to the standard that is required and at the same time we have people out there, who are actually willing to purchase these houses and we have a policy here, as far as I can see that are against people buying houses they have lived in for those 30 or 40 year, so to me, it sounds like an area that should be of concern to us and the amount of money we are actually spending out there on trying to bring very old houses up to required standard and as I said, it appears to me that 1.7 million is, the vast majority is going to into the housing section.

So I ask, Joe, in that regard, are we getting value for money in terms of spending that level of funding on trying to bring houses up to a certain standard, that is certainly very difficult to do in that regard. There are few other aspects I have questions down the line that I will ask, but I will ask that question in terms of the housing are we getting value for money in spending the level of spending we are? I certainly, down the years here I have asked that we would spend extra money on housing, but my understanding was that it was coming out of the rent that people were paying in there, but they weren't getting the level of spending that should have been spent on repairs of houses.

Equally so, they are there for a year or maybe a year-and-a-half before we get them back in, so we are losing the rent as well of income, by the length of time those houses are left out there. So I am asking you, Joe, in terms of the actual spend, are we getting value for money in terms of what we are spending in repairing very old houses, thank you very much, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Just a question there for the director there, on page 16, I might be a bit silly, but just the grant funding for private houses we

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got 1.78 million and spent to date 600,000 less than that figure, now I understand that there might be applications in the system, but we are in the 11th month of the year, going into the 12th month of the year what valid reason is there for 600,000 not being spent. We wouldn't have 600,000, we shouldn't have, if we have of applications for disabled housing grants or such, so why is there 600,000 unspent as there. Can I talk on the commercial rates on this one? I don't know if Cllr Blake, we are not on that, we are only talking about roads.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are talking about roads and housing.

CLLR FITZGERALD: That is the only question I have on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, director and Brian and for the detailed reports. I had a question for Joe on the energy efficiency and the fabric upgrades. I like a detail on really the difference between phase 1 and 2 in terms of just the importance of getting our stock into deep retrofitting that would be saving council for the money long-term and a little bit of detail, central heating I see is installed in 30 existing units, are there many more that need to be done in conjunction with that, or done with phase 1 or 2 upgrades, just more detail on that and is this on roads as well?

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will get Colm to come up.

CLLR SCOTT: That is fine.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Myself and Anne Ferris from the Labour Party we have to commend the budget for being positive. We know that the difficult decisions were made in September that we can sit here today and be positive about it. In term was house I know that Cllr Blake has said about the commercial rates and we sent in our own proposals and Cllr Fitzgerald if we have to talk about it later we will, we have concerns about a one size fits all and we did look into an appeals process, being put in place, but I am sure we can talk about that later. We are concerned that with the rates they are looking at bringing in 780,000, I think it is from the vacant properties, but we still have 1.1 million outstanding in council arrears on council houses and we would like to know how the Council intend on addressing that going into the new year.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Cathaoirleach, just in relation to the RAS figures that were thrown out, it's a substantial drop and can you give us, is there better explanation as to why you are losing landlords from the RAS scheme and is it creating difficulties trying to place our tenants, are they getting priority access to housing or what way are you dealing with tenants who are in the position where their tenancies are being terminated by landlords. Brian threw up a figure of €400,000 increase in rates. I was also given the impression that the overall cake was to stay the same, so I was wondering where the extra 4 million was you came up with there.

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In relation to the roads I can ask a question on the roads here as well? I would like to welcome the statement there from Brian that a significant amount of funding is going to go into improvements there of the regional road network at Ballinaclash, the junction there and Rathdrum and I would like clarification on that scheme and how much progress it has made and when we are likely to see a start on it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, Cllr Bourke has asked one of my questions in that the reduction in the RAS scheme is concerning and it seems to be, from what I can gather, it's year on year, it seems to be reducing. We are down 65 properties in the RAS scheme since last year and obviously I would be keen to know what is the reason for that? My other question is back to page 9 with the expenditure on housing, like, for example, boiler maintenance, we are saying it's up by 260,000. What figure are we comparing last year, this year and last year and equally with the survey and works central heating fabric upgrades remediation works and so on. What are we comparing those figures with, against I should say from last year.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McManus.

CLLR McMANUS: Two questions. Can I ask why, can we get a more detailed explanation as to why there is a shortfall in the non-private residents income and in terms of local authority maintenance housing grant am I correct in saying that the estimated income is 16 million but the estimated expenditure is only 8.5 so why the difference, if I am correct in that?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Just in relation to the IPP the loss there, the footpath renewal scheme we are down 300,000 but on the other side we have a 200,000 gain in the fact that our premium has been reduced, so is there an opportunity to continue with the footpath improvement scheme due to the fact we are getting that reduction in the premium and just on the roads end of thing, the Delgany Village, I know it's a different matter, the Delgany accessibility scheme, I would like to get an up to date report on that scheme, I know with had a Part A passed, see where we are going on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: I understand the reason for the vacant property levy, obviously it's to try and do away with them and get people to start improving their properties and start using them again. It seems quite a high figure in terms of some of the other counties that are offering 10% and 20%. I know, overall, you said the average was 57%, but I think it's still high and ambitious, to expect people to pay 40% on a vacant property. Often the reason it's vacant is because they don't have the money to do it up. So does anyone know what the success rate is in



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achieving this? What it has been across the board in other counties. Have people paid it or not and is there a cost then involved in chasing it up, which would then, effectively defeat the purpose? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Crean.

CLLR CREAN: Thank you. Can I just ask Joe in relation to the housing expenditure, about the, I suppose follow on Cllr Blake's point, because it was unexpected 6.3 million, but there was 3 million taken in, was there plans to fund those expenditure items anyway and what were those plans? And also, in relation to the P&A agreements, just to get more detail on that expenditure as well and the income there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, if you want to.

JOE LANE: Will you clarify the second last question about the 600,000 and the 3 million.

CLLR CREAN: So looking at the budget for last year, the expected income from the rent review was 6 million and then this year 3 million came in, obviously the expenditure you have, aim assuming that could have been met because it's basic services because of housing. How would that have been met and would it not have been met by the grants from the central funding and building on Cllr Blake's point that there is extra millions from the rent review, we need to be mindful, the reason that increase is there is there is adult children at home, a lot more people employed and a lot more income coming into the council, purely due to the fact that people can't move out of the family home. It's problematic the way that rental income comes but that is separate point. I suppose it's about the fact that being responsibly how we use that 3 million and it being used the way it's described here, could there be alternative ways?

JOE LANE: Okay, I will through it in the order it was asked. Cllr Blake, there is a tenant purchase scheme in place and we are still taking applications in, so that should be understood where people are eligible, the criteria, I think for the 2015 scheme is rather specific, so there are specific schemes there and we have our own exemptions but people can apply and we will take a look at it. Whether again the condition of the house is not conditional on the tenant purchase scheme so it's up to the applicants to apply, the houses are sold in the condition they are in and that is part of the application.

The relets, yes, there is a significant expenditure incurred in relets. The average, our expenditure in relets average is 34,000 units. When we put them back out we put them out in a condition, in an excellent condition, insulation, invariably there is rewiring, insulation, now kitchen, if required.

Last year we had 80 and this year we have 91 and that is only to date and we will see that significantly increased next year. As people, as we are, I suppose we will come back to in a minute regarding the rent, we



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expect this year 287 new nights and there will be a percentage of those people who through transfers for overcrowding reasons that will generate more relets which is good news but it means there is significantly more work involved there and there was nine months of the year mentioned, I haven't got the average but I can get it for you, the relet period, it's in, it's a national indicator, but it wouldn't be with regards to that. There would be delays in some situations where we, where there is significant scheduling and rewiring would be a particular condition of that, where it would be scheduling but we move them as quickly as possible and like I said it's 34,000 per unit on average. That incurs for a lot of expenditure that has occurred and has been incurred by the local authority.

Fabric upgrade was asked. The major difference is phase 1 was insulation and phase 1 was 100% funded. Phase 2 requires funding from the local authority. There is a suite of work, so it could average about 80%, but it really depends on what suite of work, what insulation, what work we do is eligible or ineligible. Give or take an average unit would be about 26,000 and we would spend about 3,400, but it's note that simple, because it depends on the mix and what the house requires and what has been done to date. We have something that came up from the Department, this would be more limited by the Department, because if you look at it, the year funding is 250,000, but then it depends, we were allocated 600,000, so that mixed work won't be limited by the allocation from the Department in that situation, for the fabric upgrade. Private grants. When this report was issued it was 1.7, 1.1 million, it's now up to the more recent Chief Executive report, the expenditure to date is 1.3 million of the 1.7 million.

I understand all of our allocations and letters have gone out to the members of public regarding private grants, but there is, they are having difficulty getting the grants and conditions and getting them paid as they get paid, we recoup. We haven't, the public are having trouble, from what I understand, getting contractors to do the work within the period. That will carry over until next year, if we don't get them in by December we will pay them December/January. Under the efficiency, again I said it's about the mix. Central heating, at the moment we think there is about 400 units outstanding on the queue, it's about 6,000 a unit, again for central heating it really depends on house, but an average of 600 wouldn't be a bad estimate, a bad way to work on that.

Arrears in rent. Arrears in rent, we hold on to, we only write off when we have to and there is no way of collecting, otherwise we will hope the hold rent arrears as long as possible. We won't write them off. The main way of engaging is to engage the with ten ant and try and get a schedule and

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deal with stuff as, try to deal with stuff on a regular basis, where they at least pay their rent and some donation towards the arrears, but we hold the, some of those figures may go on for a few years which some people would write off, we normally hold off and we get something before a write off. If it's uncollectible, people have left, situations like that, we do write them off, but we try to hold on as long as possible in the theory that they will have to be addressed. RAS and HAP.

The figures are going down, you have to look at this in the context of HAP, that is going up higher than RAS, where as the RAS figure is going down nationally, it was always seen that HAP could be seen as replacement for RAS or we wouldn't be losing units that. Would be our experience, the HAP is up this year alone by 569 units and since we started by well over 1,000, I think 1,200 or 300. Yes, RAS is down, but HAP is up. There was a question asked regarding the budget in general I think and particularly surveys, remedial work and maintenance going up. Yes, that is part of the budget process that we are, for the last couple of years we were not in a position to invest fully in our housing stock and therefore funds are being provided. The how long survey we have put in provisions for the last two years in the housing survey, we are still waiting for a national scheme there and the hope there is that the state will fund up to 50% of that.

That would be quite comprehensive and quite a big investment from the local authority to start there. Costs well over a million, assuming 250 units to inspect with about 4,000 units but we are waiting for the national scheme and the hope is that the state will pay a fund towards even the survey and see where we are on that one. So we are still waiting on the national scheme on that one.

Okay, P&A, P&A agreement, or the P&A agreement is the monies, the state pay, or we pay towards the approved housing bodies for the agreements they have. So when an approved housing body attempts to buy a house what happens is they get or may get a grant and therefore the State pays through the local authority a shadow rent to pay the mortgage. So they take out a loan and the State, through us, pays back effectively the mortgage through an agreement. This payment and we have, the important thing here is we have full nomination rights so if you look at it, just basic calculations, if you divide out the number of units, about 250, 260 units by about 1,000 that comes to 3 million. What happens is on a monthly or quarterly basis they send in the bill and we make the payment towards them. Next year and this year, if you are looking and saying the major supply, the big ones coming in would be the Rathnew scheme, part 5s, the Dunlavin scheme and Arklow scheme and

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these supplement our supply over next year/year-and-a-half and effectively they are funded until, to fund the loans they took out.

As regards the rent, there were two elements. Yes the review generated more monies than we thought this time last year, the scheme for 2018, we hoped it would go in in May, it came in in August, so it did take a while to go through the work and it was quite comprehensive survey. It increased, the rent review was again it's income-based so it depends on each household. Next year we had benefit of that for next year, so where you say 600,000, yeah, there was an increase also on top of that, and this is the important thing, there is significant new units coming in in 2019, sorry in 2020 and they are also significantly contributing to the rent increases. For next year, which is this year's supply and next year's supply we have new units in Rathnew, Kilbride, Whitehall, Fair Road and Farrankelly and Enniskerry, on top of the review that occurred. So it's the accrual, the weekly rent is changing constantly, so when we did our review, when we started our review we had no benefit of new unit, by the time August came in Vail Road was kicking in, so it's changing but this is what we expect for next year and again the new units are making a significant contribution, at this stage. I think that is it.

BRIAN GLEESON: In relation to Cllr Cullen was looking for figures, obviously the presentation and the booklet show the increase in housing provisions, the actual full amount that is provided in the budget for boiler maintenance is 480,000, central heating 200,000, housing repairs and maintenance 1.9 million, fabric upgrade 374,000, conditional survey, 220,000, pre-letting the full provision is 2 million and remediation works, 300,000. Just to clarify one point, Cllr Blake made about the Local Property Tax, the 1.7 million going towards housing that isn't going towards housing, the increases from housing are coming from the increase in rents from the rent review, the 1.7 million for the Local Property Tax has been ring-fenced for the Municipal District discretionary fund, the Community Grant Scheme, climate initiatives and match funding for the URDF projects.

CLLR McMANUS: I don't think my question was answered, it was about shortfalling on NPPR income and the under spend, or what I think is an under spend in terms of the income we expect in maintenance versus the expenditure.

BRIAN GLEESON: I might take the NPPR income. In scheme was brought in from, it's, there was a charge of €200 per property, that is your non principal property, that has ceased but there is still arrears and late payment charges that applied so when you go to sell your property, if you hadn't paid your NPPR at that time there is, dependent on how many years you missed out, it could be a bill of 7,000 when you go to sell that particular property, so while the annual charge has ceased, the arrears is

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still there for the years that were in place that the time. It's just the trend, I think most people that were selling properties, the ones where there were arrears it seems to have just, it's a natural progression of reduced income, as I say, it's a trend across all local authorities that has been flagged in everyone's local authority budget and it was always the case, it was eventually going to happen, a number of years there was a nice source of income that we did use, but in the last 12 months it has seen a considerable drop and I know the Department did flag, we had already identified it ourselves, but they did send correspondence there in the last few months just to make local authorities aware that that is a trend that is happening across the board and to take note of it in relation to our budget calculations.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: I didn't get an answer for the extra 4 million you projected for the rates when I was assuming that rates were to stay the same overall. That wasn't explained and can I throw one in on the NPPR, I had a few cases of people unfairly, who felt they were unfairly treated by that bill and went to the Ombudsman, but I don't know what the results are. Have any of the appeals been overturned by the Ombudsman to your knowledge?

BRIAN GLEESON: I am not aware at the moment, I can check it out but I am not sure, we can check that out for you and let you know.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: In relation to the Ballinaclesh Junction, maybe we could update the members on that. I am delighted to see it in the estimates now, so maybe we could get an update for the members to inform them where it is, I know where it is but the other members may not, so if we could update the members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Colm, if you would like to come up.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Before we move away from that, I know that there mass been in addressing the huge challenges presented, but the figures are identical, the numbers on our list and the numbers of our tenants, so as I say, we are still overly reliant on the private sector in terms of HAP and Part 5 acquisition to address our housing needs but I know that is nothing the director or the management can do, there is nothing they can do about, but just to point it out, we are still, there is a lot of challenges ahead and anything we can do in increasing our supply that is the objective and the key challenge.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That was a statement, not a question. Okay, Colm.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry Brian wants to come back.

BRIAN GLEESON: Just in relation to what Cllr Bourke changed about the 4 million. This was due to be changed in legislation at the summer and it was to address future losses that would arise. Obviously if there was no change in legislation what would have happened is we would have lost out

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on 2.2 million of income, in relation to Irish Water because the additional money we would have gotten from the rates, we wouldn't have been able to benefit from it, it wouldn't have been added on to the bottom line. The legislation that existed at that time didn't allow for any increase and there was a bad coincidence that the re-val was taking place at the same time as Irish Water was getting rated, so the Department had to bring in legislation to allow the Irish Water rating income be added on to the bottom line, otherwise we would have been down 2 million, so when it's additional money, it's really just offsetting the loss of the income we were receiving from the Department.

So that was a change in legislation that happened before the summer recess. Also in that legislation, there was provision provided for, of 2.4 million for possible future losses, based on appeals to the evaluation tribunal and I suppose this was a new piece that was identified, this is the third re-evaluation that has taken place across the country and it was identified in the other revaluations, what was happening is appeals that were being made to the valuation tribunal, it might take two to three years for the outcome to be determined and where there was reductions, they would be backdated to the date of the revaluation, so the local authority were left with bills whereby they would have to pay two or three years of a refund to particular businesses that got a reduction by the valuation tribunal, so the legislation was changed to allow a provision to be put in for that, but it's not being spent anywhere it has to be put into a capital reserve until all of those appeals take place and we get a full picture of the loss, so that would be used to offset that loss.

So, in real terms, we are not really, we aren't making any additional money on the rates, it's just those particular changes in legislation allows us to cover the losses really.

CLLR BOURKE: On that, I have an example of a small windfarm that the bill went from 10,000 to 50,000, would you expect a case like that to be successful.

BRIAN GLEESON: I don't know, the wind farms were, I suppose subject to a number of appeals in the previous revaluations, so I don't know whether that particular business appealed to the valuation tribunal, but as I say, we have no idea, the valuation tribunal is an independent entity and result of it, I suppose we just have to wait and see, but the problem is it can take two to three years for that result to arise and the ratepayer will pay the amount they are billed, so we will get that money in, but then, if there is a reduction in three years, it will be backdated to the date of the valuation, which would be September of this year, so we could have a bill of two or three years of a refund to pay.

CLLR BOURKE: [INAUDIBLE].



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BRIAN GLEESON: No, I hope that explains it.

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you.

COLM: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just in relation to Cllr Bourke and Kennedy's comments in relation to the Ballinaclash junction, as Brian indicated we have made three applications to the Department for funding for specific improvement grants, those being Ballinaclash Cunningham's corner and Roundwood and the Laragh and Glendalough scheme.

So an application in relation to Ballinaclash has been made for 500,000 in a specific improvement grant, we will expect to hear whether or not that has been successful in late January 2020. In terms of the progress which has been made on the scheme, we have met the landowner, we are in discussions with them about acquiring the land for the scheme, which has been positive to date, the Department inspector has gone out and shown the scheme as well. He is positive as well in relation to funding coming for it. When we know for certain that the funding is available, come late January we will be appointing a consultant for the detailed design and then going through the Part A process, so that is where it's at at the moment.

Okay, Cllr Walsh asked about Delgany Village, as you stated yourself the part A process has been gone through in the Council chamber, we are working through local issues on the scheme in relation to accesses, mainly from houses on to the roadway, so we are heading into detailed design on that scheme and we intend to make an application under the, for the round of the URDF funding when that application process opens again.

And just to say, as well, in terms of Delgany/Black Lion, when you mentioned Delgany, we have the part A for that road scheme on public display, so that is to cover the roads that are currently there. I think you mentioned footpaths as well, councillor, the 300K reduction that Brian mentioned in his presentation relates to special development levies that were no longer there, these are levies that were footpath related and have been spent. There is still 500K available to all Municipal Districts across the Municipal Districts from the IPB capital redistribution, which is funding towards foot paths which are a matter for the Municipal Districts to decide on.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Stephen Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And I suppose, first of all, there is some positives in this budget, but they are very minimal and when you look at division A and B it's about 50% of our budget. What it highlights is the fact that local Government is not funded sufficiently and we have had that discussion over and over again, but it is plainly clear



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and Wicklow is faring quite poorly in that measure. We are not being funded significantly by central Government and they are two areas where we would have historically relied heavily on central funding and it's just not there. That is a national discussion, probably not for today, but it is a discussion that will have to take place. In terms of the 300,000 reduction in footpaths and I know you have referred to it, director, I appreciate there is 500,000 still there, but that 300,000 reduction is going to have very significant negative impacts on district engineers to carry out repairs to footpaths required in our towns and villages and our roads and foot paths are dangerous at the moment for people who want to walk and are on bicycles.

You only had to look this morning in the dark and the wet, how dangerous it can be for pedestrians and cyclists, so of the 27 million we have in division B for road transportation and safety, can we and I don't expect it today, director, but can we have an indication or breakdown of how much of that budget will be spent on road safety improvements for that other sector of road users which are pedestrians and cyclists who really need it and the district engineers who are doing as good work they can with the budget, the NTA guidelines are priority towards public transport, pedestrians and cyclists and motor vehicles last on that list. I would like to see our transportation budget reflect that sort of national guidance on how we should spend our money. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Just on page 24 and can I direct this to Colm or the Chief Executive, the Arklow Transport Study, whether we get funding from the NTA or not, we are going to provide for that study, which is essential for Arklow, because at the moment we are choked and getting further choked into the town. The funding is there for the Arklow study because it says projects complete ready out to tender. I have no knowledge of that being out to tender. Could I have a response on it.

COLM: Sorry I will respond now. Firstly, Cllr Matthews we will try and get a breakdown for you on what has been spent on cycling and walking structure as part of the overall budget. In relation to the Arklow Transportation Study, there is a provision made in the capital budget for, the NTA to carry out that study in 2020. So we have made provision for it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Thank you, chair, a few questions for Colm. First one is the Local Improvement Scheme has proved successful over the last couple of years and I know in our district of the Wicklow Municipal District there is over 40 on the waiting list to avail of the Local Improvement Scheme. I suppose one of the questions I have, is it possible for us to be more proactive in looking for funding for that scheme, because it is

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certainly worthwhile. A more broader point, the, on roads, I suppose it's been mentioned already about road safety and there is certainly a concern, particularly on rural roads over safety issues. We only have to look over the last couple of weeks and see the extensive rain and flooding that has fell and particularly drainage inlets to let away water off the roads is something that is going to have to be given more time and effort. It certainly is an issue on rural roads and I think we need to respond to it.

And my final point is on the footpath fund, again like other councillors, I am disappointed it's been reduced. I think our footpaths across the county are in need of a lot of work. There is quite a lot of older estates in our county that foot paths are basically disintegrating or are basically a concern from the point of view of safety, health and safety and I think it's something that we are going to have to look at doing some sort of a survey on our foot paths particularly in the estates and villages around our county to get a clearer picture of how serious the problem is. Because there is no doubt we are going to have further claims, if we don't deal with this issue. I am disappointed overall that we don't have more funding to improve the foot paths and Young it's something we need to have a broader discussion on later in the day. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr P Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Sorry, Cathaoirleach. Just firstly I would like to thank Colm and all of the team who have worked on the Ballinaclesh/Rathdrum junction. It's probably the most dangerous junction in the county. We also have to thank the landowner for his engagement with us, because he has been approachable in talking with us all the way through. The other thing not in the estimates today and I will mention this on several occasions is the Rathdrum plan, the traffic study in Rathdrum and the traffic plan going forward, because it's only a matter of time before an ambulance or fire brigade can't reach where they want to go and there is nothing in the estimates to show that is being looked after.

It needs to go in and it needs to be tied in with the Arklow one as well they both need to be done, it wouldn't cost a huge amount for the Rathdrum one to be done but it has to be done and we have to allocate some funding for that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just two quick questions one with regard to our programme, I know it doesn't affect too many people here, but in terms of west Wicklow it is a significant benefit to us. Some of the projects are still out there that are not completed and I just maybe suggest that the community section in the council here, we apply for those grants could play a more active role in ensuring that the finance that has been provided from central Government is spent on it. I am

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particularly referring to the fact that foot paths haven't been completed.

The funding that was made about three years ago, hasn't been completed so I am asking if there is a greater interaction between the Department of community in here and the local engineer in terms to make sure that money is actually spent. The second question is with regard to the lights programme, I see we are talking about having to borrow €8 million to carry out the change from the, we referred to them as the yellow lights to the LED light but certainly it's going to be a long programme in that regard and are we going to experience the difficulty for the rest of this winter in terms of light repairs throughout the county, because certainly there are a huge amount of lights out there that are not working. I do understand that that programme is in place, but have we drawn down the money, or where are we in relation to that loan of 8 million to carry out the necessary changes of the light structure? Thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, just a quick question in relation to our parking bye-laws which were adapted in August 2017, I think ABCO were the successful bidder for the contract. At the time we were led to believe, we were told there would be a review of those bye laws after 12 months so I am wondering we still haven't had that review and issues that would have come to light in the interim at local and district level that we like to revisit. We haven't had an opportunity, but we are being told we have to wait for the review, I am wonder figure there is a plan.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am wondering if it's in the budget?

CLLR WALSH: I beg your pardon.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you asking if it's in the budget.

CLLR WALSH: On page 24 there is reference, a general question in relation to that review and when it will be carried out.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, again I would like to thank you for the presentation, but just a couple of points. Again I want to echo what they said, it's a particular problem for rural villages and it my district. We have a situation where the footpath has been taken over by nature, the ditch has reclaimed the footpath. It's disappointing we need to have a proper discussion on how we can get extra funding. If is there know path or a no footpath or for people with buggies it's disgraceful. Also, road safety measures in our districts need to be addressed, particularly the electronic speed indicators, I think we need to really roll out them in an aggressive way because I think they do change behaviour and I think they are cheaper than some of the more aggressive traffic calming measures out there. Lights I echo with Cllr Blake, the light situation is chronic and we don't seem to be getting the type of reports going in on lights and they are not being fixed for months on end. There

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is new lights being installed and they are not being turned on for months on end and it's frustrating for people who expect it to be done in an efficient manner. On a positive note I welcome the work has been done on the Arklow Shillelagh greenway and I would like to see that continuing. I think it will be an excellent project for the Arklow area and west Wicklow.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to answer those Colm.

COLM: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, Cllr Cullen in relation to Local Improvement Schemes, yes, we do make applications to the Department for as much funding as possible. We get our allocation and we ensure every year that is spent insofar as possible. It's one of the things maybe that our SPC, the transport SPC may look at as the way that the, as you mentioned the numbers on the waiting list for Local Improvement Schemes may be putting terms and conditions in place as to how those cases are prioritised and which get funding in a particular year.

In terms of regional and local roads you will see that there is increased funding provided in the budget this year based on the allocations we got in 2019 which allows us to carry out more work on the regional and local network. I take the points that are made in relation to the foot paths and the funding available, as I say, there is 500K there, if at all possible we will look at the schemes that are in desperate need of rehabilitation, those foot paths where you mentioned they are severely dangerous. I would point out as, as brain has in his presentation, that our IPB annual renewal has reduced by 200K. That is as a result of less and less claims being made in relation to our public liability insurance and a lot of that is due to the improvements we have made to our foot paths. Cllr Kennedy, in relation to the Rathdrum traffic study, as I mentioned earlier, the Arklow Traffic Study is included in the capital budget for 2020.

As you know, the capital plan will be reviewed in March again this year and we will look at including Rathdrum in it that the time. Cllr Blake, the Clora programme I will let my colleague, Michael Nicholson deal with that question, in terms of light repairs, public lighting repairs we have provided additional funding to carry out repairs on existing sites that. Is in relation to the current contract we have ongoing and we are looking at specific contracts to fix problem areas such as the port Road in Wicklow where we will go out to tender on a specific contract to fix a number of faults in that area and target areas like that going forward.

In relation to the national retro fit programme we are moving ahead, it's been led by Kilkenny County Council County Council who have appointed an engineer to lead the programme. We hope that that programme will commence later this year, we have provided in the budget for 70K for

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interest repayments on the loan that we would hope would come before the council for approval early in 2020. Cllr Walsh in relation to the parking bye laws, yes they are up for review and it's scheduled for 2020. I think that is, that was the issues that were raised.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And the director has answered a lot of my questions, but I and I want to commend him for come back to me last week about the lighting in Bachelor's Walk. It has been evident that the companies looking after the lights weren't winter ready and I think lessons have to be learned that coming into the winter, I know Cllr Dunne has raised it many times about the lights and it seems to be put on the long finger so we need to look at that. The next thing is we have spoken about the secondary roads but the big elephant in the room is the N11. It seems to be a slow process, we had the consultation a two weeks ago and it came to a surprise to many people that it's now looking at 2027 for the start date and you know yourself there is a lot of people frustrated out there at the moment and I would like to see what the council do to expedite this and keep the pressure on the Government to get this project started. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Glennon.

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just and I do know that this is about macro issues rather than micro issues but it has been raised at our Municipal meeting that there was funds put aside for the footpath at Hollywood and we are told it's going to be lost if it's not spent by the end of the year and again I would like to thank Colm and the Chief Executive for their efforts to resolve our issues regarding a footpath and bus stop on the N81. I would like an assurance from the Chief Executive that funding won't be an issue when we get the other pieces of the jigsaw in place and I do know that that this is dealing with macro rather than micro issues but I would like the assurance that this funding won't be lost and that further funding will be available when the other ducks are in the a row.

CLLR BOURKE: I would like to welcome Colm statement that he is going to get contractors in to do problem areas with lighting, a constituent was complaining to me last night that there are no lights working around the leisure area, Seaview Avenue, was in darkness last night, people had to leave early, so perhaps you could have that investigated. It occurred to me when we are discussing public lighting, a number of years ago there was a study done on energy saving and I have never seen the results of that, to see how much money we have saved from that, it might be interesting later in the day to have a report on that to see how much have we saved in the past.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you for the report. One of my main points over the last number of years has been public



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lighting. The easy way to check on this is either the lights are on or off and around my area they are definitely off. I have been on to the council and the different agencies to try and get this sorted and it's not working. On foot paths in my area, especially, around Wicklow town, they are falling apart, from the main street to the outer roads we have major problems and I know my fellow councillors hopefully will look at it this year because a lot of funding has gone other places within our district, but this year we need to look at Wicklow town, especially on the main street where a lot of old people are walking into the main street and are falling and I don't think we can let this continue, there is something very bad, there has been very bad falls and a lot of these people, the older people have been on to me and it's something that we are definitely going to have to look at.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Following on from that question, there are a lot of concerns out there from residents, particularly residents in a lot of the Glen of the Downs and Delgany area, some of the proposals, I know there was a lot of on the presentation which was only last week. Maybe if the council could organise follow up meetings with these groups just more or less to put their minds at ease or give them some form of solace that this isn't a done deal and people are looking at, the possibility of losing their homes, etc and that is out there, so it's important that those concerns are addressed, sooner rather than later, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I say before Colm answers this, this is the budget meeting, definitely the N11 is an enormous project, this is not the day we can discuss it, that will be for next month.

COLM: Just to start with the N11, as you know we are in phase 2 of the current TII project management guidelines, this is the option selection stage, so a number of options have been put out, seven in total, the mainline as it currently is, plus six other options and that went on public, there was a public information day held on the 12th of November and those options are online on the N11/M11 website. The information day on the 12th of November was very well-attended, over 600 individuals signed into it and we know there was a lot more that didn't sign in. We know it was a busy day. Just in relation to Cllr Walsh and the follow up meetings arising out of the information day there is over 160 follow up meetings that have to be arranged. We have a record of those, both our consultants and ourselves have a record of those and we will be following up on those 160 meetings as soon as possible. In term was trying to bring it forward, Cllr O'Brien has mentioned it's post 2027 that it's scheduled for in the National Development Plan. There is, I suppose an out in terms of trying to bring it forward, as I say we are currently in phase 2 option selection, it's hoped we will be moving to preferred option around the middle of 2020. At that stage, when we have selected the preferred



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option for improving the scheme we will be going for planning permission to An Bord Pleanála, so once that statutory approval is in place and we set about acquiring land, if necessary, for the project, we will be making a case to the Department, to TII that the scheme should be brought forward and then it comes down to a Government decision around bringing the project forward and whether the funding, etc, can be in place.

So it doesn't necessarily mean that we will be, it will be post 2027 before you see improvement works begin on the N11. I take all the comments that have been made in relation to public lighting and the foot paths across the county, as I say, we are working with our contractor to fix as quickly as possible the issues with lights that are out. We arrange numerous meetings with the contractor and we have asked them and which they have done, secure additional resources to fix those problems. A lot of the issues do, are not just light bulb related issues, they may be cable faults, etc which require ESB networks to come on board and we are trying to arrange a meetings with ESB Networks to see how we can speed up those cabling issues being rectifies as well. On the foot paths, as I said previously there is 500,000 there split among the Municipal Districts, which can be prioritised for those foot paths that need immediate attention.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: Cathaoirleach, thank you for letting me back in. I want to ask the director, most of the damage to foot paths is not caused by pedestrians, is a lot of the damage to foot paths is by vehicles parking and driving on them. Do we also not to look at investing in repairs but also looking at enforcement where cars can't fit on a cycle path, so they will put two would wheels up on the kerb as well. We also need to look at that aspect of it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: Something that came to me there, we meet with Irish Water on a regular basis, with the public lighting maybe we could meet with the contractors once every six months and have clinics here, because I don't know whether the frustration is coming across that the lights not working at this time of the year, would it be possible to have a clinic maybe with the contractor, just to have a chat to them and let them know what is going on, on the ground.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

COLM: Cllr Matthews, we have no evidence to suggest that the damage being caused to the footpath is as a result of vehicles parking on them, I am sure it has an impact. Obviously the issue of enforcement is probably one more for Síochána and it's something we can bring up, the Council can bring up in terms of its policing plan in committee. In relation to a

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clinic, I will explore that with the contractor, but you can rest assured councillor, that the contractor is well aware of all of the faults that are out, we are on to them on a daily basis in relation to specific faults that are not only brought to our attention, but the faults that are logged by yourselves on to the fault logging tracker as well, but look I will check if that is a viable option to have a clinic.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. That is, Brian.

BRIAN GLEESON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, before I move on I will answer Cllr Glennon's question regarding the carrying over of funding, any unspent money in the discretionary funding for the Municipal District. We have carried it over for the following year so that will be the case again going into 2020.

The next areas we are looking at are water services, division C, expenditure of 7.5 million, income of just under 7 million on pages 96 and 113 to 114 environmental services, expenditure of 2.4 million and spending of 1.1 million. Details are on pages 98-120 in the report. There is a crossover between directors of division, so Colm as responsible for the water services division C and part of E in relation to the emergency services, as in fire operations and then Sean Quirke will be dealing with part of the C and non-Irish Water element and the rest of environmental services. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Anyone have any questions? Cllr Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: We are meeting Irish Water next Monday and obviously one of the six monthly questions we ask them is in regard to upgrading of storage facilities in both Tinahely, obviously Aughrim and Avoca and other areas come into it, but certainly they make the point to us that there is a need for a contribution from the local authorities as well, that we do have a Service Level Agreement for 12 years with Irish Water, but it appears to them they are looking for, whether it be logistics or financial support from the local authority in terms of upgrading those schemes, we have had a commitment here in the past that we would engage with them at every level, to try and progress an improvement in those schemes and certainly the information I had that 300,000 that was mentioned earlier on in terms of compensation with regards to the rates from Irish Water, that that money is forthcoming and again we are talking about it being spent in housing.

I think that, from my point of view, that money could be used in some form or another, to progress with Irish Water in terms of carrying out those improvements, that is so badly needed in terms of being able to develop housing in the likes of Shillelagh where Wicklow County Council have applied for planning permission for 20 houses that are needed in the area, it's certainly being held up because we do not have sufficient,

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apparently anyway, a lack of sufficient capacity in the sewerage system, so I certainly would be looking to try and progress the thing, but I think that 300,000 is out there at the moment, that is proposed to be coming from the Department in relation to Irish Water could be used to start the process, with Irish Water in terms of improving those facilities, thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Any other questions?

COLM: Councillor, Irish Water is the national water utility, so investment decisions that are taken in relation to the public water network and the public wastewater network are matters for Irish Water. As you say, we are working under an SLA with Irish Water and an annual service plan and we carry out the works that are funded by Irish Water under that plan. We have raised the issue of extra capacity at all of our tier 2 and tier 3 meetings with Irish Water in relation to the smaller plants throughout the county, we have raised that issue, for them, but in, at the end of the day, it is a matter for Irish Water as to where their planned investment goes into the future.

CLLR BLAKE: Look, Irish Water, seems to be making the point to us, we want a contribution from the councils, whether it be from the development levies or wherever else, but we want a contribution from the councillors in terms of being able to upgrade these small schemes. They are not huge money, we are not talking about millions or anything of that nature, the millions is spent on the N11 or railway lines and improvement and I have always supported whether it's great for Wicklow, improving the N11 or N81, but certainly in terms of local small towns and villages, we are being left behind in that regard and I think if there is 300,000 that is supposed to be coming from the Department in terms of additional funding it's my belief that 300,000 should be used to start the process of upgrading the small water and sewage schemes, so I am just restating what I have said in regards to it, but certainly Irish Water indicating to us time and time again, we want a contribution from the local authorities as well.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Cathaoirleach, they are capital schemes and if we are to put funding there it would have to come from the likes of development levies and I know the rural regeneration and development funds, some of those grants are saying they can put funding into water schemes in small towns so we will have a look at that. But the 300,000 you mentioned we haven't got it yet, we haven't got a letter, we may get it, but that is intended for the revenue budget and for compensation in relation to this Irish Water issue where we are not getting, we are getting more compensation than we are getting for the rates so that money has to be ring-fenced in the budget and my recommendation is it's spent on housing but we will certainly liaise with Irish Water and how we can expedite the small schemes.

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CLLR P KENNEDY: I fully accept what he is saying but also in terms of what Vincent Blake is saying I also agree with what Pat saying as well. Irish Water are holding the small towns and villages in this country to ransom and we need to waken up and accept that. I know in Aughrim and Avoca we cannot build a house, so we have a problem here and Irish Water are the problem. We are talking about the housing crisis, if we were to build 20 houses in every village, there is 11 villages in my area, that would be over 200 houses and Irish Water have a role to play and we need to be putting pressure on them, the manager said they have raised it at the meetings in tier 2 and 3, but they didn't tell us what their response was, because the response they are giving me at the clinics is that it will be on the 2025 programme of works, maybe looked at it then but not until then. That is too far away, lads, in all fairness, we need it now, because these people need houses in these villages. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, if there is no more questions for Colm maybe Sean Quirke could...

CLLR BOURKE: Can I have an update on the remediation of the land fill in west Wicklow I didn't see that included and the effect, is there any budgetary effect on that this year or next year?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Cathaoirleach, as I said at the last council meeting, there is consultants appointed to that and they have done a lot of work to date in terms of geophysical surveys and site investigation and surveys on the river and all of that. All of that work is ongoing, they look to have a remediation plan by next May and we then have to sit down with the owner was site and the PA in terms of agreeing that and it would be into the following year when that will be agreed. The Department are well aware of all of this, they have paid the funding for consultancy fees to date, we would expect them to be paying the capital works in relation to this and they are engage with us, they know it's coming it's under capital plan, but at the moment the focus has to be on preparing the remediation plan and, as I say, that will be ready next May. There is no major budgetary implication for next year.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, questions for Sean Quirke on Section C and E. Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Page 32 Section D am I okay for this one with Sean?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes.

CLLR S CULLEN: It's the second paragraph and I am just not entirely clear, it's to do with the contributions a total of 267,000 files were closed in 2019.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry that is for Colm but continue with your question.

CLLR S CULLEN: And a further 806 customers are being monitored at present. I suppose I am not clear what that means, is there 267 files closed because they have finished paying their contribution and also the 806 being monitored at present, are they being monitored in that there is

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an arrangement in place in terms of the revenue, how much is outstanding to this council with regards to contributions and equally, what type of a system have we in place, are these, to collect the contributions basically, that is the question I have.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry that is Section D, so any further questions on Section C and E before we move on to D?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I know I will be breaking the rules by saying this and you will probably give out to me, but I want to take the taunt to commend Sean Quirke for his work for the council both in Bray and in County Wicklow, we were talking outside we first met in 19 when I was a newly elected councillor and he was the new appointed housing officer in Bray. I presume we will get another opportunity but I wanted to thank him for his work for the county and his dealing with me. I just have to one simple question on E and it is something that comes up every year in the Chief Executive's report where he recommends that the mobile recycling service in West Wicklow is withdrawn. And it has appeared again today on page 47.

Now I am not sure, maybe the representatives from west Wicklow have already discussed this and if they have and they are happy with it, fine, but I just think it's a retrograde step, it's the only area that doesn't have access to recycling facilities and I would like to know what is the justification for it and I will also be interested to know if local councillors maybe have a view that it is the right thing to do. I don't want to interfere with that, but it doesn't give the right impression considering the fact we are trying to encourage recycling.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: I also had a question in relation to the development levies and the outstanding monies being asked and the other question I had was the process of taking in charge estates. Are there particular problems and issues around that with developers. I see we have a large number of outstanding.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you on division?

CLLR WALSH: D.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are still on C and E.

CLLR WALSH: You thought you said D.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sean will take C and E and then we will move on to D. Any other questions on C and E? Sean, if you want to go back to Joe.

SEAN QUIRKE: I like it so much I am coming back next Monday. The mobile recycling in west Wicklow, that is a service that we have continued to provide, there are alternatives in place for householders where commercial companies are collecting. The standard of the collection is very low in that there is a lot of mixed waste going into it, so it's being



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used maybe not in the way that it was intended. And, what we would propose to do is where there is an alternative in place that we would withdraw the service from those areas, over a period of time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so, are you happy to go on to D now?

CLLR WALSH: Can I add to that, just to clarify the amount in the budget for mobile recycling is unchanged from last year. So if you look at alternatives but the actual money provision is unchanged from last year, so there is no cut.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So now questions on, we have one in from Shay already.

CLLR BLAKE: Just to clarify that, so does the recycling remain there in that area? Can the recycling remain in Blessington if we can't find an alternative to it? Finance is there to keep it going, but it's a case if we find an alternative system we can do that in the meantime, in the meantime the lorry that is there at the moment will remain there?

SEAN QUIRKE: Unless there is an alternative. It's not proposed to cut off the funding.

CLLR BLAKE: We have had the same every year, it has been proposed and we haven't spent it.

SEAN QUIRKE: We have had to spend money with going out and enforcing and examining what people are putting into the recycling, it hasn't been pure recycling and what happens is if it's mixed it all goes to landfill.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, I think, sorry, Cllr Walsh you had your question for Section, so we are taking questions on Section D and G for Sean now.

CLLR WALSH: The question has been asked by Cllr Cullen in relation to development levels and the efforts being made to collect and the second question I had was are there issues around the taking in charge of completing housing developments? I see we have a large number of them outstanding.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Yes, Cathaoirleach, just in relation to D, I think. It's the enterprise park we have in Rathdrum. I have had a number of people complaining to me that nothing is happening there for a long time now. It's ideally located, it's got the train line service there, for commuters to come to it, why can't we locate businesses in our own county so that people won't have to travel on the congested motorway to Dublin, so I mean we have waste water treatment, we have water there, why are we not able to attract businesses to locate there in our enterprise park? That is the question. So, I am putting that up to yourselves to answer that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think we will leave that for Tom Murphy, that would be more his area when he comes on.

CLLR BOURKE: Okay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

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CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, can I just ask how much is in the capitals levy account?

SEAN QUIRKE: Okay, the, sorry, Cllr Behan, you mentioned page 32, was it? I am trying to get to the right page.

CLLR WALSH: The second paragraph on page 32T.

CATHAOIRLEACH: D03, is it enforcement? It's to do with the contributions.

SEAN QUIRKE: I must have a different page 32.

CATHAOIRLEACH: D03 enforcement.

SEAN QUIRKE: That is not for develop. Contribution, but look it, it doesn't matter. I am not sure what page you are working off. Developing contributions, when they are, when the development commences, the development contributions are invoiced that the point in time, so, for instance, if a development of 200 houses is commenced in December, you would have a balance showing as being outstanding in January, although not a house would have been built, so we actively follow up on collecting the contributions, we have full-time staff involved in that and it's very rigorous and successful, the collection of contributions, the amount in the capital account, maybe Brian has that figure, I don't have it off the top of my head.

The taking in charge again is a process, we take in bonds for housing schemes and we don't release them until such time as the development is of a standard that we can take it in charge, without it being a burden on the council's finances, so in some cases that means that we do the work ourselves, but in most cases the fact that we have a bond in place means that we have sufficient leverage on the developer to complete any outstanding works, but it is a labour intensive process as well in that you are all the time monitoring to see what is about done, the developer comes in and tells you something has been finished and you have to come out and inspect it, maybe it's not finished and he does some more work, so there is quite an amount of work in that. Once it's taken in charge, then the roads and services, as regards say surface water and so on, come in as part of the council's infrastructure to maintain, hence it goes into the roads budget etc.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: I just maybe reiterate what I said there. With regards to the contributions, it says here, a total of 267 files were closed to date in 2019 and a further 806 customers are being monitored at present.

SEAN QUIRKE: Sorry, I have it.

CLLR S CULLEN: I don't understand exactly what that means. Is the 267 files closed, are they closed because they have finished paying their contributions.

SEAN QUIRKE: Yes.

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CLLR S CULLEN: And the 806 customers being monitored.

SEAN QUIRKE: They are ongoing developments or they may have arrangements to pay off so we have to monitor those as the money comes in.

CLLR S CULLEN: But in terms of revenue, how much would be outstanding and how long would it be going?

SEAN QUIRKE: Largely they would be current files, there would be very few going back over long periods of years and, as I say, it can be outstanding on the accounting system, because we have issued the invoice, but in fact we wouldn't be collecting it, maybe only in phases, if you have a big housing scheme, you would only collect the development levies as the houses are completed in phases.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

BRIAN GLEESON: I will just get the figure. The, under the development levy scheme there is approximately 65 million for development levies, the debtors' figure at the moment is 13 million.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that it for questions for Sean? Okay, if Director Murphy and I think Lorraine can give an answer to Sylvester Bourke while Director Murphy is coming down.

ADMINISTRATOR: Just to say that the council has expended a huge amount of money in bringing Avondale Business Park to where it is today and there is a business located there. I have sat down with a number of businesses who have expressed an interest to locate there and I would be hopeful. I don't know, to answer your question, why, I don't know why, it's a fantastic park, it has all of the facilities, it looks really well, so I would be hopeful in the future. We will continue to drive it, as place for business.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Now, Director Murphy will be taking questions on D, G and H. I can't believe he is getting off that lightly. Sections D, G and H. D is page 103. And then, so page 103 and page.

BRIAN GLEESON: Just in relation to what director Murphy is in, Mr. Quirk would have been in planning element of D, director Murphy is in relation that... and operations of an industrial and commercial facilities. So that is his particular area under D.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

CLLR MATTHEWS: It's a question on Section G in relation to maintenance of piers and harbours. There is no breakdown on the amount that is apportioned to each of the piers and harbours we have in the county, but in terms of the maintenance of harbours, is that carried out by centrally by Wicklow County Council and not by Municipal Districts and we had storm damage to Bray Harbour and I want to know does the repairs come out from that budget or is there a storm budget we can draw down from.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That might be for Sean, but we will keep going with the questions. Cllr Leonard.

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CLLR LEONARD: It's just in relation to division G, I just want to ask, as part of the budget, has funded been allocated to fill the position which has been lost for the harbour master in Wicklow and Arklow. Am I on the correct section? And also the figure for the coastal protection, do you think it's adequate and can we look at maybe increasing the priority of this in the budget for this year or next year. It's a very important matter and also are there any plans to incorporate a budget for continuous maintenance for a dredging programme for Wicklow's ports. We have a lot of good infrastructure that could be used and I think that is going to be an important thing going forward as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I want to concur with what Cllr Leonard said. Arklow is a maritime town, we do need a permanent presence down on the harbour because hopefully in the near future there should be announcements about Arklow and the offshore wind farms, so, I am down the harbour fairly often as are other councillors and it's difficult to contact someone. I understand that one person has gone, or about to go and I am just concerned that there will be, we will have no personnel at the harbour, so we need some assurance that there is going to be a permanent person there, some days of the week, as I say, it's going to be a busy port into the future and the last thing we want is that we have no people present to deal with inquiries or whatever. It's all right coming to Wicklow to get answers and whatever, but you need a permanent presentation in the harbour, so I wanted an assurance that there will be one.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think a lot of those questions are directed at Sean, so if he can answer them and then Tom can answer ones relevant to him. And you thought you were getting away lightly.

SEAN QUIRKE: I needed the exercise. There is a breakdown for the expend future on harbours. It breaks down 30,000 for Bray, 267,500 for Arklow and 394,000 for Wicklow, just in relation to the harbour master duties, the harbour master will remain as is at the moment and that is Paul Ivory who has the responsibility for both harbours as harbour master. There is a vacancy at the moment and we are just reevaluating the role that was there, maybe to change or expand it and then we will replace it's person who was there previously who has left us at this point. With regards to, there isn't any specific budget in for dredging, so that is not in the budget as it stands it he moment. Coastal protection, there is a whole coast evaluation happening at the moment but that any expenditure on that will go into a capital budget.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you. I think this is the section dealing with enterprise centres, I am not quite sure, but I would like to say there is a proposal which has been in the planning, in the development plan for over

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ten years for an enterprise centre in Greystones and that is the subject of a planning application where submissions have to be in in about ten days' time. I think it's important that the council gets to gripped with this enterprise centre as no work has been done on it by the council and ensures that the proposal, which is in the strategic housing development, is adequate, which I think at the moment is only half the size it needs to be.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ferris.

CLLR FERRIS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I want to query those figures that Sean read out there by the harbours. Bray is getting 30,000 compared to others with the six figures, maybe I am miss something, but I wanted clarification on that.

SEAN QUIRKE: It's straightforward, because the other two are ports, because Wicklow and Arklow are operating as ports, so Bray doesn't have a harbour master, the 30,000 is for maintenance and that storm damage will come out of the maintenance figure. There is some remaining for this year and then we will have 30,000 again in for next year.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay and then Tom, if you want to answer your ones.

TOM MURPHY: Just separately, Cathaoirleach, in relation to Bray Harbour, just that the members of Bray will probably be advised and informed that we have appointed consultants to prepare a study basically into how best Bray Harbour can be protected from the north easterly winds and how also, to maximise the use of the harbour, so we are in the process of meeting the consultants in the next week or so, so just so that the members are aware of that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay so, Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Just page 127 there for Tom Murphy, a couple of queries here. There is a figure there that, I have missed it somewhere along the line, it's for other income in miscellaneous services, 2.65 million, down from 3.2 million the previous year, could you give us a summary of what that other income figure is and secondly I note that Tom Murphy must have seen the Moorhead report because we haven't seen it, because he has left hash-pressed councillors for next year as last year. That is life I suppose.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Division F is for Michael Nicholson rather than Tom. Isn't it?

BRIAN GLEESON: I will look it up and get back to you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: A question for the director, in his role as manager in Bray I was interested to read the section on Bray Municipal District that you have commenced discussions with the NTA on an intelligent traffic system for Bray, this is why the lights are remotely controlled. It's an interesting system and it could work well in other areas if the going to be introduced in Bray in the future, just...



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CATHAOIRLEACH: I would like one of the remote controls that allow you to get through the lights, but anyway. Sorry.

CLLR MATTHEWS: Do Cathaoirleachs not get them automatically?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, director.

TOM MURPHY: Those discussions are taking place in order to, as you know, the operation of traffic lights comes under the control of Dublin City Council and this is a proposal really because of the increase in traffic movement and numbers in the town, you fix one problem and a problem emerges in another area, so this is just part of the ongoing discussions and how to address traffic flow in the town, Cathaoirleach. Hopefully we will be successful in securing funding for it.

CLLR BOURKE: I have to say, Cathaoirleach, that we are going through this meeting too fast, I was just reminiscing my first estimates meeting went on until 1.00am in the morning.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are hoping not to replicate that. So, if director Nicholson would like to come up.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: As you know there is a planning application in which will be adjudicated on and there is further land zoned for enterprise and units but we will come back to you on that one if that is okay. We will have a look at the application and the zoning.

CLLR MITCHELL: What is being applied for is half the size needed.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The zoning hasn't changed so if someone comes in at a later date that land is still available, but we have to adjudicate on the planning application we have.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, questions on division D and F under Michael Nicholson's remit. Members have any questions?

CLLR BLAKE: I already asked, you probably know the question in regard to the [INAUDIBLE] programme of it and the roll out of it and the lane drawing it down and equally so there is a great potential to increase the area we can make applications on, I do see other council, particularly Carlow County, that is a very agricultural county, but now they are drawing substantial benefits in terms of roads in Carlow, I am wondering if West Wicklow could be fortunate enough to be benefit from that funding in that area.

MICHAEL NICHOLSON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, in relation to the Clora programme, this area only affects a small area of Wicklow. And also, it only applies to certain types of work, generally the road safety types of works and the community facilities. What we do is in our section we make the application in consultation with the two MDs and when the applications are approved and the money is allocated, it's up to the MDs to do the work and what you will find is they have to work around their already busy programmes, for example, they won't be able to do the work during the surface dressing season and when they are expecting other types of budgeted money, so they are trying to work around their own

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programme to carry out the works so there can be delays and often they have to end up waiting on the utility services, for lights and that, but we do keep a close eye on the Clora spend and all of the money is definitely spent every year.

We can't increase the programme, it's set by the Department, it's based on census population figures and based on townlands which have suffered a depopulation, so in a sense this comes out, they look at the townlands in the county that have suffered depopulation, there is very few of them in the county and that is where that programme plies. So we haven't had an extension to the programme, we still have the same number of townlands in the last number of years. The SPC asked last year that we apply for an extension, but the answer we got is it's based on census figures and will only be increased if the census reflects the same.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Just a couple of things, when I was going through this, I was looking for differences between the estimated outturn for 2019 and the estimated by Chief Executive for 2020, so there is just, sometimes there was a plausible reason, such as the climate change initiative and things like that, but there is one or two that just jump out every now and again. For example, under development management the estimated outturn of 2019 for general development promotion work was 33,000 and it's jumped to 195,000 for 2020 and the service support costs for tourism has gone from 105 for 2019 to an estimate of 187, I know it's not a major change, but it's still significant enough. So if you could just explain the reasons for those two jumps.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

CLLR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I like to commend Michael on his hard work in getting a lot of these projects over the line, such as the town and village scheme and a myriad of smaller schemes which is a good way of getting money into our Municipal Districts, out into the community. But, I would like to see, perhaps, some of the more people that are more disappointed that they didn't qualify, for example, Barndarrig in Avoca, didn't get funding and perhaps he would ensure there is an even spread of successful projects throughout the district into the future and I would find it much more helpful if, as councillors, we had more advance notice of the types of projects that are being applied for funding so when we get queries we are in a better position to answer them when we know what is being applied for as well and perhaps the manager might build that more and also a bit more hard work, there is a lot of detail already in the manager's report, but I think that might be helpful to councillors, if we knew the minutiae of the projects being plied for before we get approvals so we can be better informed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

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CLLR S CULLEN: Compliments again to Michael and the staff, there is a huge amount of work that goes on in this section. I have sat on the SPC in the last five years and I could see the work they do, well done to everyone. A couple of questions I have, in 2019, we were successful, I think in the urban regeneration and development fund. Did we apply for the urban regeneration fund, sorry am I right in saying we got it in 2018? Did we apply in 2019? I know we were successful in the rural regeneration scheme recently which was a huge positive and my second point was on the leader funding, I think we have over a million still left in leader funding, do we have applications to cover that million and maybe what sections or what parts? I know there is a different criteria there, that will be funded, with that million euro that is left over, a little over a million.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. The question just in relation to the community CCTV scheme and that is a scheme obviously that we have to provide, I think it's 40% much match funding in that case some of the LPT increased money has been ring fenced towards that. My question is for the successful, I know we already, Arklow have been successful, I think it's been installed, Greystones and Blessington have new schemes being processed at the moment and there is others coming. When these schemes are actually provided, the follow-up costs, maintenance costs, in other words if there is issues down the tracks, where is the funding? Do they have to come from local funds? It's just to clarify where the funding is going to come from, if there is issues with the schemes going forward, if the cameras are down, who do we get to repair and where does the money come from? Just the second question is in relation to the Bray to Greystones click walk, I know we have money ring fenced to improve the works there, I know our section on the Greystones side is in need of addressing issues with drainage, I am wondering can we get an update on the situation there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Thank you, chairman. Just a couple of things, the town and village renewal, I know there is good work there, but Wicklow is still bottom of the list in the country, so I would ask the director what suggestions you would have for improving that rating, I think we got 250 in the announcement a month or so back. Any strategy we could implement to improve our drawn downs in terms of village renewal and in relation to that, anything we do have, can we make sure we spend it during the year. In Hollywood we are losing about 25,000, that was for various good reasons we couldn't draw it down this year, so just to avoid that scenario as well, so what plans would he seek to improve our ranking, because we are bottom of the 26 counties on the town and village renewal. Second question page 121, community grants. I see it

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appears to have dropped from 430 last year down to 361 this year. That is page 121, line F0401. I am just wondering if there is any reason for that particular reduction?

MICHAEL NICHOLSON: Thank you, members. In relation to town and village applications, we go out at the start of the year and we visit each of the five MDs, we do workshops and we do our living best to encourage parties to come from each of the MDs. We bring in guest speakers to speak about previously successful applications and we have done everything we can to get town and village applications. We sent in our full allocation this year, we were only successful in a small number, there is no rationale why we are not successful and if you look across the county most countries got four or five approvals, but some were higher than the others. If you look at the totality, while we might have done well in them, the Department do look at the totality of grant schemes and we also have huge applications in for some schemes and if we do well on those it would make the town and village pale into insignificance, because all of those schemes are 200 grand plus, if you look at last year, we did well as a county overall than others although we may have fallen down in some of the individual grant applications. But we will of course carry on this year and next year and try and get as many applications in and any help that the members can give us in putting together applications will be welcome.

Under the leader, yes, we have more applications for leader funds than we have money to spend, so we will have no difficulty spending that money, we are currently oversubscribed in all of the categories and so there will be no worries there, we spend our entire allocation as we did the last time. In fact we have overspent in some areas, that is how popular some of the areas have been. Under the community CCTV scheme, there is no doubt that all of those MDs against those schemes will have to provide money in their own budgets to maintain the schemes. Certainly there will be no central pot to maintain those schemes, so it will be up to each MD to provide a separate budget. They won't have to pay more of the capital cost, but certainly I imagine the maintenance cost will come from each MD.

The Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk, the work has been completed, there was a hold up on the Greystones side because of drainage works and the difficulty in trying to get the water off without it falling on to the rail line. As soon as that solution is reached that work will be done. As regards town and village we do try and spend the money in the year we get it. Sometimes there can be a problem, if we have to go through procurement or planning it can delay things. On the community grants, we have had 200,000 every year and we will have that again next year for community grants and also with regard to, there was one other

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question, the URDF. There has been no call for that for 2019. So as soon as those there will be applications under that.

CLLR BOURKE: It's coming in January, by all accounts that is what they are telling us.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay that seems to conclude. Cllr Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: The service cost in general, if you go down to page 15 they are significantly up in all of the sections.

BRIAN GLEESON: I will explain that, our central management costs have increased from 16 million to 18.4 million, that covers all of the areas such as finance, IT, etc, our pay costs and then pension costs and then it's spread across the services, so every year the support services figure will increase because of our central management costs increase every year. In relation to the question you asked, regarding DO4, the DO4 this year includes 100,000 for a tourism strategy implementation and also for the marine aquaculture strategies, 65,000 match funding. So they are two items there in respect of Cllr Bourke's question regarding the difference in the miscellaneous income, the drop is for the NPPR reduction of 400,000 and also the insurance dividend of 142,000 which we won't be getting in 2020, so that makes up the difference in the income reduction in that regard.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Brian, could you clarify why the community grants is down 60,000?

BRIAN GLEESON: As the director said, the Community Grant Scheme is being maintained at 200,000, there was a provision for a community enhancement programme and it's based on funding that we get, so I think it's based on expected funding next year, so that is a different programme altogether, but the actual community grant scheme, there is a couple of elements within that overall budget that you were looking at, it's broken down, but the 200,000 for the Community Grant Scheme for the local groups that is untouched and will remain at 200,000.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, members, that concludes all of the questions, so it bring us to 12.30, do people want to take their lunch and come back afterwards or continue with the meeting and have it after the meeting?

CLLR BEHAN: I would like to make a few comments. Normally with have be an opportunity to comment as it is 12.30 it would be important to take this opportunity to reflect on a couple of points so if that is possible I would like to do that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes.

CLLR BEHAN: First of all, I mean this is one of the most important functions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Within three minutes.

CLLR BEHAN: We have left, as councillors. And, to my mind, it's very important that we understand what has happened here. A huge



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miscalculation was made here in relation to commercial rates, we were told initially there was going to be a particular figure that would be used as a multiplier for commercial rates when the revaluation happened, that turned out to be totally inaccurate and as a result of finance director is saying, "well, actually, rate payers will now be 5% better off than they would have been if we had the old multiplier."

It probably doesn't mean anything in money terms but it's a miscalculation that happened between the valuation office and this office. I need more of an explanation about how that happened. That is the first point. The second point is that national Government have overseen this property tax which we all know, it has only replaced the rate support grant, so the people of Wicklow are paying 14 million roughly in property tax. It's only replacing what the Government used to give, we are not getting anything extra for it, but to add insult to injury they are now allowing Irish Water to get away without paying for the commercial rates they are supposed to be paying in 2020.

What we hear from the manager is an outrageous statement at a budget meeting that listen we might be getting 300,000 during the week and if we get that we will put that into housing repairs, bypassing all of you who are going to vote for this budget, but the people who are going to vote for it, they should be aware that the extra 300,000 is going into housing repairs, that is the councillors decision, but the other point is around the country and if you look at what has happened in Dublin City. They have postponed budget considerations they have gone back to central Government to look for the Irish Water rates they are owed. Government have said they will talk to them, up to last Thursday they were willing to talk to them. As far as I am concerned we have until early December, I think it's the 9th or 10th of December to make a decision.

Rather than postponing for lunch or adjourning for lunch are I propose we adjourn this meeting full stop and we go back to the Department of the environment and we look for the money that we are owed. Not the manager saying during the week we might get 300 grand but we will decide where it's going. At the very least we need more information and the new councillors are entitled to that information, so I propose we adjourn until next month Monday and we go to the Department to ask for the money we are being denied completely wrongly in my view, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Any other comments?

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Just to go back to what Brian said about the increase in the costs which obviously they are being spread across the Departments to be absorbed because they are all overheads, but we are

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talking about increases in pay, due to pay agreements which are now coming into effect and increases in pension contributions and gratuities for retirees and things like that. So there is about, there is just over 2 million increase which is being spread across the Departments, but is central Government contributing any portion towards those or is Wicklow County Council paying the whole increase, because it seems very unfair that we are, as Cllr Behan no longer getting the support grant and everything coming in in Local Property Tax is going to pay for this. Because if central Government aren't paying anything and we are paying it, that is effectively what our Local Property Tax will be going to pay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Two points back to Joe Lane there, certainly in the budget which was presented to us and again I thank everyone for the work they have done and particularly the corporate policy committee for the work they have done in regards to it. But to Joe Lane it appears to us, there is a substantial amount of increase in the amount of finance coming in from rent of our housing stock out there and I just am wondering what kind of a calculation did we do to increase that substantial amount of money that is coming in there and certainly it's welcome in that regard, but certainly there a lot of people out there living in our rented accommodation, who are pretty dissatisfied with the conditions they are living in and nevertheless their contributions are being made on a weekly basis has gone up substantially.

Just in relation to the 300,000, it's my understanding that that will not be part of the budget today. I think that was said at the outset by Brian himself, that the 300,000 isn't part of the budget and as Cllr Behan has said, it's for future considerations as to how that money is being spent. I said at the outset I don't agree with the way it's being spent, I think there are other ways out there, calling it an improvement or anything else in terms of looking at our water and sewage facilities out there, as capital expenditure, there is work that can be done and that can be classified as current expenditure future in that regard. So I do agree with Cllr Behan, it's not, that 300,000 is not part of the budget today as far as I am concerned in relation to it. So thank you, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Just on Dublin City Council, if memory serves me right, they reduced their property tax by 15%, is that not right? Now they are begging the Government to make up the difference, I was speaking to one, because they can't balance the budget. We are in a different situation, we increased the property tax, so I don't think that argument stands up, because Dublin City Council have until the right and they are begging the Government to give them extra funding. They made a mistake to reduce the property tax, which now, as I say, they are

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begging the Government to make up the difference. We are not into that, we made the right decision farce I am concerned, I made that decision, reluctantly to increase the property tax, so I don't see where Dublin City Council comes into it and I am not in favour of delaying the meeting whatsoever, because of Dublin City Council or anyone else.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr P O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Can I echo what Cllr Fitzgerald said here. I had to bring it up at the meeting after the property tax about the bridge and the councillors who received the back lash because of the decisions responsible councillors took in this chamber. While I appreciate Cllr Behan's because of his advice, I am a new councillor, we were able to put the questions to the director before this meeting and were able to get satisfactory replies so I am not sitting here to start putting off meetings I feel we have to do the responsible thing for our constituents and pass this budget today, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Just a query in relation to that 300,000 figure there on the Irish Water rates, Cllr Blake obviously made a comment that it's not part of the budget process, so rather than decide today that that goes into housing, I am sure that is a decision that can be deferred to a further meeting, due to the fact we don't have that money at this point in time, thank you.

BRIAN GLEESON: Cathaoirleach, I will just answer a couple of issues that were raised by Cllr Behan. Regarding the rates and the ARV there wasn't a miscalculation, we received correspondence from the Department on the 8th of November in relation to the extra 2.4 million that had been identified for the appeals from the valuation tribunal, so that wasn't confirmed until the 8th of November, that has been added into the equation. In relation to the Irish Water rating we are going to receive money from Irish Water for a rating, however it's not going to be as much as we were self-receiving from the Department as compensation.

There is a total of eight local authorities that are losing because of this change of system, by using a global valuation for the utility of Irish Water and splitting it by population of each county, as far as I am aware, Wicklow is one of the few that will be receiving funding in this regard out of the eight, not everyone is going to, that is my understanding, so I think we are in a fortunate position if we do get that 300,000 compared to other local authorities and I would echo what Cllr Fitzgerald said. I was here in September and I made the point that we had a couple of tough decisions to make, we either made a tough decision in September in relation to the Local Property Tax or we made tougher decisions in November in relation to having to cut expenditure or increase charges, like what Dublin City Council have to do now. I would also reiterate that

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the increase we did have in Local Property Tax, we took the opportunity to ring-fence that for particular projects and initiatives that will benefit the people of Wicklow. Thank you.

CLLR BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, sorry, the point I made was about the multiplier, not the amount. I am talking about the multiplier was changed from the indicative multiplier we were told at the commencement of the revaluation process, it was a multiplier which has now been decided on and I want to know how did that come back.

BRIAN GLEESON: Because we have the indicative. That is why I was calling it indicative and that was clearly stated at the time.

CLLR BEHAN: [INAUDIBLE]

BRIAN GLEESON: You don't have to adapt the indicative there was no agreement. It's an indicative multiplier. There was a representation, proposed valuations were issued by the valuation office back in March/April, there was a period which allowed rate payers to make representations to the valuation office, after that the final valuation certs from issued in September, obviously they changed, some people got increases and some people got decreases following the representation period. The final valuation list is now based on what the final ARV figure is 0.217. The fact of matter is it's reduced, so it's of benefit to every single rate payer around the country. It's of benefit to. So that has always been the way and that is the proposed, there is an indicative, based on the proposed valuations when the appeals are processed is there is a final list and then the final ARV is calculated, so it's not a case of a miscalculation. That is the process.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Two things in relation to what you said. First of all the provision for future losses on appeals, the 2.4 million, could you explain how that is, where that figure came from, what it's made up of and secondly in relation to the other indicative multiplier, did that have built into it a provision for expecting that people's appeals would drop, would lower what the property tax would realise? Why else would it end up in the final indicative figure end up being 5% lower than what was originally estimated? Like where did that original figure come from? Did it have a provision in it, a multiplier expected outcome, did it have then a provision to say we are going to have appeals, so we will end up maybe over estimating it by 10% and then the appeals maybe led to it, maybe an overestimate of 5%, so people are 5% better off, see that Howe that indicative multiplier came up and where the 2.4 million came from.

BRIAN GLEESON: The indicative multiplier and the proposed valuations W very no input into that, the valuation office are an independent entity, they determine the valuation, the original one, that was based on their calculation and methodology and criteria. What I do know, we wouldn't have the detail of how that is calculated, but if in case where my some

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rate payers didn't engage with the valuation office at the outset and provided no information, didn't make a return, then the valuation office may have put on a figure, similar to another business in the locality, subsequent to that they may have engaged at the representation period, and provided more up to date and accurate information to the valuation office.

In that case, that would have changed, so other than that, as I say, we don't come up with the valuations we have no input into the valuations, that is entirely a matter for the valuation office. In relation to the 2.4 million, as I stated, that was based on historical situation, this is the third national revaluation that has taken place, the previous two, there has been a situation which has arisen where local authorities have suffered from losses that have materialised from the valuation tribunal, in relation to appeals, those losses haven't arisen for two or three years down the road, so the legislation was changed in the summer to allow for a provision to be made for those future losses. To address that situation.  
CLLR TIMMINS: What is the methodology?

BRIAN GLEESON: The 2.4 million is based on the valuation, set by the minister. We just got the figure from the Minister, it was based on advice given to him by the valuation office. The actual calculation methodology used to come up with that figure we don't have access to.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just if I could go back to, with the director on the development contribution fund and the levies. The director said there was about 65 million on account there. Is that correct?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I say when we are finished answering these questions, we are going to go to lunchtime.

CLLR BEHAN: I made a proposer.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You haven't a seconder, so.

COUNCIL MEMBER: I second that.

CLLR TIMMINS: My question is where does that 130 going? What are we using it for? And I might have a follow up question to that in a minute, but that is the question I am asking.

BRIAN GLEESON: I explained this at the CPG. The 65 million, first of all we don't have, that is not pure cash that we have, the capital accounts have a number of deficits that were, we are undertaking an exercises to use the levies to offset capital that have and we will have to use develop. Levies for are that. Also, 13 million of that 65 is in debtors which still has to be received. In addition, we just don't put money on to account and leave it there, we have a cash flow that we have to manage, our housing scheme has been cranked up over the last 12 months and we have to pay in advance for housing developments and then wait, you could be a



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number of months waiting for the funding to be refurnished from the Department. We have to manage our cash accounts, that is why the money is usually on short-term investment deposits, whereby the interest, anyone who has money on investments, you will know it's miniscule, I think it's 0.2%. We don't have a huge lump of interest.

CLLR BEHAN: Just on a point of information, if I can, the finance director mentioned, I don't know if you have had a meeting this morning.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes.

CLLR BEHAN: I like to know what happened at that meeting, but looking at the minutes of the last meeting, there was reference to the refurbishment of the council chamber and the area outside. Not mentioning this at all - not mentioned in this at all, the book of finance for next year. It's in the minutes it's starting in January, not a reference here at all. My recollection from the last time this was discussed in the old council was this was going to cost up to million euro do. Most councillors who are here have never discussed it, don't know probably very much about it and I want to know why was that not referred to in the statement to the members as distinct from the corporate policy, but could you tell us what happened this morning as well, Cathaoirleach, because I think we are all entitled to know what happened at that meeting.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Literally at the meeting this morning we went through the presentation that Brian made to us when the meeting started. That was the only items discussed at the CPG this morning and it was effectively a run through all of the slides that Brian was going to present to the meeting.

CLLR BEHAN: Repetition of this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes, there was no additional information.

CLLR BEHAN: Okay.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: And the chamber scheme is the same as others.

CLLR BEHAN: It's not mentioned in this.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: This is the revenue budget for this year.

CLLR BEHAN: Why did you not mention it.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: It was in answer to a question in relation to the previous CPG, but it is mentioned here some place in relation to the works in the building, it's a specific capital.

CLLR BEHAN: [INAUDIBLE NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC].

CATHAOIRLEACH: I said we are breaking for lunch we, coming back at 2.00pm, if we can continue with questions at that stage.

CLLR BEHAN: [INAUDIBLE NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC] I propose we adjourn and go back to the Government...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I just say that I had said.

CLLR BEHAN: [INAUDIBLE NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC]

CATHAOIRLEACH: I said we were breaking for lunch before you got a seconder, so we will do it after lunch.

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ADMINISTRATOR: That is just one proposal from the floor in relation to this, there will be others and we will take them all together.

ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH UNTIL 2.00PM

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, I know the room is... I am just coming in to tell you that... there is, having all sorts of permutations outside, so I am adjourning the meeting until 2.15.

CLLR BEHAN: Right, we could have my motion before we adjourn?

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, before we broke up for lunch, I think Mags Crean had question if you want to start.

CLLR CREAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, it was just to second Cllr Behan's motion. I know a decision was made in September, but to me that was a blind decision and members made that in good faith to increase the Local Property Tax. To me what I can see in this budget is increased income we weren't aware of then. I know there is the 1.1 million going into the repairs and relets but I would argue that should be coming from central Government, particularly in the time of a housing crisis and in relation to the, others council, Waterford went back to central Government and they came together and managed to negotiate a 2 million subvention to deal with the Irish Water loss, so I think there is merit in taking a moment today to discuss and think out the options of using this as an opportunity, I know Cllr Matthews said it was a national issue, but I disagree, I think it's playing out locally.

The whole idea of the increase in property tax was to bring added value and to ring fence services for people in the county and I feel that can still be done, we can still have a balanced budget, but we can still use the opportunity in the meantime to go to central Government and put it to them that in Wicklow we suffer severely from decreased central Government funding. So, I would second Cllr Behan's motion in that regard.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are there any other questions in relation to the budget? Tommy Annesley.

CLLR ANNESLEY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just on transport, there was talk three months ago about the, with the council vehicles brand new vehicles and they would be doing away with the second hand vehicles and there was no mention of that in the budget report and I would like an application or the figures on this, how many vehicles are we going to lease and how much it's currently costing to keep the second hand vehicles on the road?

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I think that there is some uncertainty about money which may come from central Government of 300,000 and I think that that should be used to fund the districts for Public Realm expenditure, probably on foot paths and I think if you go back in the proportion that most expenditure does, we need to get these foot paths sorted out so people can walk safely around the area and I would propose that that money is used for that purpose and that we don't delay this meeting, we make a decision today and it will be on the basis that if this money comes, that it is used for each district for public foot paths and Public Realm.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I suppose, Cathaoirleach, what I have been looking at and you know, I spoke earlier on today about the capital programme and the funding and the interest that is on that capital funding and I feel that the foot paths funding has been depleted and we have further made to invest in foot paths, so am going to put down a proposal that this council provide 100,000 from the development contribution scheme and that this money be divided between the five Municipal Districts and that this money be used for foot paths only and I am proposing that here now. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Seconded by Cllr Paul O'Brien. Cllr Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Thank you, chair, just to follow on from Cllr Mitchell on the 300,000 that we are discussing with, from Irish Water, well the figure is actually 600,000 that we are less, we are less 600,000 from the revenue from Irish Water and like, I am going to make the point that we in Wicklow supply a large portion of the Dublin water supply from the Vartry Reservoir and I think we should be making a very strong case to the Department that we not only want the 300,000, but I think we should push for the 600,000 from Irish Water. I think the people of Wicklow are entitled to this money, I think it's sometimes forgotten about, the investment and what we offer in terms of the water supply for Dublin, the Vartry Reservoir supplies a large portion of the water supply to Dublin homeowner and I think we are entitled to that money, so I would be asking the management to pursue the 600,000 that we have been left short from Irish Water.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Can we just put on the record too, why I overall support the refund for rates and vacant properties. I believe we live in a diverse county and I don't believe there is a one size fits all solution to it and what concerns me today is that there is no appeals process for those who can't afford to rent out their property or to live in a rural area where there is not the demand in the same way as urban areas. So I would urge caution in terms of having an appeals

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process put in place. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Just on that point, again, Cathaoirleach, I would like to see if it were possible that a mechanism be put in place to address genuine hardship cases in that scenario, where people are having difficulty in renovating the properties and getting new businesses there.

CATHAOIRLEACH:

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I won't, this isn't with a view to delaying this budget, but for future budgets I would like to recommend that we seek more funding from central Government to cover things like pay roll costs and pension costs, because at the end of the day, people pay income tax for these reasons to pay for that. This should not be coming out of County Council's budgets, it's, these are public service jobs and at the end of the day we are, the public are paying a hell of a lot of income tax, USC, PRSI, employer contributions, right across the board and that should be covering costs, it should not have to come out of the budgets from here.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Brian or Frank do you want to answer any of those.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: In relation to the funding, the 300,000, if we get it, we haven't got it yet and I take Cllr Cullen's point, we will push them for as much as we can possibly get. It's a fair point, we are only getting 50% of what we lost, but if members want to use that on Public Realm foot paths in Municipal Districts that is absolutely fine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: In terms then of the possibility of an appeals scheme, if, say in the case where a property is genuinely unable to be rented, do they have the possibility to delist as a commercial premises, so that they don't incur any rates?

BRIAN GLEESON: Just to be clear, the legislation doesn't provide for an appeals process, for the rates vacancy. The criteria is that you are either vacant or not vacant and there is a number of criteria in relation to that, but I suppose, as part of the revaluation process, a number of derelict buildings and old sites would have been delisted, as part of the process and I suppose, any property can apply to the valuation office for delisting, subject to, I suppose their own criteria in relation to providing that, so I suppose that is, that would be an option for any rate payer or landlord in that regard, depending on what their future plans are for a particular property.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Kennedy, can you put in your proposal in writing please?

ADMINISTRATOR: I have that, that is okay, thank you, Cathaoirleach. It's okay. Additional €100,000 for the development contribution scheme to be given equally to the five MDs for foot paths only that was seconded by Paul O'Brien.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We will have Cllr Behan's first proposal that the

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meeting be adjourned...

CLLR BEHAN: [ INAUDIBLE NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC ]

CATHAOIRLEACH: When Lorraine is finished.

ADMINISTRATOR: I want to clarify Cllr Mitchell's proposal for a second. Cllr Mitchell you have proposed 300,000 that the money will be used for that purpose, if it comes and that it be put into foot paths and Public Realm and that you don't want to delay on the meeting.

CLLR MITCHELL: That is my proposal.

ADMINISTRATOR: Are you proposing the adoption of the budget subject to this?

CLLR MITCHELL: Yes.

ADMINISTRATOR: Do we have a seconder for that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I say that instead of saying 300,000, whatever money we get back so if we get the 600,000, so amount of money.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That seconded by Cllr Shay Cullen. Just to say that I am advised by the head of finance we have to make three decisions and we have to do them in order 1, 2 and 3, agree the annual rate of valuation, the rates relief percentage and vacant premises and then the adoption of the statutory budget.

CATHAOIRLEACH: What about Cllr Behan's and Cllr Kennedy's proposals.

ADMINISTRATOR: We take Cllr Behan's first.

CLLR BEHAN: At this stage...[INAUDIBLE NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC)...the basis of my motion and I want to thank Cllr Mags Crean for adding to what I said. Can I say to the members we are supposed to be meeting here next Monday anyway, I feel myself it would be wrong to make a decision without knowing what the outcome of the talks with the Department of the environment are going to be this week. So, what is the problem of waiting another seven days? It's not going to cause any inconvenience to anyone? We have a two-week period and then we will know, exactly how much money we have to deal with, rather than making a kind of a decision when we are not fully in possession of all of the facts. So on that basis I would appeal to members to support my motion, Cathaoirleach, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to take the vote?

ADMINISTRATOR: Okay so the proposal from Cllr Behan is that we adjourn consideration of the budget until next Monday and we go back to the Department and look for the refund of Irish Water money that we are owed. That is proposed by Cllr Behan and seconded by Mags Crean. Cllr Fortune.

VOTE TAKEN

ADMINISTRATOR: So that is 6 for, 23 against and one not present. Sorry, 25 against and one not present.



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CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. So, Cllr Kennedy's motion.

CLLR BEHAN: Can I ask a question on Cllr Ken December proposal. We are being asked to adopt a rate here, are we being asked to adopt the multiplier officially? So, theoretically councillors could adjust that multiplier.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Not this year.

CLLR BEHAN: The rate.

BRIAN GLEESON: Next year.

CLLR BEHAN: Next year it will be the same as the commercial rate in the pound. I just wanted to ask, I don't want to delay.

ADMINISTRATOR: Okay, Cllr Kennedy, again proposed by Cllr Kennedy that €100,000 be taken from the development contribution scheme to be divided equally from the five Municipal Districts for footpaths, proposed by Cllr Kennedy and seconded by Paul O'Brien.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Sorry, I was going to say.

#### VOTE TAKEN

ADMINISTRATOR: So that is 26 for, five against and one not present. Motion carried.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So then, Cllr Mitchell's proposal. But Cllr Mitchell's proposal that we would, whatever money we get from Irish Water, whatever money we get back in terms of the rates from central Government and Irish Water would be split proportionately.

ADMINISTRATOR: For footpaths and Public Realm that is proposed by Cllr Mitchell and seconded by Cllr Shay Cullen, but the budget is dependent.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Do that one first.

ADMINISTRATOR: Okay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So if this money comes back, whatever comes back gets split between all of the, proportionally between the Municipal Districts, which at least then gives the member, if we do get money some say in how it's spent? Okay.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: I want to clarify, so like we have just, that is a proposal just thrown out there, the Chief said earlier on he proposed it go into housing now it's proposed it go into foot paths and Public Realm, I don't know what the rationale for a decision like that, we are supposed to considering where money should go. Why can't I say, I know I can, but it's a decision to throw it into Public Realm and paths when maybe at a local level it's more useful in housing maintenance, so.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: I would prefer it went into Public Realm, because we have done other things before which are decided locally and are under the control of local councillors, that would be my preference.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: I think, Cathaoirleach, what we are saying here is this money is divided up into districts, the local members will ultimately have a decision to how it is spent. That has been my interpretation.

CLLR BEHAN: That the case can we clarify that.

ADMINISTRATOR: You have a proposal by Derek Mitchell and seconded by Shay Cullen that the statutory budget be adopted on the basis of. You can propose an amendment.

CLLR BEHAN: What does Public Realm actually mean? Can you define that? Fair enough if it goes back to the district to decide, whatever their priority, is that acceptable to Cllr Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Well Public Realm is foot paths and **streetscapes**.

CLLR BEHAN: It refuses housing repairs and Cllr O'Brien is making a point he might want housing. Can it be left to the districts?

CLLR MITCHELL: I would prefer it is called Public Realm, I think we need to make Public Realm better in Wicklow, that would be my preference hence it's up to the councillors if they wish to decide this should be left entirely to the districts.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay so the vote is... okay, so, so this, what we are voting on now is Cllr Mitchell's proposal that whatever money we get back from Irish Water is going to be put into proportionately into the Municipal Districts and it will be spent on Public Realm, does anyone want to amend that proposal?

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien, Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: I would propose that if it is to be proportionately distributed amongst the Municipal Districts that Municipal Districts decide what to spend it on.

CLLR McMANUS: I will second it.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: I just want to clarify proportionately. What going to be the criteria?

CATHAOIRLEACH: It's the number of councillors, to Bray has eight councillors and all of the other Municipal Districts has six, so Bray always proportionately gets more of a spend because they have a bigger population.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: So the other four councillors would get the same and Bray would get slightly higher it wouldn't be a different split.

CATHAOIRLEACH: No, it's done by the number of councillors.

[INAUDIBLE].

CATHAOIRLEACH: Grace McManus already has. We will take the amendment first. We are taking the amendment first, isn't it, so that will be Cllr O'Brien's amendment which is that it just goes to the Municipal Districts and can be.

ADMINISTRATOR: The Municipal Districts decide where.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Decided on was the word I couldn't think, decided on by the members of the Municipal Districts.

VOTE TAKEN

CLLR TIMMINS: Could I ask what we are voting for?

CATHAOIRLEACH: What you are voting for, whatever money we get back from Irish Water is put into the Municipal Districts and is decided on, the spend of it is decided on in the Municipal District by the members of that Municipal District and... not necessarily on Public Realm.

ADMINISTRATOR: It's an amendment to the motion.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Put forward by Cllr Mitchell.

CLLR S CULLEN: I got it wrong, I thought we were voting on Derek Mitchell's proposal.

ADMINISTRATOR: We were voting on the amendment. Do you want me to do it again?

CLLR S CULLEN: I wasn't clear...

CLLR MATTHEWS: Has my name?

CATHAOIRLEACH: It hasn't been finished. Do you want to take your vote?

CLLR S CULLEN: I would like to it to be done again.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can you amend Cllr Cullen's vote.

ADMINISTRATOR: Derek Mitchell made the proposal seconded by yourself. That the money, the 300,000 or whatever you get would go back to each Municipal District by proportion, Public Realm and foot paths, now the amendment that Cllr O'Brien put forward was the same spirit, except that the Municipal Districts decide where the money is to be spent, so we are voting on the amendment first, so if that failed we would then go to your proposal, if that is passed, but then it's passed. We will start again on that basis.

>>: [INAUDIBLE]

COUNCIL MEMBER: It's a good job they are not sitting where I am sitting.

ADMINISTRATOR: Is everyone clear on what we are voting on?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you all know what you are voting on?

COUNCIL MEMBER: [INAUDIBLE DUE TO NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC ]

CLLR BEHAN: I know it's a difficult job you are trying to have, so I am not trying to make it awkward. Can we clarify this is only on the Irish Water money? If I vote for this amendment or that proposal that does not mean I am voting to accept the budget.

CATHAOIRLEACH: No, the budget is totally separate.

CLLR BEHAN: It's only the extra money, be clear about that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: And it's only the money that comes in from whatever we get back from Irish Water, if we get anything back from Irish Water. So does everyone know, Cllr Cronin.

ADMINISTRATOR: This is the amendment, if this fails we vote...

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CLLR CRONIN: Are you doing the vote, clearly there was a lot of confusion in the room there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are going to take Cllr O'Brien's amendment, so what you are voting on now is whatever money come back from Irish Water goes proportionately into the Municipal Districts and the members of the Municipal District decide on it, it may not be as Cllr Mitchell proposed Public Realm.

CLLR MITCHELL: But it can be.

CATHAOIRLEACH: It could be, but... it's not restricted to Public Realm. Okay. It could be housing, it could be whatever you want. Obviously it can't be for having a good time, okay, for yourselves.

VOTE TAKEN

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: The reason we want to go to foot paths, bear in mind we saved 200,000 this year on our insurance claims, because we have been putting money in the last few years into foot paths, where Irish public bodies were telling us where the accidents were and that is why, in the last few years we have been doing the right thing in repairing foot paths and that is the reason why I support Derek Mitchell's proposal in that regard, that it will save us money in the long-term.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is great and you can still vote for Derek Mitchell's proposal in a minute, if you, if Cllr Dermot O'Brien's proposal falls, okay. Okay, so we are going to start again, we are voting on Cllr Dermot O'Brien's amendment.

VOTE TAKEN

ADMINISTRATOR: Okay, that is 20 for, 11 against and one not present. So that is carried.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So now we move on to the budget. It's to adopt the Statutory Annual Budget for 2020, but first of all we have to do the, is it, in which order? So we will go backwards. So first of all we have to take a vote on the rates relief percentage on vacant premises. So, at the moment, that is set at 60% in the budget in front of us. Can I have a proposer for that, please? Cllr Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: I would like to propose it is put in at 60%, it add as great incentive to landlords to look at the rent they are charging on some of the rent they are charge having experience in that area and look nor a realistic rent and that, in addition to the incentive for new businesses, I think is an appropriate approach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder for that proposal please. Cllr Stephen Matthews. Shall we take a vote on that.

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BRIAN GLEESON: Just to reiterate and remind people, if it doesn't go through and the 60% isn't passed then we would have to find 800,000 from the budget, because that is what it relates to, okay.

ADMINISTRATOR: So if that doesn't focus the mind.

VOTE TAKEN

ADMINISTRATOR: So that is 28 for, three against and one not present. That is carried.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so the commercial rates for 2020, to agree the annual rate of valuation, the ARV, which is set at 2....

BRIAN GLEESON: 0.217. Can I have a proposer for that. Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I propose 0.217 be adopted.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder for that, please? Cllr Blake. Yes, Cllr McManus.

CLLR McMANUS: We can't change that anyway can we?

CATHAOIRLEACH: No, but it's a whole statutory process we have to vote it.

VOTE TAKEN

ADMINISTRATOR: So that is 29 for, two against and one not present.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so then with both of those in place, I am looking for a proposer to adopt the Statutory Annual Budget for 2020, can I have a proposer, please? Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: I propose that the budget be adopted.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder for that. Cllr Paul O'Brien?

VOTE TAKEN

ADMINISTRATOR: 26 four, five against and one not present.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Before we conclude the meeting I like to thank all of the members for their time and their attention and I would also like to thank Brian, Frank and all of the directors of services and all of the staff, you can't get blood from a stone, it's not easy, everyone wants to do and make their money stretch as far as possible and provide the best amount of services within the county they can and at the same time have to live within their budget restrictions. I think the reason that we are not here until 1.00am this morning is a testament to the work that Brian and his team and all of the directors have put in in making themselves available to people for questions and making the process as simple as possible for the members and I would like to thank them very much. Thank you.

ADMINISTRATOR: Can I say before we go, we have our December



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meeting next Monday, the 2nd, just could remind councillors we have a presentation to our retired and non-elected members at 12.00 noon in the council chamber and then we will have Christmas lunch and start the council meeting proper at 2.00pm.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Look forward to seeing you all next week. Thank you very much.

THE MEETING THEN ADJOURNED

DRAFT