

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Wicklow County Council
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

Transcript of the County Council Meeting Held on 2 March 2015 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow



Text streamed live to the web on www.seewritenow.ie



Telephone (0404) 64355
Fax (0404) 64354
Email info@pcr.ie
Website www.pcr.ie

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7 Wicklow County Council Meeting, 2nd of March 2015:

8
9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Fáilte anseo. I welcome you all in Irish because from the 1st to the 17th
10 of March of course is Seachtain in a Gaeilge, it's Irish week. I know we have a great
11 announcement that Colaiste Rathin have the go ahead for planning for a modern state-of-the-art
12 school, there are councillors around the chamber like Cllr Thornhill and Oliver O'Brien who
13 actively promote Irish language and culture and they are both to be commended for that. So I
14 think it's fitting with Cllr Thornhill's encouragement just to start with a few words As Gaeilge.

15 Cllr THORNHILL: I think it's great to have this opportunity and to have Cathaoirleach leabairt
16 as Gaeilge, I think important for us as public representatives to, we have a great opportunity to
17 show the people in our areas that we are interested in our native culture, and as the Cathaoirleach
18 mentioned, after 20 years Colaiste Rathin have been given the go ahead to look for planning
19 permission to build a state-of-the-art up to date secondary school and it should do great for the
20 future of Irish culture in the Wicklow area, and especially in Bray, the area which I'm in, we
21 have three national schools.

22
23 From here onwards, if we all do our little bit to promote the language it's upwards and onwards.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay we're going to take votes of sympathy. We have recently the sad
25 passing of Una Timmins, Billy and Edward's sister, of course Una worked for their father, the
26 late Godfrey for a number of years, I think she worked for Billy as well, there was a huge crowd
27 at the funeral which was a testament to how well respected Una was held in both the Baltinglass
28 community and further afield in Wicklow and further. So my deepest sympathy to the Timmins
29 family on the loss of Una.

30
31 We have other votes, Cllr Snell?

32 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I'd like to pass a vote of sympathy to the family of the late
33 Anthony Doyle. Anthony passed away last week there, he worked for Wicklow County Council,
34 he was a rent collector in here for many, many years. He also was a fieldworker in compiling

1 the election register and keeping it up to date. He will be sadly missed, not only by his family,
2 but by his many, many friends.

3
4 Anthony led an extraordinary life, he dedicated it to community, he was instrumental in the
5 setting up of the Rathnew Development Association for many, many years. But I think his real
6 passion was in -- not just in drama, he won an All-Ireland for St. Brigid's drama group in
7 Rathnew back in the 1950s, he was involved in Wicklow drama group, involved in Rathnew, the
8 village players. Myth productions here in the town, and his other great passion in life was the
9 GAA.

10
11 He was president of Rathnew GAA club at the time of his passing. He won, he was a member of
12 the last hurling championship, which was the senior championship won for Rathnew in hurling
13 in 1950. 20 years later at the end of his playing career he won a senior football championship in
14 1970.

15
16 But the true mark of the man's passion for GAA was that he refereed up to the age of 75, which
17 is a remarkable feat. His other passion was the procession, the Corpus Christi procession,
18 Anthony organised it many many years, I had the pleasure of showing him some tapes that came
19 into my possession recently of a procession in 1960, I showed him some of the footage from it,
20 himself and a priest who was 93, both of them sat down and reminisced over many, many years.

21
22 The Corpus Christi procession is a true indictment to the community and people like Anthony
23 Doyle who kept it going, last year was its 100th year in existence. I'd like to extend my
24 condolences to Anthony's family, his wife Betty, his sons, daughters, grandchildren, some of
25 who are members of this local authority and working here still. So to Anthony, he is in our
26 thoughts and prayers. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor, other votes of sympathy Cllr Blake?

28 Cllr BLAKE: I too would like to sympathise with the Doyle family, we all knew Anthony for
29 many years.

30
31 But you said at the outset regards Una Timmins, she was well known, among the staff of the
32 County Council, from my own point of view I've known her quite a number of years, our dearest
33 sympathy to her mother Nora, to Billy, and Edward, and to all her brothers and sisters as well.

1 It's a big loss to her family and certainly a very unexpected death. We all knew she had her
2 difficulties with health over the last few years, but nevertheless when it does come, it came as a
3 major shock and surprise to everybody. The staff in here would have known the voice of Una
4 rather than the face of Una because she certainly, was in contact with a lot of staff and people
5 made reference to me who were at the funeral as well, the first time a lot of them had seen Una,
6 but nevertheless talk to her over the phone on numerous occasions over the years while she
7 worked for Billy and her late father as well. So deepest sympathy to the Timmins family on the
8 death of a very untimely death, at a young age of Una.

9
10 I'd also like to take the opportunity of Jim Tallon in Arklow, who was a very well known
11 election candidate, not alone here in Wicklow but all over Ireland as well. Reasonably young
12 age as well, he was buried this morning. So the family are well known throughout County
13 Wicklow in education and farming activities, our deepest sympathy.

14 Cllr McDONALD: Just like Cllr Blake I want to offer my condolences to the Tallon family, he
15 was from the Republic of Glasnos in Arklow, a colourful character, fully committed to his
16 beliefs, very generous with his time. I don't think we have heard the last of him, I think
17 everybody in the town and county have a story to tell about Jim and somebody, maybe some
18 day, will put pen to paper, but I want to extend my condolences to his family and his friends in
19 Arklow.

20 Cllr BRADY: Just a vote of sympathy to the O'Sullivan family in Bray for the death of Teddy
21 O'Sullivan, a former Lord Mayor of Bray, he was made Lord Mayor through a difficult format, it
22 was a community initiative at that stage, I think it was 1985, he became the Lord Mayor of Bray.
23 But he would have done enormous work in the Ballywaltrim area of Bray, a founder member of
24 the Ballywaltrim Community Council. Unfortunately Eddie passed away in the last week or so,
25 just condolences to all his family.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr O'Neill?

27 Cllr O'NEILL: Again I'd like to offer -- I'm not with it today, sorry about that -- my sympathies
28 to the Timmins family, especially Billy and Edward, on the death of Una. I've known Una for a
29 long time, I met her once or twice, but I know she didn't care about your religion or your politics,
30 she was a great help over the years, and I know even the day her last journey to the hospital she
31 was making inquiries about constituents and their needs or whatever, so she was a great woman.
32 And I especially extend sympathy to her brother, I know she will be sorely missed by the whole
33 of west Wicklow.

34 Cllr WALSH: I'd like to extend sympathies to the family of Ann Nolan, Ann was 48 years of

1 age, her funeral took place in Greystones this morning, I first got to know Ann through her sons
2 Keith and James, when they started to play hurling, she was a great supporter, her car was
3 always available to ferry young players to matches, she was also a member of the, long serving
4 member of the Cumman in Greystones, her son was the secretary of that Cumman. I'd like to
5 extend sympathies to her family.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. Cllr Vance?

7 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman, I'd obviously like to be associated with the vote of
8 sympathy to the Timmins family on the death of Una on behalf of the Fianna Fail group here,
9 very, very sad occasion for the Timmins family.

10
11 I'd also like to be associated with the vote of sympathy in regard to Eddie O'Sullivan, who was a
12 great contributor in the Boghall area, the community up there in Bray, he had a huge funeral.
13 And also to Cyril Dunne on the death of his wife Sheila, who was a long time in business in
14 Bray, a very popular man.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you councillor. Cllr Thornhill?

16 Cllr THORNHILL: I would like to, like the other councillors, express my sympathy to the
17 family of Eddie O'Sullivan. Eddie I would have known over the years and as a community
18 guard I really appreciated his presence on the main street, very colourful character and he had
19 been Lord Mayor of Bray at one stage and he was also involved with the BLB, and I must say
20 one individual that would really put you in good humour.

21 Cllr RUTTLE: As I said I'd like to be associated as well with the vote of sympathy for the
22 passing of Una. I first came to know her in 1980 and always found her a dedicated kind
23 individual who dealt with everybody fairly and in a kind manner, it was a great shock to the
24 family and my sympathy, all our sympathies are with the family at this time of loss.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you councillor. Thank you members. Just in relation to Anthony
26 Doyle, my own father passed away suddenly 20 years ago this month at a Rathnew GAA dinner
27 dance. Anthony was the Chairman, and was given the unenviable task of heading to Kilmac to
28 inform my mother, but handled it so well, that my mother has become a Rathnew GAA closet
29 supporter, it's not something I care to admit to but...

30 Cllr SNELL: I'll bring in a jersey next week!

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: But I was very saddened to hear of Anthony's passing, I'll let in the
32 manager.

33 COUNTY MANAGER: Chairman, just to say on behalf of all of the staff of the Council and my
34 own behalf I'd like to convey my sympathies to Edward Timmins and all the family on the

1 untimely and sad passing of Una, just to convey our sympathy on that and indeed to be
2 associated with the other votes of sympathy, perhaps also to convey our sympathy to the
3 Williams family, from Redcross on the death of Robert Williams last week. The Williams
4 family had been involved in the tourist committee and other development issues throughout the
5 county.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: We'll stand for a moment.

7
8 (Minute's silence)

9
10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Cllr Nolan?

11 Cllr NOLAN: Just very briefly Cathaoirleach. I'd like to send sincere congratulations to
12 Newtown United FC, they had a great victory last weekend in the Leinster Senior Cup, they beat
13 Shelbourne in Tolka Park, it was a huge historic day in the history of Newtown United and
14 Wicklow, it's had many great victories over here, this trumped them all, in May they are going to
15 play Bohemians in the next round, so fingers crossed they'll repeat that, they've had some year to
16 support them over the last 12 months this was another addition to that.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks congratulations, it was a fantastic achievement.

18
19 Okay I have a request for suspension of standing orders, Cllr McDonald I'll let you in first.

20 Cllr McDONALD: Thank you. I just want to call for suspension of standing orders just to
21 express my concern over the spending of public money on sending the retiring CEO on a trip to
22 America. I know it's been organised, but I just think that the money could be better spent and I
23 know the protocol is that these trips are used to highlight Wicklow, to highlight the county of
24 Wicklow to bring back money, jobs, investment, but I just don't think at this stage with less than
25 a month to the CEO retiring, that this particular trip will be of any benefit to County Wicklow. I
26 have a proposal that I gave to you, I wanted to put on the table, for consideration. I know we're
27 talking about this later on in the agenda if you want to...

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to read it out?

29 Cllr McDONALD: "As the CEO Mr Eddie Sheehy has announced his retirement, I am calling
30 on him to do the right thing and cancel his trip to America for the St. Patrick's Day festival as
31 this trip will be no benefit to County Wicklow as his retirement will be a week after he returns.
32 As a gesture of goodwill he should redirect the money to a homeless charity in Wicklow."

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, it's up to the members, do I have a seconder for that? Cllr Brady.
34 It's up to the members who can set time, quarter to five for this if the members wish?

1 Cllr BRADY: Agreed.

2 Cllr VANCE: I wouldn't agree with that. I don't think it's appropriate for suspension of standing
3 orders. Standing orders are supposed to be an emergency situation, this is not an emergency
4 situation as far as I'm concerned.

5 Cllr McDONALD: With less than a month to go it is a bit of an emergency.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay take a roll call on it. This is for suspension of standing orders to
7 discuss the matter, okay?

8

9 (Vote taken)

10

11 MS GALLAGHER: 13 for, 16 against and 3 not present. Falls.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we did have discussions on this late last year, the 3rd of November
13 councillors, it was agreed by the Protocol Committee, which is made up of all the parties. So
14 that falls. Okay. Cllr Brady?

15 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I'd also like to request a suspension of standing orders and
16 also in relation to the announcement by Eddie Sheehy, the County Manager or CEO, in his
17 announcement that he is going to retire, and also in relation to his disgraceful radio interview
18 that he gave on East Coast Radio last week, and some very, very hurtful comments and untrue
19 comments that he made during the course of that radio interview in relation to the deaths of two
20 Bray fire fighters that lost their lives here in this county under Eddie Sheehy's watch, as County
21 Manager.

22

23 I had previously asked Eddie Sheehy to apologise for those.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you requesting a suspension?

25 Cllr BRADY: I'm requested a suspension of standing orders to discuss Eddie Sheehy's
26 retirement. I see on item number 13 it's just down as, to note the retirement of Mr Eddie Sheehy
27 as chief executive, I think we need a full discussion on this issue, because I firmly believe there
28 needs to be an investigation into Eddie Sheehy's 14 years at the helm of this county. I also
29 believe he needs to apologise, and I also think he needs to retract those very, very hurtful and
30 untrue comments he made during the course of that radio interview last week, and certainly this
31 Council endorsed the verdict...

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Look, we're not having a discussion now.

33 Cllr BRADY: Mr Sheehy seems to disregard...

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Have I a seconder? Is that agreed?

1 Cllr VANCE: Chairman could I suggest that we take -- there's agreement that we can get
2 through the agenda fairly quickly, that's up to all the members here, we can take it in under 13.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay we'll take it under 13 then.

4 Cllr BRADY: As long as we get to item 13.

5 Cllr VANCE: That's up to the members.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We'll crack on then okay. To confirm and sign...

7 Cllr FORTUNE: Sorry chair.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune. Apologies.

9 Cllr FORTUNE: I want to raise an item on point of order. Yesterday we got a mail at 2.29
10 basically informing us about a cost, or fine of 7,000 that was imposed on the Council. I just
11 thought it was most unusual to receive such correspondence on a Sunday afternoon, and why
12 that happened.

13

14 I can recall the background to this because I was unfortunately involved around AGM time,
15 when I was basically shafted as I said at the time and talked about various things. It would
16 appear that there is questions that need to be explained about what we got yesterday, a bit of
17 detail about it, background to it, why certain paragraphs are written the way they're written
18 because there was a question asked here in the chamber only a short couple of months ago on
19 that matter, and we were basically told there was no issue, no problem. And now it transpires
20 that there is a problem, and also it necessitated a mail coming out on Sunday the 1st of March at
21 2.29. That's quite dramatic I think in anyone's language. So I would hope that we, on a point of
22 order that we can get an explanation to that.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think that's fair. I'll set aside at quarter to five and we'll get the director
24 of roads to clarify exactly what the issue is, okay. Is that agreed? Quarter to five councillor, all
25 right?

26

27 Okay we'll move on. Item 1. Confirm and sign minutes of Ordinary Meeting of the 12th of
28 January. Proposed? Cllr Casey. Seconded Cllr Nolan. Is that agreed?

29

30 Item 2, confirm and sign minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Monday 2nd of February. Proposed
31 Cllr Blake, seconded Cllr Bourke. Agreed?

32

33 Item 3 ...

34 Cllr BRADY: Sorry Cathaoirleach?

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry Cllr O'Brien.

2 Cllr O'BRIEN: Just under matters arising, since the last council meeting I received a further
3 e-mail, obviously since the way I clarified my position regarding staff was not acceptable and it
4 must have caused some offence, particularly when I mentioned pushing in filing cabinets and
5 things like that and producing nothing. I was not having a go at the ordinary staff, I was in no
6 way having a go at the ordinary staff, I am well aware as was recorded in the Bray People, the
7 few days after, that I had said that I know how hard the staff work. And that I said it was
8 administratively top heavy, just to clarify my position a bit more. I have a friend works high up
9 in the bank in America, he says I do very little, and he says the guy above me does even less, he
10 said it's the girls in the office that do all the work around here, so I'm not having any go at the
11 ordinary staff members here. What I was having a go about was, when I said they aren't
12 producing nothing, means you are producing something, two negatives make a positive. They
13 are obviously producing something. But I felt there was over -- I felt there was too much
14 administration, I don't feel that any housing officer or any waiting list would suffer if we built
15 houses. I'm worried the reflection of the Council, the administrative staff is so big, I use that as
16 criteria whether we are succeeding or failing, the bigger the admin staff the more you're failing
17 doing the ordinary work, that's my view. I know that I said it, I apologised if I did cause offence,
18 I apologise for that, but as well as that, I do feel that you are on a show like that you don't get
19 much time, I wasn't on the panel, I was out in the audience, I was not allowed to express my
20 opinion, people say things I wasn't happy, you can't come back in and say what I meant was --
21 Mr Timmins had a go at me about administration, he said Sinn Fein is the party with more
22 administrators, of course everybody laughed, but I was pointing out when you start a project like
23 we were starting the project of this country maybe 70 years ago you need a lot of administrators,
24 but 70 years later they are still there there's something seriously wrong.

25
26 There are uses -- the point I'm making is there are useful jobs in the country and they are useless
27 jobs that's the main point I'm making, it's very sad that the higher up you go the less do you and
28 more you get paid. We need to correct that in this country that's all I'm effectively saying, I have
29 the highest respect. I don't know how they do the work, the work they have to do. They are --
30 the work the ordinary girls in the office do, they are given that work. I couldn't do the work they
31 do. I would go mad if I was standing in an office five days, I'd be gone mad. So apologies from
32 me if there was any offence caused. Susan you were the one that sent me the e-mail, I apologise,
33 I was no way having a go at you or anybody else on the staff.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, I know you well enough to know you didn't intend offence.

1 We'll keep cracking on.

2
3 Disposals item 3. Consider disposal of 0.23 hectares in the townland of Crosscoole harbour,
4 proposed? Cllr Ruttle. Seconded by Cllr Nolan. Is that agreed by everyone? Okay. Agreed.

5
6 Item 4 consider the disposal of 31 Connolly Square north, Bray, 0.0012 hectares or thereabouts.
7 Proposed Cllr Vance, seconded by Cllr Matthews, is that agreed? Okay.

8
9 Item 5 receive a presentation from Mark, ready to go? Regarding flood risk assessment
10 management programme.

11 MR DEVEREAUX: Thank you members, I have two presentations, the very first is very short
12 and I have a longer presentation, you'll have to bear with me. You don't need to know all of it.

13
14 The OPW are about to start a process of consultation about what's called CFRAMS, the
15 consultation will be taking place over the next number of weeks, Wicklow County Council are
16 partners in the consultation process, we'll provide two of the venues, here in our building and in
17 Greystones. The objective of the consultation is to get people's input to the process which the
18 OPW have done so far and also to inform you of what's going to happen over the next year or so
19 about finalising this process. The process is important because it will be laying down for the
20 record areas that flood, areas that are known to flood, and they will be made available to the
21 public and it includes a lot of decisions over the next number of years and may influence
22 people's building of their own homes and indeed developing lands.

23
24 These are the locations when the consultation will take place, each consultation starts at 3pm
25 till 7 pm to allow people who want to go after work to attend. There will be OPW staff and RPS
26 Consulting Engineers will have staff there as well.

27
28 But also each of the consultation processes will start with a session during which the Council
29 Members, yourselves, will be given access to the staff, the OPW staff, some of our own staff,
30 Sorcha is providing some of her staff and I will be there at some meetings, we can't be at all of
31 them, you will see some are on simultaneously, again because of the way the OPW are rolling
32 this out to the whole country over the next number of months, so there's a certain amount of
33 doubling up. But we have asked them to do try and adjust some of the times they gave us so that
34 they would be in different municipal districts at different times so district councillors will be able

1 to go to their own district for the process.

2
3 Aughrim and Greystones/Kilcoole will be on at the same time, so Arklow district members can
4 go to one and Greystones to the other. So the important thing is it's starting at 2pm in the
5 afternoons in question, there will be OPW staff as I say and RPS staff available to give, to the
6 members, these will be closed to the public, only open to the members, the staff of the Council.
7 They are all starting at 2pm, except Greystones, which for some reason is starting at half one.

8
9 At 3pm each of the sessions will be open to the general public. If you want more information or
10 more detailed information about the studies and various areas the websites are there. Indeed
11 anybody can e-mail me if you want further information about it.

12
13 This is the more detailed presentation that I'll run through, because a lot of this will be available
14 if you attend. It's more specific to the process. CFRAM study catchment flood risk assessment
15 and management carried out effectively by OPW, but in our areas we're partners and involved in
16 it.

17
18 At the moment what paperwork is available is draft flood mapping, it's not finalised. The
19 objective is to give you an overview of the studies, the current status and some background and
20 explanation of maps, but there will be much more help available when you come to the sessions,
21 I'll tell you what the next steps are and guidance as to how to make submissions.

22
23 They arise from EU floods directive and our own law was SI122 of 2010, which gives OPW the
24 obligation and powers to go ahead and do the studies and notes the local authorities as statutory
25 consultees we call them, normally we're several stages we have an opportunity to be consulted
26 and make our comments on the process, we're just about approaching the point when we'll be
27 given our statutory time or opportunity to formally comment and this is, this process is a lead up
28 to that.

29
30 There was other pilot projects, effectively this is the overall study, nationwide study is based on
31 the river basin districts which doesn't much the county boundaries, we're in both eastern region,
32 which is the pink area on the map of Ireland and part of our county that's affected by the River
33 Slaney is in south-eastern region.

1 The project commenced in 2011 and '12 and the objective is to have the process completed and
2 in law by 2016. The roles and responsibilities, OPW are the competent authority and through
3 the Department of Finance they have funding and they have managed the process. They do all
4 the reporting, co-ordination and consultation, they are the main body.

5
6 Other public bodies local and regional authorities are partners, partly because of the way we are
7 involved, we have plenty of opportunity to be involved, we progress, tend to progress minor
8 works in the schemes some of you may shall aware, there are some headline schemes like River
9 Dargle flood defence scheme and River Avoca, they come under this in the sense they are
10 mentioned, they were not specifically covered under the process and I'll explain that in a minute.

11
12 We also have an obligation to have appropriate planning and development for the flood risk
13 that's built into it, but mentioned in SI122 which takes on board the outcome and where
14 appropriate there will be maintenance where schemes are put in place.

15
16 RPS are the consultants employed by the OPW to support the process and provide labour and
17 technical expertise to develop the process.

18
19 The objective is to provide flood risk management plans and the first thing to say is flood risk
20 management plans are not emergency response plans, nothing to do with schemes or studies
21 going on, construction projects going on. They are solely focused on flood protection -- solely
22 not solely focused on flood protection, they are focused on flood mechanisms. They don't
23 produce detailed designs and won't produce a set of works to progress immediately.

24
25 As part of the process the OPW and RPS looked at each of the catchments and within the
26 catchments they developed areas for further assessment. The bulk of the catchment is not really
27 affected by flooding maybe on the ground but the consequences are relatively low for farmland
28 and agricultural land, I accept there is consequences for farmland and agricultural land, but in the
29 context of this study the OPW have concentrated on what they call area of further assessment,
30 our areas are highlighted in blue on the map, on the out eastern area Baltinglass is the only area
31 on the River Slaney and on the other map the areas have been selected for further assessment.

32
33 The process will concentrate on them towards the end. The current status, we are currently at the
34 second of the boxes there where the flood hazard and risk maps are being prepared, which is the

1 information being fed inwards into the process at the moment. They still haven't started working
2 on the objectives, the options development or solutions nor the draft flood risk management
3 plans have been prepared yet. When the draft flood risk management plans are developed and
4 finalised they will be given to us for formal consultation, that's one of our statutory points of
5 consultation and objective being to have the final flood risk management plan in place. Which
6 leads to the question who does the solution and when? It's not part of the process.

7
8 The project tasks carried out at the moment are data collection, flood risk review, submissions by
9 OPW to EC Commission on that, surveys, hydrological analysis, flood risk assessment,
10 environmental assessment, consultation and engagement -- that's the stage we are at, at the
11 moment, the next two stages are down the line development of flood management options and
12 preparation of flood risk management plans.

13
14 The surveys have consisted of on the ground surveys, what we refer to as surveys topographical
15 surveys, also using aerial surveys from Ordnance Survey Ireland. Then surveying of the ground
16 and flood plains, there is commissioned surveys of defence assets, that's walls or flood defences
17 constructed in past times and property surveys, mostly to assess the amount and type of
18 properties that are in the flood plain or at risk in the areas.

19
20 There's been a significant amount of hydrological analysis, analysis of what happened to date,
21 historical events, developing catchment boundaries, analysing rainfall data built up over the
22 years of collecting data, hydrometric data that's on the rivers themselves, there's certain amount
23 of stations where, monitoring stations over the years measuring rainfall, river levels, then we
24 move into gauging station rating review which is each of those stations will have its parameters
25 mapped and logged and then those parameters are used to predict flow levels, there's estimation
26 of design flood parameters that's to estimate what design -- what if a flood occurs in a particular
27 scenario, they are referred to as design floods, they are floods against which they measure the
28 designs. Then there is joint probability analysis, that mean these look at different scenarios for a
29 lot of NFA they look at high tide event versus low to medium then high rainfall event and low to
30 medium tidal event. Usually a high tide and high rainfall don't happen at the same time, there's a
31 very low probability, so very, very rare occurrence, they do a combination of two different
32 occurrences happening in a catchment, that's joint probability analysis.

33
34 Sensitivity analysis means they look and see what if we got it wrong, what if our estimates are

1 out by factors, when we make a decision based on the study they usually test sensitivity, if they
2 make a mistake what are the consequences? And make sure that their confidence in their studies
3 match the sensitivity to future events. The future changes, that's to do with global warming,
4 factored into the overall.

5
6 The RPS have carried out hydraulic analysis, this is modelling, computing modelling estimating
7 the consequences of the rainfall and tidal events etcetera, I'm not going into detail on that for
8 you. Calibration and verification of deliverables, that's where they compare what they think will
9 happen based on studies with knowledge that may be on the ground, say the likes of our district
10 engineers, ourselves, they will have compared the flow, events they modelled with what they see
11 on their hydro-graphs, on their measurements they carried out on rivers themselves. They look
12 at survey flood depth information, things like trash lines they go and survey the rivers that have
13 risen and follow the trash line and see does it match what they predicted the water would come
14 up to, that's used, all this data is known as calibration data, it's all kept centrally by OPW and
15 used for studying other catchments, for instance if they study in Arklow they might look at other
16 catchments up around the north or eastern coast, some of the rivers behave similarly to the river
17 in Arklow therefore knowledge in one catchment can inform another catchment.

18
19 The deliverables for this whole study is to try and deliver flood extend which is what areas flood,
20 the flood zone, which is the zone that is influenced, the flood depth, the velocity, the speed of the
21 water and river channel mostly and flood hazard function mapping, that's about mapping all the
22 various parameters in one place.

23
24 Those numbers are Annual Exceedence Probability, AEP, we used to talk about one in ten year
25 events, scientific formula the way they do it now is Annual Exceedence Probability, a 50% is
26 one in two year, so the event happens every two years. For instance if you look at -- 2% -- 5% to
27 2%, river Dargle generally bursts its banks and floods roads every 30 to 40 years, that's between
28 5 and 2% AEP event.

29
30 I'll talk about percentages, what I'm actually talking about is return period, how often a particular
31 event is likely to occur based on a study.

32
33 The flood mapping you will see a number of these maps for each area, that's the area for
34 Wicklow, a big blue area top right-hand corner of the map is Broadlough, we all know it floods

1 that's why we show this slide, it's instructive. The area in the middle in blue is the area around
2 the railway line, if anybody knows the area the river that comes through under the railway line
3 out towards Rathnew direction, has been known to flood gardens of houses there, that's a fact.
4

5 The different colour on the maps relates back to AEP, on the right-hand side you think see the
6 box with text, that legend shows you what the different AEPs are, the probability. This map
7 shows, makes it look like a lot of properties flood, but bear in mind the values that are mapped
8 on this are 5%, 1%, 0.1% which is one in a thousand year flood event, so some of the
9 probabilities are quite high, so areas are shown to flood but flood in quite an extreme event,
10 that's the first thing to bear in mind.
11

12 So those numbers along the bottom they are all mapped in blue on the maps and the maps we'll
13 show you over the next couple of weeks will be specific to the rivers and areas in question.
14

15 If you want to make submissions on public consultations days, the first of which is tomorrow
16 here for Wicklow, Ashford, Rathnew areas. You can come along to the public consultation days,
17 there are already people on hand with questionnaires. If you go onto the website which I gave
18 you at the beginning there is mapping available for viewing on the websites, it will be made
19 available as the consultation goes on. There is a questionnaire on the website you can download
20 and complete, or you can submit the comments via the website itself.
21

22 Further statutory instrument consultation, that's the statutory consultation that will happen in a
23 matter of weeks or months from now, there will be an online tool where you can make your
24 comments on that as well. But in order to understand the flood maps and how they will be
25 developed and what they mean I encourage you to come to the consultation days.
26

27 The next steps, the RPS in conjunction with OPW and in conjunction with ourselves will
28 develop flood risk management options, these are where mapping shows an area of flood they
29 will look at the likely types of interventions that could be carried out to stop that area flooding
30 and the cost versus benefit, such as area whether it's urban or where there is significant benefit or
31 rural area where benefit while not insignificant to landowners may not yield benefit sufficiently
32 high to warrant. There will be consultation on that as well, they will be part of future
33 consultation, the objective for the current round of consultation is to get all the information in
34 and really the question RPS want to ask is have we got it right, are we thinking these are the

1 areas that flood.

2
3 Then after the consultation on flood risk management options there will be a series of plans
4 publicised by OPW as they go ahead.

5
6 Just to go back to the list of AFAs, just to point out something I missed, if you look at the
7 mapping although Bray is mentioned as AFA, that's an error, Bray is not currently being
8 included in the AFAs in the public consultation because the River Dargle has a flood scheme
9 under construction, so the mapping study that was done on Dargle was done in 2006, 2007 so
10 there isn't actually a need to do flood assessment for that because it's done, the construction work
11 that's underway as a result of that study, so there is no formal consultation for Bray AFA in this
12 process, because it's already been done. Similarly for Arklow, the River Avoca is not being
13 studied in the town of Arklow under this process, but it is being studied under the Arklow Flood
14 Relief Scheme, which is underway and consultants have been appointed. So because Bray and
15 Arklow are at an advanced stage they are not included in the areas of further assessment. So
16 before you ask me that question, they are not included in this process because there isn't such a
17 need because it's already been done under a separate process.

18
19 The other areas listed here are (inaudible) thanks.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Mark. Okay Cllr Blake?

21 Cllr BLAKE: Thanks Mark for the presentation, this certainly is an issue that has been to the
22 forefront in County Wicklow for a number of years, because we have a lot of mountains in the
23 county leads to the problems that water certainly appears down to low lying areas very quickly.
24 In regards to Aughrim and Baltinglass a lot of work has been carried out and alleviates a lot of
25 the problems, but one area that has, and you alluded to it by talking about historical problems,
26 one was in Shillelagh, for a number of years we had a lot of flooding, work was carried out but
27 over the last few years flooding has again been occurring in that area and also planning
28 permission a few years ago was refused for a number of houses based on the possibility of
29 flooding in a particular area in Shillelagh, so I'm surprised to see it hasn't been included in this
30 particular assessment of all aspects, but it will be an opportunity or can I ask you will there be an
31 opportunity to add a location based on experience or the fact that it has been flagged to yourself
32 and the committee as well over the next number of weeks?

33 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks very much for that presentation Mark, I was just wondering up to
34 now what sort of analysis has been done by the Council in order to give permissions and things

1 like that and whether, if this new study because it seems to be very in-depth if that throws up
2 discrepancies between the maps we had been using and the ones that the OPW will actually
3 identify, if there is any potential impacts on the Council?

4 Cllr SNELL: Thanks for the presentation. I think it is important that this is carried out, just
5 wondering, you stated in your presentation that basically it's to compile all the data, but we're
6 actually unsure where we're going to get the funding from to address the issues that's
7 highlighted, I suppose that's an issue for another day, but just in regards to the Wicklow
8 Town/Rathnew environs plan that the members went through here, quite extensively, we had 13
9 or 14 steering group meetings, and thankfully there was a comprehensive flood risk assessment
10 carried out for that plan.

11
12 The Ashford area as well which would lead into this, I assume that all this is compiled, will it be
13 fed into our current County Development Plan that we're going to implement which is at draft
14 stage at the moment? You did refer yourself just in regards to an issue of around Knockrobin
15 there, a lot of issues in regards to them houses flooding at the moment, and having personal
16 knowledge of the families there and of the issues, people would say that it's been exasperated
17 since we try and put in new infrastructure, such as the port access road and since that necessary
18 infrastructure went in there it now seems to have exasperated the flooding problems. I'm just
19 saying that yeah, there is issues where we have to potentially look at stopping the flood risk
20 assessment and stopping floods potentially into the coming years, but if they are of a vastly rural
21 nature, if they are of no benefit for building purposes and they have a huge history in regards to
22 flooding over 60, 80 years surely we're not going to go looking for funding to alleviate problems
23 on really land that the land owners know and is in families for generations.

24
25 If it's a case that developers have, surely there's an onus on the developers to put in their own
26 flood risk assessment and carry out their own works and it shouldn't be coming through local
27 authority funding, which I assume would come from the Department? I'd just be wary of a
28 detailed report of what lands we're talking about at the end of this, what lands we'd actually look
29 at to go seeking funding to address.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thanks councillor. Mark?

31 MR DEVEREAUX: On Shillelagh I can't answer that question, I know the OPW did an exercise
32 in going through some of the smaller areas and decided where they were going to concentrate the
33 AFAs -- I'll check on where Shillelagh lies, they were given a certain amount of information and
34 went through some process, I'm not sure but no harm coming along to the consultation for

1 Baltinglass or for the other areas we can get that fed into the system anyway, find out why
2 Shillelagh isn't on the AFA, and we can look at it separately. I don't know the answer is the
3 short answer.

4
5 There's probably not an opportunity to add that on, but we'll ask the question.

6
7 What studies have we done Cllr Whitmore? The planning process, the process of developing the
8 County Development Plan, the process that Sorcha goes through every few years has cognisance
9 of flooding we know about, it's built into the plan, one of the questions we have asked of the
10 OPW, is the difference between this process and what information it will yield and the process
11 that we have gone through ourselves where we've identified areas that are known to flood and
12 our Development Plan contains reference to areas that are known to flood.

13
14 The short answer is that this is a very broad brush exercise using the same parameters for the
15 whole country, so it produces a result which is slightly different to our own process. In that
16 we -- our consultation and our Development Plan contains information from ourselves, it also,
17 our plan allows for areas that flood because of issues which are not necessarily to do with the
18 river per se, for instance culvert blockage, that's where there's a local problem in the pipe or a
19 culvert or a bridge or something that's known to cause a problem to flood land. We would still
20 include that land as potentially flooded or flooded in our Development Plan and that informs us
21 and our decision-making process, the OPW would not necessarily include that land in the
22 CFRAMS process, because they assume every bridge and culvert operates as it's supposed to and
23 that's the same parameter for the whole country, they use that process in modelling flooding in
24 the whole country, and that really is referred to us as our problem locally to deal with, such as a
25 culvert that blocks. So there's differences between information we have in our plan and the
26 CFRAMS process when it's completed, that's because of local issues.

27
28 We are obliged to take cognisance of the CFRAMS and what results it throws out, but equally
29 we can have cognisance locally to things we know about ourselves. So they are two different
30 processes and two different sets of information. There is a lot of interaction between Sorcha and
31 her team and the OPW and we have been asking that question as well, we don't want to be left
32 with a series of maps that differ to the maps we produce, the reality is we'll be left with two
33 different sets of maps for two different purposes and inputs if you like. They won't change, we
34 won't change our attitude to areas that we think are known floods because the mechanism is

1 different to which the OPW studied, so we won't necessarily change it. We'll still leave areas
2 with the risk if we think they are, even if though don't appear on CFRAMS.

3
4 Cllr Snell, I think your question is the type of land that's protected, the exercise right here and
5 now that the OPW are doing is to measure what areas are likely to flood, map it all, and the
6 circumstances under which they are likely to flood, so the probability of a return period to -- of
7 the event to cause the flood will be mapped. What type of land is only being considered when
8 the OPW look at defending it, the plan arising out of this, so what land they will defend. They
9 will only defend generally public land or large areas of private land, so a street in a housing
10 estate or a large area where a number of properties private or otherwise require defending, they
11 won't necessarily, while they might refer to a piece of land and have a plan, they won't
12 necessarily fund the defending, that's done in a separate process, outside this process.

13
14 These studies and plans will then be taken by the people who may look for funding, if we go
15 looking for funding we'll look for funding for public lands or lands that we are in control of.

16
17 Developers and private landowners may take this information and use it themselves, the decision
18 on funding is a matter for OPW and Department of Finance, while I can't say strictly how they
19 go about it, from experience of dealing with them, private developer land or private lands
20 generally is left to the private developer to deal with and sort out and OPW when they consider
21 requests for funding from us, they consider public infrastructure first, roads, assets like that.
22 They consider employment zones and areas such as the main street of a town next, in terms of
23 priority. And privately developed land will be way down the priorities in terms of how the OPW
24 consider it. So I don't think there's any hint that this process here will lead to lands being
25 defended or worked on to benefit of anybody other than this State or people generally. Private
26 land is left to the developer to deal with.

27
28 How this might change the people's attitudes to development land is a matter for the owners of
29 the land, and market prices will change for land once this process is completed, that's entirely out
30 of our control. Does that answer the questions?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Thank you very much Mark. It's a long process and
32 sometimes people only think about floods when it happens, so thanks again.

33
34 I'm delighted to welcome Wicklow Local Access Action Group, sorry to keep you waiting. We

1 have of course our own Miriam, David Lee, Padraig Reilly, John Ashton and I know Anthony is
2 down in the gallery as well, so we're going to receive a presentation, Miriam you are going to do
3 the presentation.

4 Cllr MURPHY: First of all I'd like to thank you all for giving us the time. I'd like to introduce
5 as the Chairman has, this is David Lee our chairperson of our local Wicklow Local Authority
6 Access Group. Padraig Reilly is our committee member and John is a committee member and
7 support worker for care as well.

8
9 So we'll move onto the first presentation. Our presentation today is to members of Wicklow
10 Local Authority Access Group, we're here to present to you the members of Wicklow County
11 Council, the overview of the work that we have done in the last few years, but more importantly
12 the work that this committee can do in the future, and that's in conjunction with the Wicklow
13 County Council and the five municipal districts and the directors of services, the engineers and
14 the access officer and all the staff also.

15
16 I'll give you a brief history of the committee and our aims. David and Padraig will highlight
17 work and achievements that the group have done, including surveys of Baltinglass and
18 Blessington which they done recently and John will conclude and give a summary and the
19 recommendations to you.

20
21 Our mission statement, and this is to support Wicklow County Council in the delivery and the
22 enhancement of its services by advising and recommending on key strategies and actions. Two
23 of the most important ones I felt were to achieve full access for all, and to assist Wicklow
24 County Council in deliver its legal responsibilities under the Disability Act 2005.

25
26 And our membership consists of members of Arklow Disability Action Group, which I am one
27 of them. Disability Action Greystones Together, a new group formed in Greystones and we
28 welcome them on board. Our support committee is Disability Federation of Ireland who did a
29 lot of work with this group and other disability groups also. Our Kare reps are here today from
30 Tinahely, Baltinglass and Blessington services, we also have members from Sunbeam House
31 Services, Wicklow Disability Action Group and also our County Council access officer, Vibece
32 and also individual membership also.

33
34 The history of WLAAG, in 1995 the Barcelona Declaration was introduced to all local

1 authorities and this was to include people with disabilities in delivery of policies and planning.
2 In 2003 the Barcelona implementation plan was delivered for the county, which was adopted by
3 Wicklow County Council in 2004. This plan contained a number of projects designed to
4 improve access to Wicklow County Council services by people with disabilities. Wicklow
5 County Council Barcelona Declaration Steering Group, which is a mouthful, consisted of a
6 cross-section of staff, as well as presentations from disability sector. This committee began the
7 process of making Wicklow local authorities and its services accessible for all.

8
9 The Barcelona -- I won't run through that, but the main five points were promotion of disability,
10 policies and measures, consultative process, inclusion and accessibility, training and analysis and
11 assessments. I know the new members probably want to read up on that.

12
13 The history of our group. The Barcelona again, that came to bring about disability awareness but
14 there was no enforcement on this programme, a little but not enough. About ten years ago
15 Wicklow County Council's Barcelona Steering Group reformed as WLAAG to bring a group of
16 people with varying disabilities along with various agencies to work with the management of
17 Wicklow County Council and all the departments of Wicklow County Council.

18
19 At this point I would like to thank Margaret Malone of Wicklow CC who was involved in this
20 group for many years. Margaret's work really helped us to come and make a committee, in a
21 huge way we are sincerely thankful.

22
23 Our aims, to advise Wicklow County Council in the enhancement and delivery of all services.
24 To advise Wicklow County Council in the access, circulation and ethos of the built environment.
25 To advise Wicklow County Council on awareness of access to information and communication
26 in technology. And to advise Wicklow County Council in the allocation of disability strategy
27 funding.

28
29 Our networking: The group has successfully lobbied on many local issues. A notable
30 achievement of the group some years ago was the employment of a full-time access officer in
31 Wicklow County Council and this proved to be vital in the future work of our committee. This
32 group has built up strong networks and connections with Wicklow County Council Director of
33 Services, staff, engineers, etcetera, and without those networks we probably wouldn't have got as
34 far as we have been. And this has given us a voice and the knowledge that our work as a group

1 is vital to Wicklow County Council.

2
3 I'll pass on to David.

4 MR LEIGH: What is disability? Anything that prevents a person doing what they want to do on
5 a daily basis and is deemed to be a disability. 83% of people will acquire a disability at some
6 time in their lives. How can we help people to improve their lives?

7
8 Remember, are you prepared to walk in my shoes? And think of how you need to live your daily
9 life and get around?

10
11 At an WLAAG meeting in the Arklow Bay Hotel on the 13th of October 2013 we decided to
12 draw up an action plan for access to all services in Wicklow.

13
14 The action plan consists of town audits to help Wicklow County Council and the Gardaí and
15 local businesses to make our local communities more accessible for everyone.

16
17 On Friday 29th of November 2013 we walked the town of Baltinglass with a service user from
18 the Kare Lalor centre in a wheelchair to identify any access difficulties, taking photos of relevant
19 issues.

20
21 With this information we arranged a meeting with the Wicklow County Council area engineer,
22 Jack Kelly, and Wicklow County Council town overseer Seamus O'Halloran in the Kare Lalor
23 centre Baltinglass on Friday the 9th of May 2014 to discuss those findings of our town audit that
24 concerned Wicklow County Council.

25
26 After this meeting, we walked the town with Jack and Seamus and pointed out to them the
27 concerns we had with footpaths, crossings, signage and disability parking. This was a very
28 positive and successful meeting and work has progressed well since with regular contact with
29 Seamus.

30
31 Arising from our town audit and complaints from families of service users attending the Kare
32 Lalor centre, parking on footpaths was identified as a major problem in Baltinglass. On the 29th
33 of October 2014 we met with local Gardaí to discuss enforcement by Gardaí of parking in the
34 town, especially parking on footpaths, hindering wheelchairs, baby buggies and people with

1 visual and/or mobility impairment.

2
3 We also decided to contact local businesses informing them of any difficulties we found
4 accessing their premises or services. We prepared a letter for each business, stressing that we
5 were bringing these access difficulties to their attention for the benefit of their business, as
6 people with disabilities could not enter their premises. We hand delivered each letter with the
7 relevant photos and explanation of who we are and informing them we were here to assist and
8 advise them with any disability questions that they may have.

9
10 These are some examples of improvements made by Wicklow County Council as a result of our
11 Baltinglass town audit. As you remember there was a pole in the middle of that, now they
12 changed it, and brought it to the corner. And there's a footpath there, it was bad, and they also
13 fixed that up as well.

14 PADRAIG: This is Blessington town, I did, when Baltinglass had their one I thought I would do
15 one about Blessington, because I think Blessington needs a lot of jobs on paths done. I went
16 through the town, I saw problems with paths, we did all of Blessington, there's one there with the
17 wheelchair ramp, that's a dangerous one.

18 MR LEIGH: We have forwarded the outcome of the Blessington town audit to County Council
19 through Vibeke Delahunt, the Wicklow County Council access officer. We hope to hold a
20 meeting with a representative from Wicklow County Council in the near future regarding
21 Blessington.

22
23 We'll continue with town audits throughout 2015. We have asked Wicklow County Council to
24 commence a review of the Wicklow local authorities disability implementation plan 2005-2015,
25 strategic plan of March 2008. We are continuing to engage with Wicklow County Council at all
26 levels of the organisation.

27 MR ASHTON: To summarise, Wicklow County Council disability implementation plan
28 2005/2015. Review of the 2007/08 access audits of towns and villages. Wicklow County
29 Council access officer. Planning. Work with Wicklow County Council engineers and
30 community and financial support.

31
32 Wicklow County Council disability implementation plan 2005-2015. The vision of Wicklow
33 County Council is one of an inclusive Wicklow society in which people with disabilities have
34 equal rights and opportunities to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of the

1 county.

2
3 Wicklow County Council recognises that the implementation of the Disability Act 2005 will not
4 only make services and facilities more accessible to people with disabilities but will ensure that
5 Wicklow as a county strives to be universally accessible to everyone. Therefore, Wicklow local
6 access action group is requested a formal review and report of the disability implementation
7 plan.

8
9 Review of 2007/08 Wicklow County Council access audits of towns and villages. The access
10 audits took place in Bray, Greystones, Arklow, Wicklow, Blessington, Kilcoole,
11 Newtownmountkennedy, Enniskerry, Rathnew, Baltinglass, Rathdrum, Ashford, Aghrim,
12 Tinahely, Carnew and Dunlavin. These took place with the participation of Wicklow Local
13 Access Action Group and other local disability groups and committees. Wicklow Local Access
14 Action Group is requesting a formal review and report of the access audits.

15
16 Wicklow County Council access officer. The Wicklow County Council access officer is
17 appointed in accordance with section 26.2 of the Disability Act 2005. Until recently this was a
18 full-time position. This is now a part-time position, currently part of the Film Commissioner's
19 brief, in addition to her other roles. The access officer is responsible for providing or arranging
20 for, and coordinating assistance and guidance to persons with disabilities accessing services
21 provided by Wicklow County Council.

22
23 The access officer also assists the various Wicklow County Council departments in meeting their
24 requirements under the Disability Act 2005 and in turn, in making Wicklow County Council and
25 its services accessible for all. WLAAG recognises the current financial restrictions but is calling
26 for the Wicklow County Council access officer to be reinstated as a full-time role.

27
28 Planning. Wicklow Local Access Action Group calls for the use of maximum, not minimum
29 building standards. Councillors need to be aware of the standards when approving planning
30 permissions. The current minimum standards Part M are not fit for purpose and are not in line
31 with universal design or best practice.

32
33 All Wicklow County Council staff need to be aware of accessibility standards in relation to all
34 Wicklow County Council services, not just the built environment. WLAAG is available to assist

1 and offer advice in any area of accessibility.

2
3 Work with the Wicklow County Council engineers and community. WLAAG will continue to
4 be available to work with Wicklow County Council directors, councillors, engineers, local
5 communities, to help people with disability to live independently. WLAAG is represented on
6 the Wicklow Housing and Disability Steering Group.

7
8 Financial support. WLAAG presented a funding proposal to the Wicklow County Council in
9 2014. Requested 5,000 per annum for the next five years. In addition, WLAAG requested that
10 Wicklow County Council formally approves a designated administrative support person with
11 Wicklow County Council who will work closely with the WLAAG and the Wicklow County
12 Council access officer.

13
14 Financial support. Five year plan. Formulate detailed five year plan, for approval by Wicklow
15 County Council. Representation on the housing and disability steering group (reference Article
16 8 of the protocol for the provision of housing support to people with disabilities March 2013).
17 Review of and advice relating to all part 8 notices of the planning regulations, in relation to
18 disability and to universal access. Support and advice to the Wicklow County Council access
19 officer. Promote awareness of the WLAAG with Wicklow County Council with a view to
20 promoting disability access to all Wicklow County Council services. Consultancy and advice to
21 Wicklow County Council on disability proofing all Wicklow County Council services and
22 projects.

23
24 Provide a public consultation and Aware/Education service with regard to the provision of
25 Wicklow County Council's services such as housing, etcetera. Provide an interface to the
26 disability sector, disability service providers and people with disabilities. Assist in the review
27 and make recommendations to support the ongoing implementation of the Wicklow local
28 authority's disability implementation plan 2005-15. Advise on disability and access issues with
29 regard to local government reform, including the cohesion policy and leader programmes.
30 Develop a web page on the Wicklow County Council website with information and links to
31 relevant organisations and agencies. Work with organisations with similar aims to the WLAAG,
32 in other areas of the country, such as the DLRCC disability consultation group.

33
34 To this end, it is the intention to look to contract a Tús, gateway, job-bridge worker to seek

1 additional funding to enable the employment of a part-time worker. In addition, WLAAG will
2 seek to fully utilise all relevant aspects of social media, will develop a separate page on the
3 Wicklow County Council website and will seek to be included in Wicklow County Council
4 literature and links.

5
6 Finally, we want to position and promote Wicklow as a leader in accessibility. Wicklow Local
7 Access Action Group is there to assist. Please work with us, we'll work with you. Thank you
8 for listening.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. A lot of food for thought in that presentation.
10 Certainly I found it very interesting, the Baltinglass town audit, I'm sure if you go around any
11 town or village in Wicklow, you will find something that's there in front of us and we don't
12 realise it, so I'm glad it was a positive experience that the engineer and overseer engaged with
13 you and I look forward to that being expanded out to other towns and villages in Wicklow.

14
15 There are recommendations within the report, or presentation, that I'd like the chairs of the
16 various SPCs to take on board, whether it's planning or housing, to see if we can get stuck into
17 these issues, because there's no point in just giving a presentation and everybody going out of
18 here and forgetting about it. We want to see action on the recommendations.

19
20 So I'll let in the councillors. Cllr Timmins.

21 Cllr TIMMINS: Thanks Chairman. Just first of all thanks very much for the presentation, it was
22 excellent and very informative. I'd like to agree with the Chairman, a lot of the success of this is
23 based on the support of the area engineer and overseer, I know shortly after I joined the Council
24 I met with the overseer out in Baltinglass and the area engineer and they were happy to go
25 around the town and mark out spots for disability points, for bank, post office and things like
26 that, that was just the beginning of what's been done, you guys have obviously brought it to a
27 much further stage.

28
29 I'd like to say the Development Plan is coming up for submission and consideration now, maybe
30 there's an opportunity for us as members and for the disability action group as well to make
31 submissions that would further enhance and copper-fasten the importance of disability access in
32 our County Development Plan.

33
34 Additionally in particular in Baltinglass since that got a bit of airtime here today, there is

1 currently going on display a new town centre layout for Baltinglass, that covers things like
2 parking, crossing, pedestrian crossings for instance in the middle of Baltinglass there is no
3 pedestrian crossing and we have an opportunity to put one in which will help all members of the
4 community, including those with disability issues, that's something as well, that will go on public
5 display shortly and submissions can be made on that to make sure what you want out of that.

6
7 Lastly I'll mention the budget, that we in the Council should consider in our next year's budget
8 putting money aside to improve disability access in our towns and villages. I see you've already
9 raised that issue yourselves, but I think it's something that we have to take cognisance of.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you councillor.

11 Cllr McDONALD: I'd like to echo Cllr Timmins. Thank you very much for highlighting this
12 issue to us, I think it's an issue I'm as guilty as anybody, we just don't take on board as much as
13 we should, until it actually comes knocking at your own door and until you see the difficulties,
14 witness the difficulties of people with disabilities, just on that note I want to put on record and
15 publicly thank Cllr Murphy for her Trojan efforts over the years, the issue of the ramp or lack of
16 the ramp at the post office in Arklow, I think she's been fighting that for about eight years for
17 something that ultimately took a week to complete.

18
19 Like I say, it's something that we don't take enough interest in until it actually came to my own
20 family and when you witness the difficulties that people in wheelchairs and limited mobility
21 actually encounter on a daily basis, I think it's not given half as much coverage, half as much
22 support as we need to do. I think as councillors and as elected members of Wicklow County
23 Council we need to get on the back of this and give them our 100% support, and get them all the
24 help and funding, anything that's there to be drawn down. We have junior Ministers from
25 Wicklow, we have TDs in Wicklow and I think we need to be calling on them in their capacity to
26 get us the funding and everything that's available to help this particular group. Thank you very
27 much.

28 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thanks Cathaoirleach. First of all I'd like to thank the team here today for
29 their excellent presentation. It's about accessibility, but the presentation was very accessible to
30 us as well.

31
32 I want to particularly commend you for the proactive approach you have taken in getting out to
33 do the surveys yourselves and these surveys are invaluable, they might look like small things, a
34 piece of a footpath missing or broken or whatever, but these are the things that make a difference

1 to people's comfort, but also to their health and safety, if you can't get on to a footpath and have
2 to travel on the road you are putting yourself in danger. So I think you're speaking for people
3 who feel that they don't have a voice or they are not being heard, I'd like to say the presentation
4 today has been heard and I hope it will be heard and that your request for 5,000 which seems to
5 me to be very reasonable, that equates to 1,000 for each municipal district, which is nothing, if
6 we had to get a consultant in to do the work you are doing it would cost us way more than 5,000,
7 so I hope that the Council, whether it be from the general budget of the Council or municipal
8 districts, that each contract maybe a thousand euro that that funding will be looked at for you to
9 progress your work, invaluable work you are doing. Thanks again.

10 Cllr CULLEN: Thanks Chairman, compliments on the presentation, very well put together and
11 very well delivered. A few points, first of all disability parking is a major concern for people
12 involved, unfortunately some of the general public don't adhere to the disability parking and I
13 think it's maybe a role for the parking wardens of our towns that they should be very vigilant in
14 that area, apart from people parking illegally, we should certainly look at improving the amount
15 of parking spaces made available for disabled parking.

16
17 Your presentation and your report there, again I think it should be given out to community
18 groups around the county. To make them aware of the amount of work you put into this and
19 keep the communities involved and that they have a role in trying to improve each area
20 themselves.

21
22 Another point, as a Council we should taking heed of as well, the next phase of building we
23 intend to do in the county here, we should certainly consider the disability and elderly when it
24 comes to building our houses and making houses more accessible, i.e. bathrooms to be built with
25 disability in mind as well, there's areas that we certainly, as a Council, can play a very important
26 role in and these are some of them.

27
28 And finally, as Cllr Kavanagh alluded to, the amount of money that your group is looking for, in
29 my opinion is a small amount of money and I think we as a Council should be willing to promote
30 the accessibility issue where possible and I think we can play a very key role in that. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr O'Neill?

32 Cllr O'NEILL: Again I'd like to thank the group for their presentation, a fine presentation, and
33 it's something that's dear to my heart for a long, long time. But I did walk the streets of
34 Blessington with Pdraig there a while ago, I'm only too familiar with the problems that

1 wheelchair bound people have to deal with. There are problems in Blessington all right, that the
2 local engineer, although doing what he can, the town centre is under Dunnes Stores management
3 or whatever and there's no getting around that. Also the development land where the Kare
4 Centre is -- that again is under NAMA land and it's a little bit more difficult, but I know the
5 engineer, I was around with him only a week ago, he is determined to do what he can in the area.

6
7 But could I just echo the Cathaoirleach's statements there, Cllr Fox, that it's time for a little bit of
8 action. I'm familiar with this, first hand and the new green way in Blessington, it's four
9 kilometres at the moment, but again that should be wheelchair friendly, but it was put in and it
10 wasn't wheelchair friendly, I think that's discrimination against people in wheelchairs. I have
11 been assured that the next stage of it will be wheelchair friendly. So it's important that -- and I
12 know the councillors in the municipal area are aware of this, that those things have been done, as
13 the Cathaoirleach said there's not much point talking about these things.

14
15 Again local areas are obliged to employ up to 3% of people with disabilities, I know Wicklow
16 County Council isn't up to that either, so again I think it's something that we should always
17 remember. So again I'd just like to let you know that I'm with you all the way on that, and again
18 thanks very much for the presentation, it was excellent and I know Padraig in my neck of the
19 woods, he'll keep us going and keep us moving and remind us at every given chance, thanks very
20 much.

21 Cllr WALSH: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I want to thank David, Padraig, John and Miriam for
22 an excellent and informative presentation, we have an active group in Greystones which I'm
23 familiar with, I note from the presentation that we had access audits around the county in
24 2007-08 and that now there's been a request of a review of these formal audits, I wonder where
25 we're at with that request, is that going to take place any time soon?

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: We'll get an answer for that.

27 Cllr FITZGERALD: I just want to -- I'm not going back over what everyone else said, but I
28 want to thank the group for their presentation and I am aware of the contribution that Cllr
29 Murphy made to the action group. And certainly I believe it's been stated there already that her
30 fight to get wheelchair accessibility at Arklow post office for all, she finally won the battle, great
31 credit is due to her on that account and many other issues. Obviously the subject is dear to my
32 heart, I have a sister who's 19 years in the Cheshire Home in Shillelagh where she gets great
33 care, I'm aware of the accessibility problems some have been sorted out, it brought home to me
34 recently the difficulties people have in Arklow municipal district, the pedestrian crossings in the

1 main street, I met a gentleman in the wheelchair, he said it was the first time he could cross the
2 street without fear of being injured, previously he had to go up to the post office 500 metres
3 away to get across the main street safely, this was the first time he had crossed the street in
4 Arklow, in a wheelchair where he wanted to go, it meant he had to go up 400 back down and
5 then go where he wanted to go. There's a lot still needs to be done and I know that in Arklow, I
6 take on the board that all the municipal districts should where possible and it is possible, contract
7 5,000 I think is the figure there, that's certainly something that needs to be done.

8
9 Can I thank everyone for the contributions and the work that's going on to help those with
10 disabilities and hopefully we can succeed into the future.

11 Cllr FORTUNE: Again, can I thank the group for your presentation and say thanks to Cllr
12 Murphy who has been and is a tremendous advocate for the whole area of access. She's been at
13 it for a long long time. I think in listening to your presentation obviously the Barcelona
14 Declaration is implemented and everyone takes it on board it's going to sort out most of the
15 problems, I think that's the challenge. I recall walking in Greystones in the last couple of years,
16 it's improved and lots of things were done following all that, but as other councillors said there's
17 so much to be done. In looking at your presentation and listening to what you were saying, it's
18 all in the Barcelona Declaration, so that's really the challenge to make sure that the system that
19 we all work for lives up to that, and if it does we'll achieve the objectives.

20 Cllr BRADY: Again like the other members just to commend you for coming in here this
21 afternoon for the excellent presentation, certainly very, very worthwhile. Just a couple of points,
22 you said a formal review is needed, hopefully that can commence as soon as possible and I'm
23 sure the Council has a huge role to play in that and I'm just hoping that that process isn't being
24 held up by the fact that we only have a part-time access officer, because I think that is the huge
25 elephant in the room here, in terms of everything that we're speaking about. We can talk about
26 the declaration, Barcelona Declaration, but until we get a full-time access officer here in the
27 county, we're really only providing lip service to it, hopefully -- I know our hands are tied in
28 terms of that because of the recruitment embargo, so maybe if we can just get a position from the
29 top table as to where we are with that, have we made approaches to the department to get a
30 full-time position here, to get a person employed, that's not to take away from the person that is
31 doing the part-time work, I want to commend the work that is being carried out there, I'm not for
32 one second criticising, it's such an important role, I think we need a dedicated person in that
33 position.

1 When we talk about disabilities we all know there are many types of disability and it's not just
2 people in wheelchairs or whatever, I've spoken to a lot of people who are visually impaired as
3 well, who have massive difficulties even simple tasks such as crossing the road at a pedestrian
4 crossing, there is issues for us as a local authority in terms of putting in place the audio that
5 comes on when the green light comes up, so people with visual impairments can cross the road.
6 So there is many things that we should be doing, and when we carry out our footpath repairs
7 there should be a standard process that we're dishing curbs and putting in place -- I commend the
8 local authority particularly in Bray where huge work has been done in dishing footpaths and
9 putting in the special cobble stone for visually impaired people to let them know they are about
10 to cross the road, huge work has been done and that needs to be rolled out in all areas.

11
12 I also want to commend the Council for work that has been carried out in playgrounds more
13 recently, and the inclusion of equipment that is accessible to children with disabilities, that
14 should be standard procedure in all our playgrounds, that no-one should be discriminated against
15 with any disability.

16
17 The last point there, maybe as part of the review, I know different councillors have engaged in
18 the past in different reviews, maybe as part of that process councillors could be brought in and
19 put in a wheelchair, a blindfold put around them to try and allow them manoeuvre around our
20 towns, just to see how difficult a process it is. Maybe if that can be included in whatever review
21 is going to take place, I think it would be a very, very worthwhile exercise here and certainly
22 open an awful lot of people's eyes around the table to the challenges facing people with
23 disabilities. So again I commend you all.

24
25 Just to finish off I also would support, I know Bray tomorrow what we're dealing with
26 discretionary funding, hopefully the other members might be able to support a proposal to meet
27 some of the financial needs that are there.

28 Cllr RUTTLE: Thank you very much. I'd like to first of all thank everyone for the presentation
29 we had here today, it was very detailed and specific. However as was alluded to by my
30 colleague Cllr Timmins, it's time to think about how to move forward and what we can do to
31 help in that regard.

32
33 Certainly as Chairman of the community social committee of the Council myself I would be
34 most anxious that we'll do everything we could to organise funding of the figure of 5,000, what I

1 will propose to that committee is out of our funding, the allocation of that to help you with your
2 future work in that regard, that's specifically our remit under the Community Act.

3
4 Thank you for your presentation, for your work. I know you are very dedicated, I know Pdraig
5 from west Wicklow here. And I will certainly do anything I can and in the upcoming budget as
6 well to help with your resources you need to move forward on that issue. Thank you again.

7 Cllr LAWLESS: I want to echo what most councillors have said, thank you very much for the
8 presentation, there is a huge amount of work gone into this and I welcome it. For someone who
9 actually would have family members with disabilities I'm quite aware of our community not
10 getting access to all the amenities within their towns or villages where they live. I've also had
11 Dags T group in with us as well, they have come up with an idea of the gold star initiative, trying
12 to encourage businesses to allow our communities, that everyone gets access to everything
13 within the communities. I think as a county it would be very good for us to strive forward in this
14 and try and promote that Wicklow is accessible to everybody regardless of what your disability
15 is.

16
17 So I would fully support any work that's going on in this area. I also think that 5,000 euro for the
18 next five years is a very small amount of money for the work that is needed to be done and I do
19 think this needs to be looked at in our annual budget and we should be looking at this more
20 often.

21
22 Also in regards to the audits done around the town six or seven years ago since it's done, maybe
23 it should be something that's done a little more often, even a three-year period would be a little
24 more feasible than six or seven years, as our towns and villages have grown considerably year on
25 year. So again I just want to thank you very much for the presentation, it was very welcomed.
26 Thank you.

27 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I won't repeat what other councillors have said, I actually
28 want to thank the group for coming in and giving a very detailed presentation here and it's been
29 well covered in regards to accessibility. But if I could just speak about housing and myself and
30 Cllr Murphy have discussed it, and I know it's something that the group are going to get their
31 teeth into. While there is help through the local authority to people who own their own houses
32 and they can avail of various grants whether it be elderly persons, people with disabilities or
33 mobility grants, we have seen the finance going to that sector dwindle year on year, it's now got
34 to such a stage where it's quite difficult for people, they are only getting 66% of the overall

1 works that's been carried out, so they have to come up with a lot of finance themselves. But we
2 also have an onus as a local authority and it's something we'll deal with through the Strategic
3 Policy Committee on housing, which is our obligation to people on the housing list. I know Cllr
4 Murphy and her group are trying to get information in exactly where we stand in regards to our
5 obligations and specific numbers, because it's something going forward, we are meant to be
6 dealing with diversity here in regards to all groups, all citizens, I believe that's something that
7 we've probably failed in the Celtic Tiger years to provide for, certainly it's something that as
8 chair of the housing SPC, I feel we need to do something that's constructive, we need to actually
9 produce units that are going to help people in the situation that Cllr Murphy and her group have
10 outlined here today. Because at this moment in time there is people sitting on our housing lists,
11 part of the four and a half thousand people on the housing lists for local authority housing, who
12 can't avail of the units, the very few units, bearing in mind there is only 21 vacant units in the
13 whole of the county. Out of them 21 I imagine there is very few that are suitable for people of
14 this group who need social housing, that's something we have to take on board and something I
15 have been committing to Miriam and her group to look into, thanks Cathaoirleach.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor.

17 Cllr THORNHILL: Can I just take this opportunity to thank everyone for giving us an excellent
18 presentation and I am sure we'll all agree that it's a situation where we have loved ones or
19 whoever in these circumstances that we should be really trying to improve things. I know that in
20 Bray that we have an organisation by the name of Bray Lakers who really excelled themselves
21 and are a great example to situations where people -- they take part in Paralympics and they
22 really put themselves to the fore, and I'm sure we should always realise, remember that the
23 person that's giving out about they had no shoes to wear until they met the person with no feet.
24 So at the end of the day we should always be aware of other people, it's very important. And
25 accessibility is the key word and it should be there for everyone, compliments to everyone for an
26 excellent presentation.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks again to all the members that gave the presentation, I know the
28 Arklow councillors alluded to the fact that Miriam fought a campaign at the post office and little
29 did the gentleman in the GPO realise who he was taking on! So well done on that. Keep up the
30 good work. Thanks a lot.

31
32 Okay we're moving on. Consider the establishment of Wicklow heritage forum and preparation
33 of the heritage plan.

34 >> Thank you Cathaoirleach, members, everybody received a briefing document on the county

1 heritage plan. I'll do a very brief presentation to give the background to that. I know some of
2 you are very familiar with it and have been directly involved and others maybe less so. The
3 proposal here today is to adopt to agree to this process and give feedback to this process of the
4 preparing the next county heritage plan and also we circulated at the municipal districts to seek a
5 representative from each of the municipal districts, so if we can have a vote on that as well.

6
7 Just an introduction to the county heritage plan, the context for it is through the National
8 Heritage Plan 2002 and that called on greater management of heritage at a local level and called
9 on setting up of local heritage fora, so that's the background, the Heritage Act sets out the scope
10 of heritage and that's everything listed here, everything from archaeology to wildlife, species,
11 habitats, heritage objects and through the county heritage plan we've also broadened that scope
12 and looked at other aspects of cultural heritage, traditions, skills and place names and that kind
13 of stuff.

14
15 As I mentioned we have two previous heritage plans, the 2004 and 2009, this will be the third for
16 the county. It's a partnership plan, it's initiated and driven by Wicklow County Council, but it's
17 very much done in partnership foremost with the Heritage Council who have an important role to
18 play, they set out a methodology for how these plans have been rolled out nationwide, and they
19 also treat each heritage plan as a strategic funded application, they have made heritage plan
20 funding available to any county with a heritage plan. But also involving Wicklow County
21 Council and the Heritage Council there are very much other statutory and non-statutory
22 organisations and individuals, you will see that in the proposed set up of the heritage forum I'll
23 go into a little more detail in a while, that's really the implementation group if you like for the
24 heritage plan.

25
26 So really going forward the next plan will seek to develop the strategic vision that was set out in
27 our previous two plans and to complement the actions that have been carried out to date. Then it
28 will look on building on those for new actions and priorities. I listed four key theme areas, these
29 are the themes under which all our actions fall under one of them, sometimes overlap and fall
30 under a couple of these, really one key one has been the compiling of information about our
31 heritage resources, I'll give one or two examples, you'll see them in the appendix of the
32 document listing the actions, really about gathering information, in particular aspects that we
33 don't know much about, whether archaeology, biodiversity, and using that information to inform
34 our policies.

1
2 Raising awareness and appreciation of heritage is always a key action as well, unless we all are
3 aware of what we have and feel proud of it and appreciate it we won't protect it as much as we
4 should.

5
6 Promoting best practice is always one of the cornerstones through the heritage plan, we ran
7 various training courses, talks, events, various publications to try and promote and generate this
8 climate of best practice, both in the local authority and our own actions and in the wider
9 community by offering advice. And then the cornerstone all about encouraging active
10 participation and partnership, that's really what the whole plan is about, bigger than the sum of
11 the parts, it is only through the involvement of various groups and organisations that we're able
12 together to carry out the multiple actions.

13
14 Rather than going through it I'm going to pick out -- all the actions are listed in the appendix, but
15 just to pick out three actions as an example, so three theme areas if you like we've done work on
16 in the last heritage plan.

17
18 Wicklow's traditional buildings, Wicklow wetlands and our online community heritage archive.
19 So on the traditional buildings, a lot of you might be familiar with that book we published before
20 last Christmas, the Traditional Farmhouses of County Wicklow, but just to give you a bit of
21 background to that, it happened as a result of various actions over the years, in 2007 we first
22 carried out our representative survey of the traditional houses of Wicklow. We surveyed 147
23 and really came up with an idea of the kind of traditional houses we have and where they are
24 located and materials, moving on from that we did an exhibition on this and various talks,
25 produced a calendar in 2009 on this theme and really incorporated some of the buildings from
26 the study that were suitable into the record of protected structures in the County Development
27 Plan giving them statutory protection, we had a traditional skills open day in Wicklow Gaol back
28 in 2010 to showcase the practitioners of traditional skills (inaudible) the publication and this year
29 to keep the theme we're hoping later in the year we'll be able, the Irish Georgian Society, have a
30 whole weekend. So just to give you an example of how actions, we try and keep the theme and
31 as we can over the years, develop it further.

32
33 Wicklow wetlands that's another one, the small document is the county Biodiversity Action Plan.
34 Again it was a separate action plan, but in our action plan to produce it was, it was in 2010, one

1 of the key things of that was identifying information about probably our most vulnerable habitat,
2 our wetlands , this came to the fore with planning and development regulations in 2011 whereby
3 you needed planning permission for the first time to drain wetlands, but you need to have a good
4 baseline of where the wetlands are in the county and what kinds we have, so we have done two
5 years of survey work to date. Phase 1 was all about desktop research, compiling all the data and
6 generating a GIS map and also database of known wetlands and phase 2 elaborated on that and
7 we did quite a bit of detailed survey work.

8
9 We ended up having our GIS map, our individual survey, all that information, going into the
10 landscape character assessments, to inform our SEA and our planning work here. It's through
11 this kind of work we generated lots of biodiversity information that goes to national parks and
12 wildlife, the little image of the larvae was a new species, it was thought to be extinct in County
13 Wicklow until we did our survey. It hadn't been recorded until we did our survey, we found it on
14 quite a few sites in the county, that's gone to inform the national biodiversity data centre.

15
16 Then to follow through with that we have had various awareness raising activities over the years
17 on this theme as well, we have had exhibitions, a photography competition and biodiversity
18 week in 2013, again it was a theme we have worked on and hope to continue working on.

19
20 Another action, the third, a different type of one through the Heritage Plan has been a
21 development of Wicklow's online community archive, we just launched that during Heritage
22 Week last year, we developed it for a year and a half before that, really it's the first in Ireland,
23 we're part of a network with the Museum of Country Life in Castlebar, we're part of the ICAN,
24 there is a number of towns in the west of Ireland that developed these online repositories for
25 heritage information, we are the first one this side of the Shannon to come on board. We have
26 developed a web based digital archive of people, places and topics of heritage interest in County
27 Wicklow, it's open access, anybody can log on, for the community at large, we have had great
28 input to it and really it acts as a resource for information about County Wicklow, but also as a
29 notice board. This came about through the action of the Heritage Plan. We tried to help people
30 network a bit better and find out more about Wicklow, we have been happy about how it
31 developed, we are hoping to develop it more, it expanded the audience for County Wicklow
32 globally and connected with the Wicklow Diaspora in overseas countries.

33
34 In the last year, from the 1st of March '14 to this year we had 26,000 visitors and up to 90

1 different countries, the top five are there. So it's very big, it's getting new and younger audiences
2 to our Facebook and things like that.

3
4 They are just, when I'm talking about actions you have an idea of what we're talking about, they
5 are three actions we have done. I suppose the key part of producing the Heritage Plan is having
6 a heritage forum, that's our steering group, our non-statutory advisory group, it oversees the
7 preparation of the Heritage Plan and oversees implementation and that typically has involved
8 four meetings per year and also as part of that, I should say when we're producing the next
9 series, even though people might be represented on the forum, there is lots of scope for
10 involvements in the working groups.

11
12 You have in the document the proposed composition of five elected representatives, one from
13 each of the districts, four representatives from State bodies, different sectoral interests in
14 Wicklow and they are listed out in the document everyone has in front of them, and from
15 Wicklow County Council staff as well, that's how we would see it rolling out.

16
17 The process itself is fairly straightforward, and set out in the document, we're on stages one and
18 two of that list there, I did present it to the Planning SPC who agreed to the process going
19 forward, it has been circulated to the municipal districts and now back to you as full Council and
20 we'll seek representative bodies from the elected members and from the wider community, after
21 that we'll advertise and set the process to prepare the Heritage Plan, we'll set up some working
22 groups, identify our issues and priorities, work on those through the forum and come up with a
23 draft plan, which again will come back to the full Council for input to it and for discussion and
24 ultimately adoption.

25
26 So that's all my presentation.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much Deirdre. I think it has to be acknowledged the
28 fantastic work that Deirdre does, she is a one person dynamo! I don't think we have had the
29 forum up and running since March and I'd also like to add the online community heritage archive
30 that was set up last year is a fantastic website to go into and have a look, I know I promised to
31 put in a contribution which I haven't done yet.

32
33 Okay, we do want to get a member from each municipal district, I know it was on the district
34 agendas, hopefully each district has selected a member. So we'll start with Bray, I know Bray

1 proposed Cllr Matthews. We'll go through the others. Have Arklow selected? Cllr McDonald,
2 thank you. Baltinglass/Blessington? Cllr Tommy Cullen. Wicklow? Cllr Snell. Greystones?
3 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Wicklow municipal district did ask if it was possible to have a second
4 candidate? We had two interested parties in the position?

5 MS BURNS: In the interest of balance we just have one, but I'd say there will be a lot of scope
6 through the working groups for additional. Or it could be a rotating arrangement if you wanted.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr McLoughlin you were nominated from Greystones?

8 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Gentlemen, I just want to make a -- commend you on the presentation and
9 thank you very much Deirdre for it. I for one would like to endorse what our Cathaoirleach said,
10 Deirdre's that silent person in the background that sweeps across the whole county and achieves
11 probably more than any one individual, I just think she's absolutely extraordinary. Her last plan
12 was absolutely superb. If you look at the amount of work done by this one woman army as I call
13 her, it was huge. But it's also showing there hasn't been enough funding given to heritage for the
14 last number of years, there was a huge amount in 2004 to '09 and then there was a cut-off point
15 where Deirdre was, somebody decided she would achieve stuff anyway we don't need to give her
16 money, just get on with it. She has. It's been remarkable. But I think our heritage is every bit as
17 important as tourism and every other aspect, so she needs the support and particularly the new
18 councillors on the Council, they need to know the work that that person up there does is
19 remarkable, she has done incredible work for the county and deserves thanks and support from
20 every single one of us going forward.

21 Cllr CASEY: Equally with yourself and Cllr McLoughlin, I fully agree with the sentiments of
22 the heritage officer, Deirdre works quietly in the background but in a very constructive manner.
23 She said about the plan working in partnership, that's the way she works, in partnership.
24 Especially through the community groups, she always made herself fully available to any
25 community groups in relation to heritage matters, I have to put on record my thanks to her, she's
26 been a huge support to us for five or six years where we have indeed got indirect funding
27 through the local authority here, and also my record of thanks for the local authority for help in
28 getting us that. But a special thanks to Deirdre for doing the work. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay then, the five names, Cllr McDonald, Cllr Matthews, Cllr Snell,
30 Cllr Tommy Cullen, Cllr McLoughlin, is that agreed? Okay.

31
32 Okay I'll ask Christine Flood to come up to discuss the draft Wicklow local authority corporate
33 plan 2015-19. Everybody got a copy I presume, yeah?

34 MS FLOOD: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Members will know that the corporate plan 2015-2019

1 is a high level document, it's the strategic blue print for the activities of the Council for the
2 lifetime of this current Council. It's a top level plan, part of a suite of plans which also includes
3 the annual service delivery plans and it links in with the funds management and indeed with
4 metrics and measurement.

5
6 It sets out our goals and strategies, our objectives and mission statement and what you probably
7 find of great interest is the metrics in the report. The figures in the 2015 draft plan are related to
8 2013 data. We're compiling the 2014 figures at the moment. It is likely, this plan is due for
9 review at the end of 2015, it will be reviewed to reflect any changes that might be required, as a
10 result of the preparation of the local economic community plan, again they are very closely
11 related and inter-dependant. So this corporate plan may change at the end of the year. And if
12 that's the case we'll be able to put in the 2014 figures as well. So it will give you a good idea of
13 the performance of the Council.

14
15 The national auditing oversight committee may introduce new metrics, but it's a requirement that
16 each corporate plan has these types of metrics in order to be able to measure our performance.
17 So thank you very much. Cathaoirleach.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Corporate Policy Group had a discussion on this this morning and went
19 through a number of issues and I think it was the view of the Corporate Policy Group that this
20 should be a working document and not something put on the shelf, because it does allow for
21 service indicators where performance can be compared to previous years.

22 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks very much. I was wondering is there any possibility of getting some
23 targets into the metrics as well? Because it's really important that we understand where we are at
24 the moment, but also to say this is where we want to be in a year or five years time, that would
25 enable us to gauge whether or not what we are doing is working. Would that be possible?

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

27 Cllr TIMMINS: Just briefly I'd like to see the metrics expanded. I know I came up with
28 proposals here before, I'd like to bring them again maybe to Christine, just in relation to
29 expanding metrics. I know for instance just the number of vacant houses, a number of things
30 like that, split by electoral area, a lot of extra relevant figures that we can ask to be put into our
31 corporate plan. There is still a lot of work to do in relation to us designing metrics that are
32 relevant to Wicklow and our electoral areas that may not be the same as what's produced at a
33 national level, I know national oversight is only getting off the ground as regards giving
34 guidelines to Councils about different metrics that should be used, and I'd be interested in what

1 they have to say to the Councils, I think they will be starting to build up a lot of knowledge about
2 what Councils should be measuring, so any updates from them I'd be interested in them, it's a
3 great way of us monitoring how the Council is doing. Some are doing well, some could do
4 better, but it's metrics, through measurement, not just people shooting their mouth off about
5 different things. It's a true measure of what's actually happening, you can't beat statistics and
6 facts to know what's going on in this county rather than the hype.

7
8 I was disappointed that the N81 wasn't mentioned in the corporate plan and transport, public
9 transport links on the west side of the county, we're under pressure with CIE dropping one of the
10 routes that goes down the N81, I know Baltinglass, certainly it will affect all of west Wicklow
11 losing a bus route that runs to Dublin on a daily basis, one of the bus routes is proposed to be
12 withdrawn by Bus Eireann from June, that's certainly a concern. I'm not sure what the corporate
13 plan can do to help that, but I'd urge it to be considered.

14 Cllr RYAN: Thank you Christine. Thanks for providing us with the document, to me it's really
15 important that we are a bit more strategic in how we go about things as a Council, and not
16 reactive as we tend to be. So it's great to get the corporate plan on paper, I think it's a starting
17 point, I'd say we'll develop it with time, I'm just interested in the values that are there within the
18 plan, I think it would be really useful if we had a workshop on the values that we believe in and
19 that we share and that we break them down into a set of behaviours that are the way we live
20 those values, because to me having values sitting in a document or on a wall means nothing, it's
21 how we bring them alive in the day-to-day operation of the Council. I'd probably like the plan to
22 be a little more aspirational in terms of where we want to go and what we want to be, I certainly
23 want to be part of the best performing local authority in the county -- sorry in the country! So
24 from that point of view I'd love to know when they are available, I think all these corporate plans
25 have to be done now, when all the other counties have them done, I'd like to see them, to see
26 what they are saying and their aspirations and maybe we can get together as a Council later on
27 and develop ours, but I believe it has to be a collaborative approach of everybody involved, all
28 the stakeholders in this county to make the best plans, so we can focus resources and make it
29 happen.

30 Cllr CASEY: I'll be fairly brief in relation to it, this is a draft corporate plan, I'd like to inform
31 the members also by the end of the year we'll hopefully have our local economic and community
32 plan in place. Which will also give us an opportunity to amend this plan to take the
33 recommended outputs of both the economic and community sections and adopt them into that
34 plan at the time, I think that's important to say, that that facility will be available at the end of the

1 year to the members as well.

2 Cllr WALSH: I want to thank Christine for the document, two quick questions on reading
3 through it. One in the appendix section, I see finance resources to upgrade existing local
4 authority housing in housing estates. I was surprised to learn recently that those resources did
5 not include the replacement of doors and windows for the regeneration scheme, so that was a
6 surprise to me. The second query I had was on the fire services section, the number of false
7 alarms, there's a figure of 120, does that refer to actual call outs or how was that figure
8 compiled?

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would say that would take the director of service for that area, but we'll
10 get you answers.

11 MR MURPHY: I think for new councillors it's an interesting document, but I do think that as
12 there is new blood into the County Council I think it's the way forward, but I do think we need to
13 know what's going on across the board and to network, and as Cllr Ryan said to see what other
14 County Councils have achieved or not achieved, where are our weaknesses. It's like the Leaving
15 Cert, you have the mock exams and the real exams, I suppose that's where we are. If we need to
16 improve, we need to revise and I think for new councillors that's what we need do as well.

17 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Christine for the booklet, lots of stuff in it. I think where the focus
18 needs to be is on our core values and I think while there's a statement here highlighting each of
19 the core values I think it would be helpful if we are going to have a workshop or some kind of
20 follow through on this, that we actually critique each of the core values, because it's like we were
21 talking earlier with Cllr Murphy in regards to the Barcelona agreement, if we can live the core
22 values and understand, as taking up Cllr Ryan's point, if we can understand what we're trying to
23 do as an organisation what we want to achieve that's the key there, but they have to have
24 meaning, they have to have measurement and we have to understand what we mean when we
25 write down these statements, because written down here they mean nothing.

26 Cllr BLAKE: Thanks Christine for the presentation, just to ask her in relation to the overall
27 structure of local authorities looking at the corporate plan for all of the plans for the whole
28 country, is she familiar with that aspect of it, and if they are reviewing all aspects of it coming
29 back early in the year or the back end of the year, with regards all aspects of it? You said it
30 already it is a working document and when that report does come out that we can actually come
31 back and have a look at what they say and what relevance it has for our own corporate plan.

32 MS FLOOD: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Just with regard to targets and metrics. The targets and
33 metrics are based largely on our service indicators which are figures that we have to compile
34 annually and there is -- the Department of the Environment compiles those figures nationally, so

1 it is possible to go in on the Department of the Environment website and compare Wicklow
2 County Council with others. It's also possible to look at other corporate plans, there's quite a few
3 of them there online, most at the moment are in draft format, but Wicklow's corporate plan fits in
4 very well with the requirements set out by the Department in their template.

5
6 With regard to creating additional metrics and setting targets, that's possible. Maybe at the
7 Strategic Policy Committee members might consider what metrics or targets they would like to
8 set, the corporate plan had been sent in draft format to the SPCs for consideration, we didn't get a
9 huge amount of feedback, but there is an opportunity, as Cllr Casey pointed out, it will be
10 reviewed in the context of the local economic and community plan, so there is an opportunity to
11 review these, have a workshop and consider the targets and our values and all of the other issues
12 that are actually in the corporate plan. And it might be a good time to do that towards the end of
13 the year when we're looking at it in the light of the local economic and community plan.

14
15 With regard to specifics with the N81 and public transport links I'll certainly talk to my
16 colleagues in the roads, transport and roads department to see if there is additional detail in there.
17 This is a high level plan and we'll also have annual service delivery plans which will actually
18 have more detailed information and again they are likely to have more metrics in them.

19
20 Regards to the door and window replacement programme, I have to find that out. Again it's a
21 level of detail that wouldn't be expected in the corporate plan, but I can find that information out.

22
23 With regard to the fire services false alarms, 120 is the actual figures, the number of times the
24 crew have had to leave to go out to attend to false alarms, so it is the number of false alarms.

25
26 The National Oversight and Audit Committee are actually looking at all the corporate plans and
27 there will be comparisons drawn, they may actually introduce more metrics and measurements as
28 they get up and running and look at other local authority plans, but certainly there is renewed
29 focus on metrics and measurement. I think that's it.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thanks Christine. Can I have a proposer then for the plan? Cllr
31 Timmins, seconded by Cllr Casey. Is that agreed? Okay, there will be a review towards the end
32 of the year as we say, as Christine pointed out, maybe it's no harm if special policy committees
33 had discussions on it to see what we can add or improve to the document.

1 Item 9, proposed? Cllr Fitzgerald.

2 Cllr FITZGERALD: Just it states in that fund there that it was increased funding because of the
3 amalgamation of the Town Councils. I am well aware that Arklow Music Festival, I don't know
4 what criteria is used so they didn't get anything -- they depended on a grant from the old Arklow
5 Town Council, 7,000 people come between competitors and visitors, which runs from next
6 Sunday to the following, for a week. I'm a bit disappointed I didn't get time, I only received that
7 on Friday, to talk to Jenny because I was away on Thursday, I'm a bit confused, what more do
8 they want? It's a music festival, we have some of the greatest musicians and contributions from
9 people in the country, it's acknowledged as the second or third biggest in the country, there will
10 be no more funding, very little funding from the municipal district coming in the future, there
11 will be none because it will all gone through the County Council, but I query why, I should have
12 mentioned before I queried it here, I didn't get a chance, but I find it strange and I rang them to
13 make sure they had made the, sent in the document and they had sent it in they tell me and they
14 haven't heard anything that I have heard of. They haven't been obviously considered, but they
15 always got funding through the Town Council. That funding was the lifeline for that group,
16 totally voluntary group. And next week, it's good for Arklow and the area as well, it's a huge
17 number of people coming into the town. I'm very surprised. I won't be supporting the document
18 until I get clarification on why they didn't get anything anyway.

19 Cllr RUTTLE: Just referring here to the six festivals listed from Bray down to Dunlavin Arts
20 Festival, ranging from top of the range of 8,500 down to Dunlavin recommended at 500 and I
21 just, that was obviously a huge imbalance and gaps in between, so I would be proposing that
22 Dunlavin Arts Festival be brought up to a grant of a thousand and the monies for that be left for
23 the direct allocation through the system. Dunlavin Arts Festival is running for about 40 years, an
24 example of huge community effort and an excellent festival involving various multidisciplinary
25 arts festival, and I think we have to do it better than 500, so I formally propose that we bring it to
26 1,000 and leave it at the discretion of the director to allocate the monies to put that extra at
27 Dunlavin, it's a festival worthy of support in the most westerly town of this county of Wicklow,
28 thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Have I a seconder for that proposal?

30 Cllr TIMMINS: Yeah. That's what I wanted, just to back Cllr Ruttle on that proposal. That's
31 the only arts festival in the west of the county. So I'll support that.

32 Cllr BOURKE: I'd like to support Cllr Fitzgerald in his request for funding for the Arklow
33 Music Festival. It's not the first time at these meetings that myself and Cllr Kelly had
34 highlighted that there was nothing in previous budgets given to the south of the county for grants

1 for music festivals or arts festivals, I think we are getting a raw deal in the south of the county on
2 this, I did bring it up before, I obviously wasn't listened to, so I'll vote along with Cllr Fitzgerald
3 in protest.

4 Cllr VANCE: Can I just say the Bray Jazz Festival is an international festival, it has always
5 been given a grant from Bray Town Council, obviously the municipal now, I can tell you now I
6 don't mind other people supporting their own particular areas, that's fine. But as far as I'm
7 concerned no money is coming off this, because this is funding that has always been provided
8 from Bray Town Council in the Bray area, this is an internationally renowned festival and it's
9 absolutely essential for this type of money, it's the least we can put in because of the money that
10 it generates and the activity it generates in the Bray area every year.

11 Cllr ANNESLEY: I would like to second Cllr Fitzgerald. It's disgraceful that Arklow music
12 festival isn't getting any money whatsoever, they have been going since 1972 and gone from
13 strength to strength, it starts at a very early stage, with a young lad getting up and saying a poem
14 and now to be able to perform on worldwide stages. We're not trying to take any money off any
15 other groups, but I think it's absolutely disgraceful that no funding whatsoever has been given to
16 Arklow and yet again Arklow has been overlooked. I just can't sit here and vote for this, so I
17 won't vote for it either Cathaoirleach.

18 Cllr MURPHY: I'd like to echo what my other colleagues from Arklow have said. I think it's
19 such a surprise, because we all have sat here, the 32 councillors, I'm sure Arklow festival will
20 tell you themselves, it's the development of young children and it is also the dedication of the
21 schools, secondary and national and adult choirs and also the small committee of the Arklow
22 music festival and this needs to be acknowledged, I won't support it either.

23 Cllr BRADY: Just for clarification I agree totally with what Cllr Vance said in relation to Bray
24 Jazz Festival, I note in the Bray municipal district we're meeting tomorrow night there's a
25 proposal to allocate them a funding of in the region of 4,000, which would appear to be on top of
26 this, can I just ask whether Bray Jazz Festival received money on an annual basis from Wicklow
27 County Council as well as Bray Town Council? Just to clarify that there is a doubling up here?

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes they have. Look we're not getting through the agenda very well. Do
29 people want to extend the meeting? I propose an extra 15 minutes. Half an hour.

30 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I think the real problem here is not the paltry 8 and a half thousand to an
31 international festival or indeed some festivals getting nothing and some getting 500 it's an
32 absolute disgrace that Wicklow County Council are only giving 16,800. If we look at what other
33 counties around the country are giving to the arts it's an embarrassment for somebody that
34 worked in the arts sector I know, God knows what we'd get if Greystones Arts Festival was

1 going, I remember before you had the breakdown of municipal districts was getting 8 and a half
2 thousand itself, we have to really look, just because it's a soft attack and heritage is soft, in
3 Wicklow we have to remember that the festivals bring as much to our economy as anything else
4 in this county, giving a whole county 16,800 is just not good enough and it cannot sustain
5 festival industry in this county. With regards to the jazz festival in Bray, of course we need to
6 continue to manage and support the jazz festival, but the amount that the other festivals in the
7 county are getting, if you look at the amount of work Wicklow Arts Festival does, it's
8 community based and completely, relies completely on funding from the likes of us and others,
9 we're not supporting them enough and I would really beseech my fellow members when it comes
10 around to the budget next year, think about what you are all saying, you want the local festival
11 supported and we can only do that if we agree as a group to give more money to festivals and to
12 Jenny so she can support them.

13 Cllr RYAN: I want to mention maybe the Bray Jazz Festival, the fact it's called Bray makes it
14 sound like it's all about Bray, it's not, it's all about Wicklow, about Ireland, so in terms of what it
15 actually provides, from that point of view it's not a parochial thing.

16 Cllr KAVANAGH: Is it possible to get information about some of the, about all of the festivals,
17 some are in areas I don't know about, some I haven't heard of and I don't know what the festival
18 is even. It would be nice to have information about where they are and where the money is
19 going.

20 Cllr WHITMORE: I agree with Cllr Kavanagh, what's missing is who applied and who didn't
21 get funding and what the rationale for funding is? So why were certain festivals picked? That's
22 important information to have.

23 Cllr WALSH: I'm just asking the question, is it possible to amend this document now as a result
24 of what we heard in relation to the Arklow Music Festival and include them in the groups for
25 funding?

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll let in Michael, but Jenny Sherwin I'm sure has gone through all the
27 applications in detail. But I'll let in Michael to make a comment.

28 >> As you say we had an adjudication panel that looked at the applications and awarded money
29 as best they saw fit. The cake is small to begin with and we try to slice it up -- Jenny tried to
30 reflect what the festivals would have got under the old regime of Town Councils as best she
31 could. But it doesn't have to be done today, if the members prefer we can leave it and put it on
32 the agenda for the April meeting and I'll get more information and give it out. That may be the
33 best thing to do.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Jenny is on leave this week as well, so maybe that might be the

1 best. We'll defer that.

2 Cllr CASEY: Can we also find out where they got funding last year, whether it was through
3 town versus County Council, should it be in the municipal budget.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Some have been dual funded. Okay we'll defer that.

5 Cllr BLAKE: I know where Bray, Wicklow and Dunlavin but are who are the other three?

6 >> Alchemy music festival is in Ashford Callary in Roundwood, Compass Arts is Mermaid in
7 Bray, Outpost is Bray, High Seas is Bray, Music Together is Greystones.

8 Cllr MURPHY: Can I just say also maybe for the April meeting that we could know how many
9 people, how many groups had applied in the total?

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah thank you. We'll move on. To note monthly management report of
11 Wicklow County Council. That's been circulated.

12

13 11, note the data protection procedure policy and privacy statement that was also correspondence
14 enclosed. Christine do you want to give a brief outline on that as well.

15 MS FLOOD: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Members, you have been circulated with a suite of
16 documents in connection with our privacy statement and data protection policy. You will also
17 have received a copy of the proposed new data protection procedures. There's a number of
18 reasons for the review of the data protection procedures and documents carried out. One is there
19 has been renewed media focus on data protection, there has been a rise in data protection
20 inquiries, people asking why is this on my file, who can look at it, etcetera. Also the new
21 structures in the local authority, the smaller numbers of staff in Bray and Arklow, and then the
22 larger councillors. So we thought it was opportune, particularly with a number of new members,
23 to review the policy procedures.

24

25 Now procedures are aimed at protecting members, staff and the organisation. There have been
26 prosecutions in relation to the data protection and there have been compensation awards recently,
27 which is relatively new in the whole area of data protection. There will be training organised for
28 elected members on the 9th of March and it is proposed to roll-out the new policies, procedures,
29 during the month of March and your co-operation would be much appreciated. We did circulate
30 at Corporate Policy Group a draft request, authorisation to be signed by people making
31 representations to councillors, where privacy or data protection would kick in, and that would be
32 typically in relation to housing and planning in particular.

33

34 We're in the process, that's only just a draft, there were some issues raised at the Corporate

1 Policy Group, and no doubt when training takes place on the 9th of March the training will be
2 carried out by a solicitor who is a legal expert in the whole area of data protection, I'm sure there
3 will be other issues raised at that stage and it may be a case that we might review the request
4 form and that will be accompanied by representations made by councillors.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. So we're going to have a day here, the 9th of March that all
6 questions and clarifications can be sought. I know it has particular relevance to the Planning
7 Department, but there are probably other areas as well. So I would ask the members to try and
8 attend on the 9th if possible. 10.30. We'll confirm that.

9 Cllr FORTUNE: I have a meeting, the risk assessment.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay we'll try and be flexible.

11 MS FLOOD: The data protection will be over by the time the CFRAM starts.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. They won't clash. Thanks Christine. Item number 12. To appoint
13 one elected representative to Wicklow Music Education Partnership, a subcommittee of the
14 KWETB, maybe it might be preferable to have somebody, one of the members would be willing
15 to take the position? Can I have proposals?

16 Cllr LAWLESS: I've actually been invited to go on to that already, I've been approached, I don't
17 know whether that's part of being on the actual board of the KWETB, or whether they need
18 another actual representative from the Council who is not on the actual board. Maybe that
19 should be cleared.

20 MS GALLAGHER: There is a letter from the Chief Operations Officer referring to the Terms of
21 Reference of the partnership provision, three members should be nominated from Wicklow
22 County Council, at least one of whom should be an elected representative, the remaining should
23 include an arts officer and director of County Council, so additional.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have proposals, I know Cllr Glynn in the past had a huge interest in
25 the whole music generation and put in a quite a lot of effort into it, it was very rewarding for
26 him. Can I have proposals?

27 Cllr BOURKE: Tommy Annesley I propose.

28 Cllr ANNESLEY: Yeah I have no problem, I'll let you know, I wouldn't know much about
29 music, so as long as they don't ask me to play a keyboard or anything there will be no problem!

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: You've just been looking for money for a music festival!

31 Cllr ANNESLEY: I'm good at looking for money, but that's for the people of Arklow, not for
32 myself. No bother going on that.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Is that agreed? Who seconded that? Cllr McLoughlin. Okay
34 that's agreed. Okay quarter to 5. We'll get an answer to Cllr Fortune's suspension, maybe Sean

1 will come up here and give clarification on that?

2 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: I think this relates to an e-mail that was sent out yesterday. The time of
3 the e-mail I think is just a matter of technology, it should have gone out earlier but didn't. But I
4 think it's worthwhile just looking at the chronology of what led to this and it probably goes back
5 to 2008 when a system for procuring bitumen was introduced, a national system called LA
6 Bitumen and it was open at that time to Councils to partake in it, the fee for joining it was
7 €10,000. Just to put it in context, bitumen is supplied by three suppliers in the country, to give
8 you an example, in 2012 the difference between the suppliers was about 0.2%, so a tonne of
9 bitumen would have been 584 and from another was 583.94, so literally nothing in it.

10

11 So at that point a decision was made not to partake, it didn't seem to be value for money, we
12 were only going through, we used all three at various stages, at the point we were only using
13 two. And they submitted their rates voluntarily for the following six months and the rates were
14 the same as LA Bitumen, so it just didn't seem to make any sense, so we continued with that.

15

16 In March 2012 a circular issued from the Department of Transport regarding road works
17 expenditure and setting out procurement requirements and so on, we continued with our
18 procurement the way we were doing it, because we felt we had comparison. In November 2012
19 the Department issued guidelines on the circular, but in the interim on the 22nd of October 2012
20 we had a spot-check, what was called a spot-check by the Department of Transport and they
21 went through our expenditure on roads, they queried about 500 items, varying in value from 10
22 euro to thousands.

23

24 And in February 2013 they wrote to us and said that they had a number of items outstanding,
25 they listed out items, March 2013 we sent in a response to the items that were raised and in June
26 2013 the Department advised us that they proposed a sanction of 69,000, and they listed out the
27 items.

28

29 So we made a further submission to them on the items that they had listed based on the fact that
30 they said that, correctly in some cases that expenditure was ineligible, but in those cases we
31 would have had, we didn't get the full value of the work of the particular job from the grant, we
32 would have had our open expenditure on top of it, so we could replace the, their ineligible
33 expenditure with our expenditure and recoup the full money.

34

1 Just to give you an example, there are minor things like for instance we had a road job in
2 Rathnew where we hired a skip to take away rubbish, hiring the skip is ineligible, now the logic
3 for somebody working on the job would be sure it's part of the job, but it's not eligible so we
4 couldn't charge. So we had to charge up something else instead that's a small item, but it's just
5 the actual definition of eligible and ineligible given that there were about 500 items was quite
6 extensive.

7
8 They did also raise queries outside of the bitumen on our hiring of plant and machinery, in a lot
9 of cases these were machines we had on hire all the time, they want to see the paper for that, in
10 some cases it was just going year to year, in the end they mitigated that in fairness to them. But
11 they imposed the sanction of 27,945 in relation to our procurement of bitumen and our
12 discretionary grant was reduced by that amount in late 2013.

13
14 So it was based on -- the circular gave the Department the option of imposing a fine of between
15 5% and 15% on ineligible expenditure, in this case they imposed a sanction on us of 15% of a
16 figure of 189,000. So I think the important thing in terms of impression of all this is that neither
17 the Council nor the Department or Exchequer was in any loss, because we got the same rate from
18 suppliers, not through our own system if you want to call it that, as signing up for LA Bitumen,
19 that has an annual cost as well for maintenance, so over that period of time we would have paid
20 20,000 to LA Bitumen for the services, but we didn't. So you could say it was a saving of
21 20,000, we didn't sign up to it anyway.

22
23 So our discretionary grant was reduced by 27,935 and that was apportioned then through the
24 areas in accordance with the amount that related to particular areas. In -- we signed up in 2014
25 for LA Bitumen, so we're getting the same prices as what we're getting through the LA Bitumen
26 system, so the matter has been dealt with. That's the background to it, I don't know Cllr Fortune
27 if it relates to the issue Cllr Cullen raised in October 2014, which was a year after that, I was at
28 the meeting, so I do recall it, he raised an issue in relation to Structural Funds issued by the
29 Department of the Environment, and to be perfectly honest with you I didn't relate these because
30 these aren't Structural Funds and they weren't from the Department of Environment, they were
31 roads funds from the government and issued by Department of Transport through NRA. So if I
32 didn't pick up on it, that's my fault obviously, but I just didn't relate two items, it was the wrong
33 department and wrong name. So I didn't relate those two items.

34 Cllr FORTUNE: Well I suppose I hear what the director is saying, this goes back to 2008 in

1 roads, so it begs the question why. And there's a kind of philosophy in life that when someone
2 tells you something and you hear it you can't be untold it. How I became aware of this was
3 getting back to the famous recent AGM when I objected to the way that was constructed,
4 subsequently wrote and I would have copied the manager and Mr Murphy and several people, so
5 you're aware of what I wrote. I was unhappy with several aspects of it, I also wrote to the
6 Department which culminated in me having a meeting in the Department to air my grievance, no
7 I didn't, to be honest have great confidence in anything that would happen, but on principle I was
8 very annoyed over the way, it's a matter of public record, I'm not saying anything I hadn't said.
9 In the course of the meeting there was a comment made to us by a senior official, and the, that
10 remark was subsequently raised here in the chamber and it was just, this is my language, I think,
11 it was fobbed off basically, I hear what you are saying that you didn't relate the two points, but I
12 would say there's a question as to why, why the Department felt the need to query, why they
13 followed it through, why they threatened to suspend funding, why they did put a charge on us, is
14 there any possibility that the bitumen that we were procuring back then was the right product, the
15 right specification, is there any implication for health and safety? If you don't know the facts
16 and it's not explained it does beg those kind of questions. And I would say, I totally respect you
17 Mr Quirke, I just think -- it's a bit disingenuous to say that the question Cllr Cullen did ask that
18 day wasn't answered, it was kind of, it was like as if he asked the question, but didn't ask the
19 question in the right way, therefore the question didn't have to be answered. It's a bit like that.

20
21 So I just think it's very serious that the Department would take an action like this, and they
22 actually did say that in any future expenditure that, it's in the letter we got, may result in the
23 Council's grants being reduced or held up. That's a very serious thing. How the Department
24 would do that and why they would do that or feel the need to do it, equally it raises the question
25 from a professional perspective why the local authority would put themselves in that position,
26 why they wouldn't follow procurement procedures? That's why, not to get on too much of a
27 tangent why the country's in the state it's in, people didn't follow regulations or do things the way
28 they should be done, so it smacks -- I think my problem with the response is that, why? Why did
29 this happen, why did the Department have to do what they did, why they followed it through
30 such a long time, I just think it smacks.

31
32 As I say, I heard that in the circumstances I have just described, so therefore it wasn't something
33 light. It was something very serious and it came across as being a very, very serious issue. I
34 must say I struggle in trying to accept fully that when the question was asked in October that it

1 couldn't have been answered.

2 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Mr Quirke for your clarification. But it's awful that we're sitting here
3 as 32 elected representatives and it's because a newspaper found out about it that we find out
4 about it. If we've done something wrong there's loads of subcommittees, there's a Corporate
5 Policy Group and lots and lots of ways without coming into this meeting and telling the
6 councillors look unfortunately we've lost 27,000 of our road grant this year because we didn't
7 follow public procurement procedures, so we can't do that amount of resurfacing because we
8 have to spend it on a fine, without us having to wait 18 months and hear it from a journalist,
9 that's what's ultimately wrong with this. Anybody can make a mistake, but every mistake that's
10 made here, unless somebody investigates it and brings it into a big issue, there's no transparency,
11 never anybody holding their hand up saying they made a mistake.

12
13 You said over the start of March 2008, a circular was issued in March 2012, so it's only over six
14 months, 27,000 in six months is a lot of money, we could have done that road resurfacing
15 somewhere else and I want to know how the Audit Committee were never informed, surely if
16 27,000 is a reasonable expenditure to advise the Audit Committee on, which is out of the norm
17 or out of the ordinary, but when the Audit Committee sit down and say to the staff did anything
18 unusual happen this year? That that's not a usual occurrence, unless you are telling us it is a
19 usual occurrence and there's lots more that we're waiting for investigative journalists to find out
20 about, I'm disgusted how we found out about it, if we make mistakes fine, but tell us about them
21 and let us move on.

22 Cllr KAVANAGH: I wasn't here at the time all this happened and I do feel questions need to be
23 asked about it, one of the questions I would have and Cllr Winters referred to it, did this
24 reduction in funding or the loss of whatever was available, did it come up in discussions with the
25 Council and did the Finance Officer discuss this with the members of the Council? You said it
26 was apportioned throughout various areas, was that something slipped through or was it
27 highlighted to this Council? Because I would be concerned having gone through the budgetary
28 process at the end of the year that these things slip under the radar and they are not brought by
29 the Finance Officer when the budget is being discussed, and again as Cllr Winters said, that the
30 auditor wouldn't have referred to it. That's where it should be brought to our attention, where
31 money is in or out, gained or lost or whatever, it needs to be brought to our attention. Thank
32 you.

33 Cllr MITCHELL: I think the deficiencies which occurred were minor, it seemed we saved
34 20,000 on not subscribing to this website and the fine cost 27,000 and there was a second issue

1 of a mis-allocation of expenses from one heading to another, I don't think there's any question of
2 significant irregularity. But I do think that where there are issues like this it should in some way
3 be mentioned to the Audit Committee. I don't think it was, so that there is somebody who was
4 aware at least of these relatively minor book-keeping issues and small fine issues in what's a
5 very large amount of expenditure here, we're always going to get such things, but I think
6 certainly in private business there are audit letters from the auditors, which detail to the
7 management and the directors of companies, what the auditors see as faults in book-keeping or
8 activities which are minor and don't need any action usually, but are at least listed and up for
9 consideration. I think it would be better if somehow that happened here. Thank you.

10 Cllr VANCE: Just for clarification, do I have it right by saying the Department wanted us to join
11 a scheme at 10,000 each year, we didn't do it for two years and the bitumen was at the same
12 price. So it beggar's belief with me that the Department were actually, would have been ordering
13 the Council to pay 10,000 a year more for bitumen. It just doesn't go with what I'm thinking,
14 you join a scheme for 10,000 I would imagine that the bitumen should have been cheaper than
15 you get on the open market. I just want clarification of that, is that exactly the case? That in fact
16 by us not joining for two years we actually saved 20,000 because the bitumen was exactly the
17 same price, that's one thing.

18
19 Could I ask that when we did join in 2014 we had to pay 10,000 as well again, would that be
20 correct and is the bitumen still at the same price? I would have imagined that you're getting into
21 a buying scheme that you're going to pay 10,000 up front that you would get it a lot cheaper,
22 where there's a massive amount being bought, so it just doesn't make sense to me that we save
23 20,000, and because we didn't go down this route that the Department are actually punishing the
24 Council by putting a fine on them of 27,000, it doesn't make sense. Could I just ask for
25 clarification that's how I understand it.

26 Cllr CASEY: I'll be fairly brief. I spoke this morning at the Corporate Policy meeting, I said I
27 was very disappointed how we find out about this, not necessarily the figure of 27,000 it's the
28 process of how we were informed about it, through the press, was disappointing. I just want to
29 put it on record that the Audit Committee were not aware of this either, it was never brought to
30 the attention of the Audit Committee and the Audit Committee is always trying to ensure that we
31 claim down off the Department, that we don't leave any funding behind us there, we have always
32 been focused on making sure each department is claiming off the Department on time and we're
33 drawing down the appropriate funds. I just feel this is disappointing how the process that was
34 involved that we had to find it out from a local paper today, rather than being informed about it

1 at the time and as Cllr Winters said there is several procedures we could have gone through, we
2 could have brought it to Audit Committee, to CPG, there were various ways to head it off, it's
3 not the 27,000, it's the process that's involved or lack of information that I'm disappointed in.

4 Cllr RYAN: I too am very uncomfortable with this, it begs the question as to whether or not
5 there is other fines that the Council has been given that we don't know about, that's number one.
6 I'd like to know that the process is now changed so that the Audit Committee will actually be
7 notified of any fines that go forward into the future because we can't change this now. But at
8 least from here on in that we try to bring a bit more transparency to the process. I'd also like to
9 know whether or not spot-checks were done on all Councils in Ireland and whether or not other
10 Councils had similar issues raised with them? I think that's information we don't have right now,
11 I think it's information that the Department of Environment should actually proffer and it's only
12 right -- I'm still confused as to how this information came out, whether it was in a meeting with
13 Cllr Fortune that an official happened to say it and it was seen as Structural Funds and it came
14 up, because I remember that meeting here in Wicklow County Council where Cllr Cullen was
15 saying about Structural Funds; I hadn't a clue what he was on about, I don't think many other
16 people had an idea either. I think if councillors have information they should be clear about it
17 and say it and not try and allude to certain things, just if you have something come forward and
18 say it and let us all try and make sure we're running a Council that's open and honest. So I would
19 be interested in that, if there is other Councils around Ireland also done spot-checks. Like Cllr
20 Vance, it seems bizarre you have to pay 10,000 to join a website that gives no efficiency, I'd love
21 someone to explain that and what the Department are at because those procurement rules seem
22 crazy.

23 Cllr BOURKE: Further to my colleague Cllr Ryan's suggestions, I'd like to ask is there -- is it
24 possible that there is a cartel in operation, if so would you not be suspicious that if there was a
25 cartel that we should have it investigated by the Competition Authority so we're getting proper
26 value for money.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: As the director said there are only three in the country.

28 Cllr BOURKE: There's only three meat factories too.

29 Cllr RUTTLE: Like Cllr Vance there, I'd like to know about this, this 10,000 seems like a rip off
30 to me. A fine that you have to pay in to them, never mind any fine we might incur, normally
31 things like that should be to your benefit, but instead they are dragging you down in the
32 beginning, it's hard to see how this 10,000 is justified at all, I'd like clarification how that works.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor. I agree with you and Cllr Vance and Cllr Ryan's
34 sentiments, but I would be very disappointed that this was not flagged to the elected members

1 earlier, and the official will have to take that on the chin. Okay I'll let you back in Sean.

2 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Just to deal with the items. I suppose at the time we considered that
3 however lose, we had a system, that we were getting prices in advance, the Department didn't
4 agree with that and what can I say. They are right in the end, we didn't have a strong enough
5 system, but we weren't losing any money, we're still getting the same price today as we were
6 before we joined LA quotes. The 10,000 back in 2008 I think consisted of some set-up costs for
7 LA Bitumen and subsequently it was 2,000 per annum, so we had 10,000 in 2008 and five
8 consecutive years where we weren't in it at 2,000 per annum, the ongoing cost of 2,000 per
9 annum, at least, it may well go up, but there is a system there now, so every load we got would
10 have a reference from LA Bitumen. It's the same price, but there is an audit trail and anyone that
11 has been audited knows the audit trail is important. You have to be able to show you went
12 through the system. We were getting the same value when bitumen suppliers sent in their prices,
13 their e-mail would say these are the same rates as are up on the website of LA Bitumen, so ...

14
15 In relation to other finds, no, that was a spot-check we had, it was comprehensive, about 500
16 queries at the end of it. There are no other fines in roads, that's all I can tell you.

17
18 Other Councils I'm not sure, I asked the question at the time and I was told that some other
19 Councils were being looked at as well, but I couldn't ever get to the bottom of it.

20 Cllr WINTERS: Are they only ones that hadn't registered with LA Bitumen

21 Cllr RYAN: It's LA Quotes.

22 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: There's an LA Quotes and LA Bitumen. Etcetera 10 grand to join LA
23 Bitumen in 2008 and it's 2,000 a year now. So we're paying 2,000 a year every year to get their
24 product.

25 Cllr VANCE: At the same price?

26 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: From the same people, product is the same specification, there isn't any
27 -- it's the same specification for the whole country. In fact it's probably, because there are only
28 three suppliers, if you were to go on price and everybody went to the one supplier they wouldn't
29 be able to supply everybody because everybody is being looking at one time, it did happen
30 previously, there was queuing at a suppliers to try and get loads of bitumen because they were
31 the lowest price, so lowest price isn't; and bringing it down to one supplier isn't necessarily the
32 best.

33
34 In relation to the Audit Committee. I accept that we didn't notify the Audit Committee. The

1 Department identified a weakness in our system and we dealt with it. So the Audit Committee,
2 they could have looked at what we did I suppose, but we accepted the criticism the Department
3 levelled at us and the sanction they imposed and we fixed it, we signed up for 2 grand a year to
4 LA Bitumen.

5
6 It came out of our discretionary grants, it goes up and down every year, and we just do more or
7 less maintenance depending on what we have, so it wouldn't have had an impact on say surfacing
8 or improvement works, it would have some impact on minor maintenance works in the areas.

9
10 I can only say again in relation to the item raised in October 2014, it was two years after the
11 audit took place and at least a year after the letter from the Department advising us that they
12 were going to reduce our grant, so I didn't associate the two together. It was completely out of
13 my head, maybe I should have been cleverer than that but I wasn't. I have to say there's logic in
14 the decision made.

15 Cllr FORTUNE: You basically inherited it and had to deal with it.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thanks, we're going to move on to item number 13. As you all
17 know at this stage Mr Eddie Sheehy has announced his retirement on the 7th of April. He's
18 given 42 years service to the public service, 14 of which was as County Manager here in County
19 Wicklow. From my own point of view my dealings with him, he has always been courteous and
20 supportive and very professional in his dealings. I suppose I only got a real look into what he
21 does since I came Chairman, the day-to-day dealings with him as a councillor wouldn't be much,
22 generally speaking. But I'd like to thank him for his courtesy and professionalism he showed to
23 me. I know that there's been ups and downs, good days and bad days, that's the nature of the job.
24 But certainly Mary has a long list of things to do at home I know and it's growing by the day,
25 and I just would wish you a happy and healthy retirement and thank you on behalf of myself and
26 indeed the group that I'm in, for the time and professionalism you've shown.

27 Cllr RYAN: Just on behalf of the Fine Gael group, obviously 14 years is a long time to spend in
28 any one job, as you correctly say it's been an interesting 14 years with some highs and quite a lot
29 of lows, and particularly difficult issues to deal with. I think none more so than the death of the
30 firemen in Bray, which was obviously for everybody involved in this Council an extremely
31 difficult time.

32
33 I think since coming into the role 14 years ago, I know you, Cllr Fortune mentioned about
34 inheriting problems, and you inherited a number of issues and from people closer to it at the time

1 they tell me that you might have chosen to ignore some of those or deal with them in a different
2 way, but you tend to try to deal with things in the best way possible that you see and that's head
3 on.

4
5 I think some of those difficult issues that have been dealt with over those years have maybe over
6 shadowed an awful lot of good things happening in this Council over those 14 years. I
7 remember standing in the floods in 1986 in Bray on the Dargle, to think it took till now to get a
8 flood defence scheme into Bray to protect the lives and homes of people, it's wrong it took that
9 long, but it's one of the things that Council along with Bray Town Council and the lobbying of a
10 lot of people to try and get funds necessary from OPW to actually make that happen, it's one of
11 the best things that have happened in the Council in the 14 years.

12
13 I also think in terms of the Florentine Centre in Bray, it's a huge thing, we know towns all over
14 Ireland and particularly all over Wicklow have been affected by the downturn in the economy,
15 but also the internet and the like, changing patterns in retail where people want to go to singular
16 places pretty closed in from the weather so they can actually do their, get retail therapy and for
17 the future Bray, the site is critically important, the developers had actually bought it up and left
18 the town fairly derelict and hugely affected negatively. But obviously the Council, Bray and
19 Wicklow supported the purchase of that, that is the future of Bray.

20
21 Greystones Harbour, again and particularly Andrew Doyle asked me to mention the purchase of
22 Clermont, which was something that was really, really important and very progressive and
23 innovative and took a chance in making it happen, but I think people in time to come will look
24 back at the decision.

25
26 On a personal level, just in terms of what I've experienced with your support for the economic
27 think tank, both in Bray and most recent the Wicklow County Council economic think tank, has
28 been fantastic and nothing but support.

29
30 On a personal level every time I've dealt with you I've seen you as being up front, you haven't
31 always given me the answer I want, but that's okay. That's allowed. But what you've given me
32 is respect, hopefully you've got that back from myself and the Fine Gael group here.

33
34 While all the decisions that you have made I haven't altogether agreed with all of them, but I

1 think you have done them for the absolute right reasons, so on behalf of the Fine Gael group, I
2 do hope you enjoy your retirement and you're a young man, you have a lot more to give, so
3 please God you'll find another role and all our best to your family who have been obviously
4 taking a little bit of the brunt of the times you have experienced in the job. Good luck in the
5 future.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I know a lot of the members spoke earlier at the Corporate
7 Policy Group meeting. So once again thanks Eddie. And this is your last meeting.

8 Cllr BRADY: Firstly I want to acknowledge the County Manager is retiring after 14 years and
9 I'm not going to repeat, read from items that were listed on a prepared statement a private PR
10 company or anything like that. I think whilst there has been some welcome improvements in the
11 county over the last five years, I think there is unfortunately been more lows in the county and I
12 think under his stewardship that the Council has been brought into disrepute on many occasions.

13
14 I personally call for an inquiry into the 14 years. But I think for me, the single biggest item that
15 needs to be brought to the fore here today, and the lowest of the lows that this Council over those
16 14 years had to deal with, was the deaths of two members of staff within this Council.

17
18 That in itself would have been a very, very difficult thing to do. But the fact that as part of the
19 subsequent investigations not only was this county building raided as part of the investigation,
20 not only was the manager, or CEO as he is now, arrested as part of that investigation, and not
21 only is there well over a thousand questions still remained unanswered as part of that
22 investigation, I think the final kick to the bereaved families of the two fire fighters came last
23 week by the County Manager during his interview on East Coast Radio, which happened to
24 coincide with the 8th anniversary or 8th birthday of one of the fire fighters away from home. So
25 his remarks were very, very hurtful on East Coast Radio, as well as being totally untrue.

26
27 As someone who sat in on both the Coroner's Court and in the Central Criminal Court and
28 listening to the evidence in both cases, I find it astonishing that Eddie Sheehy would find it upon
29 himself to give his own narrative of events and not the events which were heard in evidence, and
30 certainly not events that were returned in the narrative verdict in the Coroner's Court.

31
32 The County Manager stated that he will never know or we don't know why these two fire
33 fighters entered the building in Adelaide Villas. If he was listening to the evidence and the
34 evidence given by the station officer on the day, Jim Maguire, clearly states he told the two fire

1 fighters to enter the building and be on the second door, so they could engage with the fire. But
2 the County Manager totally disregards that. He states they were told to stand outside the
3 building, a total and utter blatant lie. And mis-truth was given on East Coast Radio. He says he
4 doesn't know what was going through their heads when they entered the door? Maybe it was the
5 fact that on request -- to make pumps two and three available, maybe that was going through
6 their heads as to why pumps two and three didn't show up to help fight the fire. Or maybe the
7 fact that they didn't have the proper CAFS training, maybe that's what was going through their
8 heads when they entered the fire, maybe it was the fact that they were carrying out orders, as
9 were given to them, as to why they entered into the building, so I think for the fact that the
10 County Manager came out and told total untruths, not only in relation to what happened on the
11 day of the fire, but also the fact that in the Coroner's Court, the following factors were given as
12 contributory factors to the deaths of the two firemen.

13
14 One was watch room equipment, the second was pre-determined attendances and third was
15 CAFS, there was no mention whatsoever of the guys entering the building, or not. These were
16 the contributing factors that were returned in a narrative verdict, before the coroner, with a jury,
17 and that's what verdict was returned.

18
19 I have previously asked, called on Eddie Sheehy to issue an apology to the families for the
20 deaths as he, and I outlined all of this previously, he has sole responsibility. He was the guy at
21 the top. Sole responsibility for the fire service and the operation of the fire service. So I think
22 it's high time now, as I believe this is his final council meeting, that he issues an apology to the
23 families now for the deaths of their loved ones and also issues an apology for the hurtful remarks
24 he made on East Coast Radio last week, those should be his departing words from these
25 chambers here today, an apology to the families for the hurt he has inflicted upon them. Thank
26 you Chairman.

27 Cllr VANCE: On behalf of the Fianna Fail group I wish to acknowledge Eddie Sheehy's work
28 for 42 years in the local authority system. I suppose like all County Managers that he started off
29 at the very bottom and done an awful lot of jobs that are necessary to get to the position and it's a
30 great achievement for anyone to start at the bottom and rise up to be a County Manager.
31 Certainly somebody that worked for 42 years in that particular system I think deserves retirement
32 and certainly everything that goes with that. I think it's fair to say most people around here
33 wouldn't realise this, but for the first few years of Eddie's tenure here it was challenging in
34 regard to myself and Eddie to say the least, we had a few run-ins in regard to certain items we

1 didn't see eye to eye on. But I think as the years went on there was a mutual respect there,
2 certainly where I didn't agree with some of the ideas that Eddie had, I'm sure he didn't agree with
3 a lot of mine, because as a councillor you always want to do things and to do things cost money,
4 and the problem is there's never enough money for everything that any councillor wants to do
5 and any councillor that has ambition at all wants to do that for his community, so there's always
6 that type of barrier between the officials and the Council as well.

7
8 But I seen it first hand, the effort that he put in, particularly in Greystones, in regard to
9 development of Greystones, I said it many times, he stuck in when the developer up there
10 wanted to hand over the green field site of 20 acres not developed and he stuck to his guns and
11 got the most fantastic sports development up there, with all-weather running track, all-weather
12 surfaces up there, sports field that anyone would be proud of, when effectively he could have
13 walked away and left a 20 acre field and certainly the development of the sports facilities in
14 Greystones, there's not a community in the country that have the type of development that's put
15 and the money put into that particular area, that includes Greystones Harbour, some people are
16 still not happy about it, but I can tell you I regularly used to walk from Bray along the cliff walk
17 there, you actually had to walk through a dump to get to a derelict harbour, when you go and see
18 what's there at the moment, it's a tremendous advancement on what had been there previously.

19
20 In regard to the Florentine Centre as well, I was happy that the Council went in and brought it at
21 probably the most unbelievable value in the country 1.95 million for a site that took 24 million to
22 accumulate, and particularly three houses that are probably worth when done up they would be
23 worth the 1.9 million, that's the best bit of business since I was on the Council that has been
24 done. Hopefully we'll get some development there, I've no doubt that we will as well. Finally
25 the Dargle Protection Scheme got great support from the manager, some people were actually
26 trying to stop it going ahead, I remember going to England to see it. We had councillor there
27 that actually brought a consultant with him to try and stop that river protection scheme going
28 ahead, needless to say that councillor is now on board and claiming credit for it.

29
30 Finally on behalf of the Fianna Fail group, I'd like to say, to wish Eddie Sheehy a long and happy
31 retirement, I think he deserves it, he put in time, the hours and particularly at this particular time
32 I'd like to recognise the support that he got from his wife and his family as well. I think we as
33 public reps and officials, it's impossible to do the type of job we do without the support of our
34 families and the families are the most important part for us. Unless we get the support they give

1 us we would not carry out the job we do, so I'd like to wish them a very happy retirement as
2 well. Thank you Chairman.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

4 Cllr FORTUNE: I have to say in my time in the Council I have to say I have been disappointed
5 with the way the county has developed and evolved, if you put it in football parlance we're still
6 in division 4. I don't like the way things were done, I have had a number of issues, I made a very
7 hard decision on a number of occasions to vote no confidence, I didn't do that lightly, I did it
8 based on what I observed, what I seen, it's a matter of public record, but of course as a councillor
9 I ended up paying for that, because there was a vindictiveness that came across that, where
10 eventually it accumulated in being basically cut out of everything, it's all orchestrated I
11 mentioned it earlier, I'm still not, still there and I classified it at the time as organisational
12 corruption and I believe that.

13
14 I think that this county should be a lot more advanced than it is. I think we have a fantastic
15 county. I think there are so much opportunities to in fact have full employment in this county if
16 it was properly run. I think the local authority has a very serious responsibility, the person that
17 runs it is basically responsible for the whole county, I would have to say that reflecting on it, I
18 would say that it wasn't a great job. Mr Sheehy will be fine, he is retiring, he'll move on, do very
19 well out of that, he could end up in Irish Water, God knows where, he won't mind what I'm
20 saying, but I just can't be dishonest.

21
22 I have to say I haven't found the local authority, the way it's been operated and run, there's a lack
23 of transparency, we talked about it earlier, a simple thing we were talking about earlier we
24 weren't even told. The auditors come in every year, sit up there, read from a script, no mention
25 of that, those kind of things shouldn't happen. I just don't think Wicklow is being looked after
26 well at all. I'm not going to get into the fire end of it, because Cllr Brady mentioned that, but I
27 did hear the interview on East Coast Radio last week, I have to say I was very, very disappointed
28 and I was very surprised at the comment that was passed in relation to the two firemen.

29
30 Also even at that stage, at retiring, and talking about councillors Mr Sheehy wasn't capable of
31 saying every councillor are good councillors, he had to say most councillors are good
32 councillors, the reference being some councillors are not good councillors. Because if some
33 councillor stands up and says the emperor has no clothes occasionally, therefore you are a
34 Maverick, you're against the system, then the inner sanctum that I talked about for years rows in

1 behind and makes sure it's supported. I saw it first hand at the recent AGM, that's what
2 happened, it's going on today here too when we were discussing the Department.

3
4 So really Mr Sheehy will move on, he'll do fine. I would hope that whoever comes in to run the
5 Council or whoever runs the Council moving forward will have a totally different approach, will
6 get in behind things, make things happen and make the county what it should be. Because that's
7 what we want. We should, as I said earlier, I said it before, this county could be wonderful, this
8 county could have full employment. People in jobs that run local authorities, they are serious
9 roles, very well remunerated, so there has to be a kind of a reference back to how it works. I just
10 think my experience has been that it could have been a lot better, but I wish you well, but I don't
11 believe as an individual you were very fair with me. And I don't mind saying that to your face,
12 I've said it to your face before, you've heard me say it in public, that's about it.

13
14 I wouldn't say it's been a great 15 years at all, lots of issues need to be looked at, we need to look
15 at the corporate governance of this organisation, it needs to be looked at, how things are going,
16 there are great people in this organisation, great people, but they need to be led. There are great
17 people here, but they need to be led. I don't think there's great leadership.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Ruttle. Can I ask the remaining speakers to be brief if
19 they can?

20 Cllr RUTTLE: Just I would like to wish Eddie the very best in retirement, obviously 14 years
21 when he was manager here and I always found him to be most helpful, supportive and
22 co-operative in any project I was involved in, he was never behind coming over to west Wicklow
23 seeing what's going on and being there. There are a number of things he was very supportive of
24 like getting a proper water supply into Blessington, which was a huge issue at the time and
25 hopefully will become the seminal point of a scheme in that area, again at a time when negative
26 forces were at the time -- the Blessington greenway, the Council took on the lead role in that,
27 while the director was there Eddie was very much the man pushing behind the scenes. Also
28 issues like Dunlavin playground and state-of-the-art, again he was behind that. Great support
29 and acknowledge and attendance at things like Hollywood Fair, which is a great event to west
30 Wicklow.

31
32 On a broader scope as vice-chairman of KWETB, the drive and initiative to purchase Clermont
33 and move forward with that was a lot of vision going forward in our education field, because we
34 were one of the places that had not got such an institution at all, there was an opportunity, there

1 were other options at the time, but he grasped that strongly and went forward, that will always be
2 there to prosper and develop. Other things as well, but it's a difficult job, not easy to do it, to be
3 County Manager or CEO, but Eddie was a man -- you are a man of energy and commitment and
4 not afraid to keep going and when you had to do it, to stand up to negative forces that you
5 encountered on certain occasions and issues.

6
7 I wish you well in your future time to Mary, Jane and Robbie, a long and happy life ahead, I'm
8 sure you'll find many fields of endeavour to put in energy, determination and commitment that
9 you have.

10 Cllr BOURKE: I arrived here at the same time as Mr Sheehy. During that time I have seen
11 plenty of ups and downs, I have had the honour of being taken to the High Court by Mr Sheehy,
12 thankfully forgiven and forgotten at this stage, but we've been through a lot and I have seen that
13 the decisions he has taken are always in the best interests of doing the job right, always in the
14 interest of rightness, it mightn't always be fairest, but it was always to do the job right. By the
15 book, I have always noted from talking to other people about Eddie Sheehy he does everything
16 by the book, you get no favours from him, unless it's by the book. If you are entitled to
17 something you'll get it, if it's allowed it will be done.

18
19 There was no strokes with the County Manager, he was very upright I thought in the way he
20 made decisions and implemented them. You mightn't have liked it but you don't always get
21 what you want and everybody got the same treatment no matter who they were. I never saw an
22 inner sanctum operated in the Council. So I'd like to wish him well in his retirement and his
23 wife and family as well.

24
25 I think the tragedy of the fire in Bray certainly has pained him and his family greatly as well, it's
26 no benefit to anybody. It's an awful tragedy for the families that it's continuously revisited and
27 reminded of the loss must be difficult to bring closure on it. It's something that nobody seems to
28 be prepared to let go. At some stage it has to be let go.

29 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I'd just say as a person on the Council for 17 years
30 or so, much of the time Eddie has been manager, I'd like to wish him well in retirement.
31 Obviously all of us have differences with different councillors and managers and everybody else,
32 I wouldn't agree with everything that happened, I'd like to say there are quite a number of things
33 particularly in relation to the area I represent in Greystones, which have been difficult to do and
34 very important for the town, particularly as was mentioned in Greystones Harbour, it will be

1 completed and will be something for the next 100 years where it was wrecked for the last 100
2 years. For instance PPPs done by Dublin City Council who is much better resourced than this
3 Council, has many PPPs that aren't going to be completed and this complex one is going to be
4 completed.

5
6 In addition we have a number of excellent sports facilities to cater for the growth of the town and
7 much of this, both harbour and sports facilities have been paid for by developers, not taxpayers
8 of Ireland, this has made it more complex and sometimes lost, once people use the facilities
9 nobody cares where it came from, but to get them built in the first place was complex, I'd like to
10 thank him on behalf of the people of Greystones. Thank you.

11 Cllr KAVANAGH: I'd like to add that I regret to hear that the CEO will be retiring on a
12 lucrative pension, never having faced an interim disciplinary process for his role in the criminal
13 negligence case which saw the loss of the fire fighters lives and also resulted in fines of half a
14 million euro to this Council which otherwise would have been spent on local services. I concur
15 with Cllr Brady that I think the CEO should apologise to those families before he leaves, he
16 might also want to consider forfeiting some or all of his severance pay to cover the legal
17 expenses incurred to this Council.

18
19 On more than one occasion the CEO brought the county into disrepute and attracted negative
20 attention and I have long been concerned about the impact on this about the loss of inward
21 investment, so hopefully his departure will mean a clean sweep for Wicklow.

22 Cllr SNELL: Thank you, again 42 years is a huge period of time to give to local government, I
23 myself worked for 23 years in a factory in the county here, 70 jobs were lost through decisions
24 by this Council and members of the Council. I still work with officials, I work with elected
25 members who I believe were in the opposition corner to me at that period of time.

26
27 People ask how would you describe being a councillor? I feel like it's a boxing match. When
28 you come in here there's a lot of verbals, a lot of trash talk, sparring, shadow boxing, then you
29 get in and you can test and you have your sporting contest. Some people look at the chief
30 executive as a referee, or look at him as an opponent, irrespective, I believe when the battle is
31 over, that you have to take the gloves off, you say well done, you shake hands and you move on.
32 The greatest of the whole lot in my opinion was Mohammad Ali who had the good courtesy to
33 know when the fight was over.

1 On this occasion I wish Eddie Sheehy, his wife and his children all the best going forward, I'm
2 never afraid to take on any battle with anybody on any issue and I certainly from here on will
3 still stand toe to toe with anybody, but I think you have to realise when the fight is over. Thanks
4 Cathaoirleach.

5 Cllr BEHAN: I'd like to join with Cllr Snell and the majority of members of the Council in
6 wishing Eddie Sheehy a long, happy and healthy retirement and to his wife and children as well.
7 As Cllr Snell said 42 years of public service is a very long time, it is a lifetime and public
8 servants very often, particularly in the last five years came in for a lot of criticism from media
9 and people in private business and very unfairly, I think public service is something that's very
10 much to be desired in people and a person of Eddie Sheehy's undoubted ability could have been
11 extremely successful in the private sector, he chose to work in the public sector and I'm quite
12 sure he gave an enormous amount of service to all people in all of the areas in which he served.
13 I just want to thank him for the service he gave people in this county.

14
15 I, like all of us, have had our disagreements, maybe some of us a bit more than others, I think it
16 arises from the fact that the County Manager and the executive have one particular role in a local
17 authority and public representatives have another and I don't think we would be doing our jobs
18 properly if we weren't disagreeing and arguing, if every time an issue came up the manager
19 agreed with the members or members agreed with the manager I don't the system would
20 function, while a lot of very hard comments have been made here today and each member is
21 entitled to make them, I am quite sure Mr Sheehy is more than capable of answering them,
22 whether he takes the opportunity today or not is a matter for him.

23
24 But I would like to honestly wish him a long happy retirement and thank you for the work you
25 have done for the people of this county.

26 Cllr O'NEILL: Again I have only just been a councillor for a couple of months here and like Cllr
27 Snell, when the fight is over the fight is over. I know that there's been a lot of controversy over
28 the years and I was approached by a paper during the week and asked would I draw conclusions
29 on the County Manager, who I wish the best of luck himself, I hope he has a long and healthy
30 retirement. But I did point out I have been looking in the door here for a long time, 29 years for
31 me to get over the line. But the controversy, long before Eddie Sheehy came to town, there was
32 huge stuff in the west and in this chamber here. I have been calling for, if there is any inquiries
33 of any description I'd appeal to everyone to listen to this, if there has been wrongdoings in the
34 chamber, I know councillors are, don't have a clean hand in this, go back 20 years ago, 25 year

1 ago we had a situation where a councillor as Chairman of Wicklow County Council sold himself
2 and neighbour some land.

3
4 So if there's going to be an inquiry there's load of stuff. There's been deaths in the county, sadly
5 in the fire station, we had deaths in the west, I won't go into them now, but fellow councillors in
6 west Wicklow will know what I'm talking about. So maybe there was a lot more to it. I would
7 sincerely like to see if there is any inquiries of any description, as I said to the news print, if we
8 go back 30 years I'd be interested in looking at the whole show, long before Eddie Sheehy came
9 around these parts at all.

10
11 There's been hurtful things done in the west Wicklow, we had dumps, illegal dumps, all sort of
12 stuff for a long time. So if there is any further inquiries or anything, so it's the people of Ireland,
13 the people of Ireland will suffer in this, the ordinary people I'm here to represent and the
14 ordinary people of west Wicklow have suffered in connection with decisions by councillors in
15 here as well as maybe officials or whatever. So I'd look to see us moving on here and I do wish
16 Eddie Sheehy, in the six months I've known of him, he has been very courteous in helping me,
17 but I do suggest that we're, again I'd like to say that if there's any inquiries of any description that
18 every councillor in the chamber over the years should answer these serious questions.

19
20 We're talking about in a year's time commemorating men and women of 1916, we have to be fair
21 to everyone right across the board, so thank you.

22 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, this is just an aside because this isn't the time for it, Cllr
23 O'Neill made a very serious accusation I don't want to revisit it at this time now, but certainly at
24 next month's meeting I'd look for further information, but on the matter that we are discussing...

25 Cllr O'NEILL: I'm saying that there was land sold in this chamber here to a Chairman of
26 Wicklow County Council and decided by the members in here that he would be sold the acre of
27 land.

28 Cllr WINTERS: Are you prepared to say which Chairman it was? If it was 25 years ago I
29 wasn't a member of the Council.

30 Cllr O'NEILL: I'm not saying you were. It did happen, on the 1st of April 1996, Chairman of
31 Wicklow County Council got an acre of land with the help of his comrades here in the Council.

32 Cllr WINTERS: I'd like to wish the County Manager all the best in his retirement to him, his
33 wife and children and say nobody's perfect, I'm sure there's things he regrets, but you have to
34 look at the totality of what's been achieved and there have been some good things achieved in the

1 Council, I think it would be important for the county that we have a positive outlook on as many
2 things as possible, I do wish him a happy, long and healthy retirement. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Last speaker, thanks everybody for their indulgence we want to let
4 everybody speak. Cllr Thornhill.

5 Cllr THORNHILL: May I, on my own behalf, wish Mr Sheehy, his family the best of luck for
6 the future, I as a newly elected representative only just 7 months, I can only speak on behalf
7 from a personal point of view of any time I ever had anything with Mr Sheehy it was always
8 courteous and as helpful as he could be with me. I will just finish off, I am aware there has been
9 an awful lot of controversies, I wouldn't have been au fait with everything, so I think as Cllr
10 O'Neill referred to maybe if we look at it in totality and looking to the future, that maybe we
11 should learn all of the mistakes that have been made, I'm sure a lot of good things have been
12 done, at the end of the day the future is the future and we have to look forward, so from that end
13 I wish Mr Sheehy the best of luck and his family.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm going to let in the Brian Doyle. I believe Brian is, will take on the
15 acting CEO position.

16 DIRECTOR DOYLE: Just on my own behalf, on behalf of the staff of the Council, I just want
17 to wish Eddie Sheehy and his family all the very best, I believe under his stewardship and
18 leadership the mission and vision of the Council has been achieved, it has been achieved with the
19 help of the councillors, and as Cllr Behan mentioned as part of that relationship, that all the items
20 that have been delivered here, the members mentioned some of them, it doesn't happen without
21 the relationship working.

22
23 When we look at AFS I believe we have a solid platform for the financial future of the county, to
24 give the councillors the opportunity to put money on the table to spend for the betterment of the
25 county. I think the fact of the matter is the Celtic Tiger could have ruined and has ruined a lot of
26 counties in relation to development, that was not the case in this county, it was because of
27 partnership between the councillors and the executive. I'd like to wish him all the best.

28 Cllr RYAN: One thing I'd like to say, I forgot to mention, I do think we should write to the
29 Minister for Environment and ask him to expedite the process, this idea that there's five Councils
30 in Ireland without chief executives is ridiculous to me, we need leadership, whoever it might be,
31 I think the process has to be speeded up.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Eddie.

33 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you Chairman and thanks to the members, as you've said next
34 month I'll have spent 43 years a public servant, 21 as County Manager, it was a great privilege

1 for me to work in five different local authorities and in particular it was a privilege to be
2 Wicklow County Manager for the last 14 years. Wicklow is a wonderful county despite some of
3 the negative publicity it gets during the past 14 years and the members have referred to some of
4 the fabulous projects that we have developed together, and I think as Brian said this is down to
5 the co-operation between the management, elected members and staff of the county.

6
7 Hundreds of different projects some of the members referred to, some of the larger ones like N11
8 becoming dual carriageway all the way, Greystones Harbour, Clermont College, Bray Flood
9 Defence, Wicklow Town Port Access, Charlesland schemes, waste water schemes, many fine
10 housing schemes throughout the county, the Shoreline in Bray and Greystones, 20 acre
11 recreational facility at Charlesland was a major coup where it was provided at no cost to
12 Wicklow County Council, a state-of-the-art world class facility there. Lots of skateboard parks
13 and playgrounds, fire stations and libraries and indeed we have a new library being built in
14 Arklow at the moment.

15
16 The Florentine Centre, it was vital that the entire site would come into the ownership of the local
17 authority, it enables us as the economy improves to do something with that and to rejuvenate the
18 town centre in Bray, which is facing such steep competition from Cornelscourt, Dundrum and
19 elsewhere, and again we have another project opened this week which is the new Civil Defence
20 training centre for Greystones. So a lot of successful projects done through the co-operation and
21 support of the elected members, done by the staff of Wicklow County Council and it's been a
22 great privilege for me to be at the helm during that period.

23
24 The work is down to the staff, I think we have a wonderful staff, wonderful management team
25 that can hold its own with anywhere else in the country, I was particularly proud when Wicklow
26 won the Livcom awards a couple of years ago as the most liveable community in the world with
27 the population less than 150,000, that was international recognition of what is wonderful in
28 Wicklow. The local authority, the members, the management, the staff working with the local
29 community to create a better place for citizens to live and people to visit.

30
31 The last six years certainly have been very challenging with pressures on us all to implement
32 government reform, reduce staff, less money and so on and again I think the staff of the Council
33 have responded magnificently, despite being paid less and reduced in number they have stepped
34 up to the mark. I saw that during the snow in 2010/11, during other severe weather events and

1 indeed there was nothing I have ever asked since I came here to Wicklow from the staff that they
2 weren't willing to achieve and go that extra mile, so I want to absolutely express my thanks and
3 appreciation and admiration to all of the staff who have strived non-stop throughout the period to
4 improve the county and their community.

5
6 I'd like to thank the members for their courtesy throughout the year. Obviously the system that
7 we have in local government does lead occasionally to tensions between management and staff,
8 but that's democracy and it's only right as some of the members have said that we all have our
9 role to do, but in general I've found that when I came to the elected members with an important
10 project that would benefit the county, such as the purchase of Clermont College, they were
11 willing to take that risk and take that chance and certainly the result now is that 350 students can
12 pursue third level courses there that would otherwise have to go out of the county. I think in the
13 future that will increase greatly in co-operation with Carlow IT.

14
15 To finish can I thank all of the staff of the Council, thank the management team who have
16 always been supportive and have worked tirelessly to be innovative and deliver on projects, can I
17 thank you Chairman for your courtesy throughout your period as a councillor, it's been a
18 privilege working with you and the other members during the years.

19
20 To record my appreciation to the various government departments and State agencies that we
21 interact with and provide much of the funding for the work we have to do and the local
22 community groups and voluntary bodies, County Wicklow Partnership, Bray Partnership,
23 Wicklow Tourism all do very important work in co-operation with the County Council, we all
24 have a role to play and I think the team effort achieves a lot more than separately on our own.
25 And indeed thanks to East Coast Radio, the Wicklow People and the Wicklow Voice for their
26 very fair and balanced coverage of the affairs of Wicklow County Council over the years, I
27 mightn't always have agreed with the coverage, but I always found they were willing to hear our
28 side of the story and report in a fair and balanced way.

29
30 Can I take the opportunity to congratulate Brian Doyle on his appointment as temporary
31 manager with effect from the 8th of April. The appointment has been confirmed to me by the
32 Department and I wish him success and every happiness in working with the elected members,
33 as I handover the helm to him and obviously the job will be filled in due course on a permanent
34 basis. There will be an open competition for that, it's a very public process where anybody can

1 apply, and that's a matter for a few months away I suspect.

2

3 Just again to thank all of the members. I have to say I'm disappointed with Cllr Brady's
4 contribution and his continued attacks on me. I suppose he has become very embittered after
5 failing to win a seat at the last general election and feels he has to be more controversial and
6 more on the attack for the next one and I wish him well with that Chairman.

7 Cllr BRADY: Maybe if you deal with the elephant in the room, there's two dead men and you
8 haven't got the guts or courtesy to apologise for your role in it instead of attacking me, that just
9 sums up the type of man you are.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you members. Sorry for the overrun.

11

12 Meeting concluded at 6pm

13

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