

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Wicklow County Council
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

Transcript of the County Council Meeting Held on 12 January 2015 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow



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



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7 Wicklow County Council Meeting - 12th January 2015:

8
9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon everyone. Hope you all had a nice Christmas and new
10 year. We have a few votes of sympathy.

11 MS GALLAGHER: Cathaoirleach, vote of sympathy for Mark Caffrey former of employee of
12 Wicklow County Council, a father of Jenny Bell. Paddy Hooper retired senior planner of
13 Wicklow County Council passed away. Ned Purcell, father of former colleague Pat Purcell and
14 father of Helen Purcell. Evelyn Clancy, sister of our colleague Lillian Keating.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Blake?

16 Cllr BLAKE: Can I add to that as well? Gerry Doran who was part of the outdoor staff in the
17 Tinahely area for a number of years, retired in the last number of years and died just before
18 Christmas as well.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke?

20 Cllr BOURKE: Could I add that we would send a letter of sympathy to the French Ambassador
21 on the tragic events in Paris last week.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed?

23 Cllr VANCE: The family of the late Ken Lambe who died over the weekend in Bray, well
24 known inspector of the guards and well known in the Bray area as well for a long number of
25 years.

26 Cllr WALSH: Could I add David Pegman from Greystones, passed away shortly before
27 Christmas.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: I was particularly saddened to learn of Paddy Hooper's passing, when I
29 came in here first Paddy was in forward planning and an absolute gentleman, very sorry to hear
30 of his passing. So we'll have a moment's silence.

31
32 There was some good news over the festive period; Cllr Casey got down on bended knee, so I'd
33 like to congratulate him.

34 Cllr VANCE: Took him long enough to do it.

- 1 (Applause)
- 2 CATHAOIRLEACH: You can't be happy all your life Pat!
- 3 Cllr CASEY: Thanks Chairman, appreciate that.
- 4 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just this is something that you are in control of, I had a
5 mail and a phone call from a lady, who I know from the GAA and things, asking that I maybe
6 ask you, or support you on the idea of writing to Dublin Bus about the 145 service into Kilmac
7 and apparently a solution has been come up with locally, that seems to make sense. Now I'm
8 raising it with you now, unfortunately I won't be able to stay for standing orders, because I have
9 to attend a meeting, so I wanted to raise it with you now, but I know you're in control, I told her I
10 would raise it.
- 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you very much councillor.
- 12 Cllr FORTUNE: Will you consider that before the meeting's over?
- 13 CATHAOIRLEACH: If the members want to have a discussion towards the end, near 5 o'clock
14 we can certainly have that quick discussion on it. Okay? We'll move onto the agenda.
- 15 Cllr BRADY: Sorry Cathaoirleach? I indicated I wanted to seek a suspension of standing orders
16 with you there prior to the meeting. I'm looking for a suspension of standing orders to discuss
17 the crisis that exists within the health service at the moment, last week I think most people are
18 aware it hit a critical level with 601 patients across the State lying on hospital trolleys and
19 corridors, I want to discuss the impact that's having on patients here in Wicklow, which I think it
20 warrants discussion here Cathaoirleach, so I'd appreciate if we can have a suspension of standing
21 orders?
- 22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay it's up to the members. Cllr Fitzgerald seconds that, is that agreed?
23 If we say quarter to five for 15 minutes?
- 24 Cllr BRADY: Well you'll have to take correspondence and all at that stage will you
25 Cathaoirleach?
- 26 Cllr VANCE: Chairman that's not that much in the agenda, we can maybe reach it a long time
27 before that.
- 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm hoping to get to it earlier. I'll take it half four if we can.
- 29 Cllr BRADY: It will be dealt with today though?
- 30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah. Okay, item number 1 consider disposal of the Council's interest in
31 land at Kilmurray south Delgany County Wicklow to Connolly finance and leasing limited that's
32 Paddy Connolly 4 by 4. I'm prepared to propose this.
- 33 Cllr VANCE: I'll second that Chairman
- 34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed?

1
2 Okay item number 2, to receive a presentation on the draft County Wicklow economic think tank
3 action plan. So I'd like to welcome all the members of the economic think tank, thank you very
4 much. Big thanks for all the input you have put into it up to this point. I know Cllr Ryan has
5 been heavily involved and also has put in a lot of effort into this, so I'll let Cllr Ryan open it up.

6 Cllr RYAN: Thanks a million Cathaoirleach, good afternoon everybody, my role you'll be
7 delighted to know is just simply to introduce people who did all the work on this plan, to develop
8 the draft economic plan for County Wicklow. But I would love to thank everybody who was
9 involved in it, this is not just the group here, but also all the people who contributed the whole
10 way along through the process, the people who are here, the chairs of the individual groups I'd
11 say if we had actually told them up front what was involved in this process, they wouldn't have
12 gone anywhere close to it! But it's amazing, slowly but surely they have managed to stick with it,
13 after over 30 meetings, this whole process started in 2012, at that time I think it was NSD who
14 announced they were moving out of Rathdrum, so I know Jimmy Shaughnessy asked me if we
15 could do something around setting up the economic think tank on the basis of what was already
16 done in Bray.

17
18 I'd also like to thank the members of our own Council, Tom Murphy, Lorraine Gallagher, Sheila
19 Daly Vibeck and the chief executive who supported the process the whole way along.

20
21 I think it's clear quite honestly that there's no magic wand to sort out all of the economic issues
22 in County Wicklow but there are a number of clear opportunities and that hopefully will become
23 clear from the plan. There's also things that we need to do better as a Council, and there are
24 things that are within our gift, but then there's a lot of things that aren't within our gift but I think
25 it's probably an opportunity for us to lobby for those things.

26
27 Just in terms of the purpose of today is to present the plan to members, that describes what the
28 business community themselves believe are the strategic priorities for economic development in
29 County Wicklow. I think there's a sense that the business community are very clear that this is a
30 partnership, that they have responsibilities too, that it's not all about what are the Council going
31 to do.

32
33 The actual plan itself -- I should have checked this before I came up! So it's county wide plan
34 and it's produced as a result of an extensive and iterative process of consultation and

1 collaboration between business community and the local authority, and obviously the members
2 here who attended in the Glenview Hotel were part of that process. So it's to develop the whole
3 way along, even those of you who attended in the Glenview the plan now we have is based on
4 your feedback in that process too.

5
6 So what's the second step? If the Council decides to adopt this plan today, the next steps are
7 prioritisation of the actions, because there's obviously a tonne of things in here, but it's our job as
8 Council members to decide which are the ones that we think are the most important and that we
9 should go with first.

10
11 Second part is about costing out those different aspects and allocation of resources. Obviously I
12 know in terms of the annual budget there was 100,000 put forward for the economic
13 development area but in addition to that the extra money that came, we've put another 100,000 in
14 there so there's over 200,000 sitting there to be used so costing them out and deciding what
15 resources are required and what money we'll put to those, but it's a nice place to be that there is
16 money ready to go.

17
18 We also have to agree timelines then and decide what metrics we're going to use, particularly
19 around what does success look like? Because that's important. It's a difficult thing for this team
20 to actually decide at this stage. But I think we do need some measures to know whether or not
21 we are actually achieving the objective that is in this plan. The final big piece is the feed
22 forward please, that this actually feeds into number one, the economic SPC, but the second part
23 that have is into the local economic plan, the LEP, which is part of the LCDC -- I know it's all
24 these terms are fantastic. But we are required to produce a local economic plan and thankfully I
25 suppose because we've been at this since 2012 we're probably ahead of a lot of other Councils
26 around Ireland in terms of developing this, so from that point of view it's good.

27
28 In terms of the agenda for today, we're going to start with to give everybody here an
29 understanding of the process that was actually followed for the development of this and then
30 obviously findings and that's going to be presented by our think tank facilitator Niamh Cooney.
31 Niamh is an independent advisor with over ten years experience working with Enterprise Ireland
32 for private sector clients including Accenture, JP Morgan and Bank of Ireland, she was
33 absolutely fantastic to work with over the period of time.

1 The second part then is actually getting into the four working group chairs, actually three of
2 them are going to present, and the first one who will be coming up will be John Hannigan the
3 managing director of sunbeam house services, he is in that role since 2010 they employ across
4 County Wicklow 450 people and support 400 individuals too.

5
6 Before that I know John was also part of the Respond Housing Association, he also worked in
7 the private sector with KPMG, Grant Thornton and Ernst and Young and in the not-for-profit
8 sector with accord housing association and prime focus in the UK.

9
10 The second person who is going to present for us today will be Killian MacGreal from MacGreal
11 pharmacies, he's a qualified pharmacist, he runs a chain of pharmacies and primary care centres
12 in Blessington, he is a director of the Blessington green way, also a member of the economic
13 SPC.

14
15 The final one doing a presentation is Dick Lenihan, we brought him, manage to bring him out of
16 retirement for this role. Probably regretting it but anyway! After initial eight years in the
17 construction industry, specialising in industrial development initially with IDA Ireland both in
18 Dublin and in New York for before transferring to Enterprise Ireland where he specialised in
19 high potential start ups and strategic development with a number of sectors and prior to
20 becoming a member of the EI senior management team and manager of the food division.

21
22 The final one and it's Declan O'Neill, he isn't going to do a presentation today because just
23 during the latter part of the process he actually landed a job, a new role with Tesco Ireland, so,
24 but formally he spent 39 years with the IDA, so ten of those were in finance and 29 of those
25 were in property. So as you can imagine he brought a huge amount of knowledge to this
26 process.

27
28 So they are the presentations that we're going to look forward to, so we'll kick off with Niamh.
29 MS COONEY: Thanks John I'll take you through three things about the process, objective of the
30 process itself and the findings we got from the consultation. Just to say to you, I know there is
31 copies of the slides in front of you, they are printed out in unusual order so try to follow the
32 slides you will look hard to find what slide I'm going to.

33
34 First to talk about the objective of the process, it was to develop a practical action plan, an action

1 plan that would drive and maintain economic activity and increase implement in County
2 Wicklow, that's the start point.

3
4 The process itself was a collaborative process of engagement involving a lot of people from local
5 authorities and from the business community and other relevant elements of the business sector.
6 Specifically we had a steering group, it was a representative group of local authority people and
7 also the business community, which John already mentioned, we also had four working groups,
8 these working groups looked at four different specific sectors in the economy, these section were
9 identified from early consultation with the business community which started in 2013. We also
10 throughout the process talked to lots of stakeholder groups and gave multiple opportunities and
11 I'll talk through that in more detail in a moment.

12
13 The output of the overall process is a plan, a plan with a big idea and also six Strategic
14 Objectives, the big idea is intended to capture the imagination and enthusiasm of businesses and
15 community in the county, hopefully it will do so.

16
17 Secondly the Strategic Objectives these are the views of the business community of six areas in
18 economic development that should be strategically important over the years ahead. They are
19 supported by a set of actions intended to be practical, which if implemented would hopefully
20 deliver on those objectives, for each action we've also looked at progress managers and expected
21 impact likely to be there.

22
23 So how do we go about this? We had a detailed strategy development process, it was
24 consultative and iterative, started back in late 2013 when the County Council hosted evenings
25 which they invited the business community to to assess the level of interest the business
26 community to engage, there was a strong appetite for it so the steering group was established and
27 also the four working groups and I mentioned those sectors were identified from early
28 consultation process. The working groups were made up of people from the business
29 community, both people who own and ran business in the county, but also other parts of the
30 business community such as various representative bodies in certain sector etcetera.

31
32 Those working groups met several times, particularly in the first quarter they worked on swat
33 analysis of the sector, they did various idea generation type activities, they talked to various
34 stakeholders in the various sectors and went through a process of refinement of those ideas

1 looking at what the impact might be coming out of the different actions proposed.

2
3 In early 2014 we launched an online survey what's the big idea, it was hosted for about six weeks
4 and advertised in various media etcetera to the broad community to complete, our target
5 audience was in particular to try and hear from the business community I'll talk to you more in
6 terms of the findings in a moment. We also in March had -- sorry in the first quarter of 2014
7 requested submissions from various stakeholders across the county and we received various
8 responses from those also. We also hosted plenary session in March, we have brought all the
9 working groups together, all the members and spent a couple of hours one evening going
10 through the findings to date and discussing propose actions, it was an interactive session, we got
11 lots of good ideas from different sectors and parts of the economy looking at different sectors in
12 terms of what could be achieved.

13
14 We then commissioned Tom Martin and associates economic consultants to development a
15 economic profile of the county, lots of data exists but not in one place, that profile is in summary
16 in the document circulated for this meeting but also was circulated in null before Christmas.
17 Then in Q2 of 2014 working groups continued to work and meet several times, at that stage they
18 were refining ideas based on feedback from plenary session, online survey inputs and also
19 comments from the -- content from the economic profile. And through that process they refined
20 ideas and by the end of Q2 submitted findings and recommendations from the different working
21 groups.

22
23 Over the summer we put together the first draft of the action plan, circulated in September to
24 various stakeholder groups for comment and further consideration. We incorporated suggestions
25 and changes and we met with Council members and working group members in November to
26 discuss the proposed plan. And the plan that you will see today and was circulated to you is the
27 edited version of that based on the further input from Council members and working group
28 members back in November. That's what gets us to today.

29
30 So I'll just talk to you now about some of the findings, in particular coming from the online
31 survey but also including comments from various submissions sought and also consultation
32 process in general.

33
34 First three mention the on line survey which went out last February, open for about 6 weeks, we

1 asked people about their experience of doing business in the county, what areas they saw of
2 opportunity and ideas to realise those and also challenges and barriers to business, at the moment
3 and what could be done to overcome those. The response rate was 154 responses, 69% were
4 from the business community, people who owned and managed business, which was the target
5 audience we were freeing to receive information back from.

6
7 The first thing we asked was about their experience of doing business in the county, overall we
8 had 55% say excellent or good, 45 saying difficult or very difficult. In particular the positives
9 great people, in particular reference to the strong community, skilled workforce and
10 entrepreneurs. Location was mentioned as particularly important, both in terms of a place to
11 work and live and specific factors mentioned regularly were natural environment, proximity to
12 Dublin, support of Leo and also the quality of life available in the county.

13
14 We asked about challenges at the moment to doing business in Wicklow, public transport links
15 were mentioned, limited size of the market, the poor business infrastructure, repeatedly
16 mentioned was broadband and political environment not always as supportive as it could be.

17
18 We asked about areas of economic opportunity for the county, in summary they were services,
19 particularly mentioned IT and wind energy, physical characteristics of the county, in particular
20 proximity to Dublin working, film and tourism are seen as having under developed potential and
21 food industry saw some growth potential. When we looked at ideas to capitalise on those
22 opportunities, specifics ones suggested were to develop the brand of Wicklow plus aspects of
23 what it has to offer as a place to visit, life and business for thrive. Tourism could be further
24 developed in terms of brand but also initial sectors could be further developed. Greater
25 collaboration across business community would add value, harnessing collective power in the
26 business community get things done and make change happen.

27
28 Make it easy for businesses to start and thrive in the county would serve to enhance economic
29 prosperity, in particular suggestions were around new hubs for business activity, single points of
30 contact in specific areas and certain incentives to start businesses. The open transparent support
31 of Council with greater and more regular engagement would be valuable and also skills
32 development aligned with business needs.

33
34 The barriers to growth mentioned in summary are lack of awareness ever what's available in the

1 county, need for greater co-ordination approach from the County Council, that weak business
2 infrastructure mentioned again and again, in particular broadband was highlighted. Some towns
3 across the county are run down and east/west divide. And some ideas to address those barriers
4 included greater engagement between local authority and business community, certainly the
5 process to date demonstrated strong appetite for that. We need a website that promotes Wicklow
6 as open for business and practical things need to be done behind it to make it a reality and make
7 it easy and attractive for visitors to come to Wicklow, in terms of having the information they
8 need to get here, stay here, park here.

9
10 That brings me to the end of what I'll talk to you about. I'll handover to the three chairs to talk
11 you through the plan itself.

12 MR HANNIGAN: Good afternoon everyone. My name's John Hannigan, managing director of
13 Sunbeam House services, I just want to reiterate one of the comments John made earlier, this
14 plan came out of a collaboration of business and local authority, we do see that business has a
15 significant responsibility to deliver on the economic activity, but can't do it without your help
16 and your right across the board in terms of County Council executives but councillors
17 themselves.

18
19 We asked what was the big idea from the survey and then we tested that big idea with people in a
20 consultative way in different meetings including some Council members who were able to attend
21 and local TDs. Don't forget what we were trying to achieve was to develop something that
22 would enable people to come together to live in Wicklow and stay in Wicklow. One of the key
23 ideas that came across was that we look at re branding Wicklow.

24
25 Wicklow is very much known as the garden of Ireland, if you picture in your mind what a garden
26 might be somewhere to relax, somewhere you might potter, do a bit of work, but it's there in the
27 background, outside what you do normally. And you spend time there in relaxation and leisure.
28 And that's what we had manage to do really well. When you type into any of the search engines
29 within the internet you type in Wicklow, the first thing you get is Wicklow Town and you get
30 Wikipedia, it tells you about the history, about what demographics are like, but it doesn't tell you
31 very much else, if you put in County Wicklow the first thing that comes up is visit Wicklow .ie.
32 Fantastic picture of Glendalough on the front make it is look like a nice place, about you not
33 somewhere you'd put a business.

1 So one of the things we were looking at in terms of the re branding of Wicklow is actually to
2 make it somewhere that you want to come, to work, come to live, come to visit and stay, and
3 when I talk a little later on about the tourism side, one of the things you'll see is we have a lot of
4 visitors that come to Wicklow, we have very few that actually stay here, I'll explain why later on.
5

6 So develop a brand that communities know Wicklow has to offer, business and potential
7 investors, there is a significant amount of work by IDA and other organisations around Ireland,
8 competing with Wicklow and what Wicklow might have to offer. And Wicklow has a huge
9 amount to offer for businesses in terms of you're going against the flow if nothing else in terms
10 of traffic, it's much quicker to get to. So there's a whole range of things.
11

12 For local people who live here, there's a whole range of potential opportunities to develop
13 business, and then for the residents who are already here, it's a place that they know, love, most
14 people don't actually want to leave Wicklow when they come to Wicklow and I actually aspire to
15 live in Wicklow myself I wish I did, I've worked here a number of years and love it, I hope some
16 day to be able to afford to live here!
17

18 What we're looking for is something that unites the whole thing and at the moment you can't do
19 that. Wicklow has a fantastic brand in terms of the garden of Ireland, but it tells you nothing
20 about business. There's nothing and no place you can go to that says it's good to work here,
21 good to start business here. There are real opportunities.
22

23 So we looked at that and said okay how do we establish that, what kind of actions do we need in
24 order to under take that and make that a reality? The first is to establish a brand task force.
25 That's going to require external expertise in terms of re branding, it doesn't mean about changing
26 what's here or even changing some of the branding here already like garden of Ireland but using
27 it to leverage other elements as well. It also has to encapsulate what you have to offer in one
28 place, at the moment that isn't there. You have to search widely to understand what
29 opportunities might exist within Wicklow in order to start a business, where you might get
30 support to start that business, and also where you might employ people from.
31

32 The opportunity to reposition Wicklow and play to all of its strengths, it has fantastic scenery
33 and leisure opportunities but there are also some very good business opportunities which we'll
34 talk about through the other presentations. So we've also put in what are the expected impact

1 that you might have from that and some progress measures. We've started as we said in the
2 beginning, we wanted to try and identify what kind of things you might expect as metrics to
3 measure whether or not you are doing well and we put them into the slide, the plan itself. They
4 are only a start, others will have to be developed.

5
6 The second thing was to redevelop and re launch the Wwww . Wicklow .ie the couple's own
7 website is a very good website, it's excellent, has a lot of information about Wicklow, and has a
8 lot about the service that is Wicklow County Council provides. But it needs to go beyond that, it
9 needs to be a portal that enables you to do everything in one place, look at the leisure activities
10 and potential to look at the business potential opportunities, look how you get support for that, if
11 you want to live somewhere, tell you a bit more about where you live or want to live. Because
12 that's what people were interested incoming to Wicklow want to know about. What do you offer
13 them that they don't already get or can't get somewhere else? We are competing in Wicklow
14 against some, a lot of other gateway type areas, even more so now, when the economy is seeing
15 some, in theory green shoots.

16
17 Already I'm beginning to see unfortunately in some respects I live in county Meath at the
18 moment, I'm beginning to see sites for development disappear that couldn't have been moved
19 before. There are opportunity it is there that if we don't move quickly on we'll lose that
20 opportunity.

21
22 So redevelop and launch the Wicklow .ie as a single portal to do all of these things, we'll talk
23 more in detail about that when we get into some of the other presentations.

24
25 The third one is engage our younger generation. As I look around the room I'd say the average
26 age is probably middle aged, that has a wide range by the way. But I don't see the 16, 17 and 18
27 year olds that we're trying to attract into the future of this county. The people who are going to
28 be the entrepreneurs, the people who are going to be the future employers, and what's more,
29 when you Google any of the information that you have on the website at this point in time, I
30 don't see anything that's going to interest them.

31
32 So how do we attract them? What do we do? The first thing you do is actually utilise them to
33 tell you what you need to do. Offer them the opportunity to help with this re marketing and re
34 branding of the county, because if you don't you've lost a huge demographic which is going to be

1 the future of Wicklow. So it's going to be critical that we have those people involved, and at the
2 moment I don't see many initiatives that enable that to occur.

3
4 So a fresh and current brand attractive to younger generations and a portal that allows them and
5 marketing plan to be put into one place, because whether we like it or not the electronic age is
6 where our younger people are, and they are going to want to be able to get to information in one
7 place without having to work too hard for it. If we're not providing that we won't retain their
8 attention. They will start looking elsewhere. The bright lights of Dublin are not too far away
9 given the roads we have at this point in time, and the opportunity that is Dublin and other major
10 cities provide could be lost, Wicklow could lose out to those. Yet it has so much to offer
11 everybody, particularly for those who might be leisure conscious or who like health and activity.
12 The future is if we're to believe what the schools are telling us and government tell us in terms of
13 obesity, policy will drive you more and more towards a healthier lifestyle, more exercise, more
14 outside work.

15
16 So we have real opportunity to offer something here that others don't. But getting it right for that
17 younger generation is going to be critical.

18
19 Okay I'm going to handover now to Killian who will talk a little about making Wicklow a good
20 place to do business.

21 KILLIAN: Thank you I'm a little better at dispensing drugs than I am at public speaking but I'll
22 give it a go anyway. I'll firstly talk about ensuring Wicklow is open for business, then move on
23 to retail sector and a few slides on that.

24
25 So there are 7 actions that we're looking at in terms of ensuring Wicklow is open for business, to
26 ensure the infrastructural requirements are in place for all businesses throughout the county. It
27 means whether you're looking at transport, broadband, water, electricity, whatever a business
28 needs to have available, they need to have a way of identifying if it's there or not before they
29 actually go and open up business, the first 12 months of opening a business are by far and away
30 the most expensive, you need to make these decisions in advance of opening a business.

31
32 So in terms of the impact that we expect to see, there will be more clarity and certainty as to
33 where capacity will be and in terms of measuring progress, if we had some sort of interactive
34 map hosted on the portal, targeted Development Plan and capacity filled.

1
2 From a more specific perspective in terms of foreign direct investment, we need to tighten that
3 up again, there's no point trying to identify ten, 15, 20 locations in Wicklow to try and direct
4 investment into, we need to be specific, as Declan said, we need to look at one or at most two
5 locations and within those we need to ensure that everything is there and ready to go. So that
6 when we go out and pitch Wicklow as a location for large multinationals it's just a case of them
7 coming in, looking at the site and saying yeah away we go. Broadband is already there, power at
8 a high level is there, really good transport infrastructure, we've got access to highly qualified
9 people, so it obviously needs to be an area of significant population and power and water. So we
10 need to be really, really specific in terms of locations and we need to drive, go out and market it.

11
12 So obviously employment isn't only about work, it's where people would like to live where they
13 work. When we're looking at employment we also need to ensure it's attractive not only for the
14 business but also for the employees themselves. So we want to make sure that we're making the
15 most out of what is an absolutely wonderful county, for a lot of people who are living in
16 Wicklow and currently working in Dublin, the option of both living and working in Wicklow
17 would be far, far greater, obviously cut down on commute times and give them a far better
18 quality of life. So this feeds into the LCDC in terms of the community piece as well as the
19 employment piece.

20
21 So in terms of progress we'd like to identify locations, we'd like to develop a plan and associated
22 timeline and communicate and market the fact it is a great place to live and to work.

23
24 In my opinion action 4 improving the working relations between the local authorities and the
25 business community is absolutely essential. If we got the communication piece right I think a lot
26 of the issues that are currently issues would disappear. The Council both the officials and
27 elected representatives do a massive amount of amazingly good work but sometimes it isn't
28 communicated as well as it possibly could be to the business community. So what we'd like to
29 see is some liaison officers put in place, to communicate what's going on, we need to have a
30 constant process for dialogue, we want to put business networks in place. If you look at the west
31 of the county as it stands, there is no business network, no Chamber of Commerce anywhere
32 from Blessington right down through Dunlavin, Baltinglass, so we need to start with developing
33 some type of business network so there is some type of formal gathering of business
34 communities not only in the west obviously, but throughout the county, and with a view to

1 ensuring that there's a solid chamber for each area of the county. And then that that can be used
2 as a liaison point with a liaison officer or directly with the councillors or Council officials
3 themselves. That would obviously lead to enhanced working relationship, better alignment
4 between business needs and investment, in terms of progress if we can get business networks set
5 up, get regular dialogue in place, put a dedicated officer in place and tie that in with information
6 portals and business networks.

7
8 Action 5 is fairly -- well the appearance would be very straightforward to put high quality
9 affordable broadband in place, but for different people that means different things. Like we all
10 think of high quality as being fibre optic cabling available to all business along N11 and N81
11 routes, but for some businesses one of the members of the retail services subcommittee William
12 Quinn of Quinns of Baltinglass for them they just needed a reliable connection, something that
13 doesn't drop, and their system was dependent on that. They are not looking for fibre optic cable,
14 but William alluded to a store in Avoca you couldn't be guaranteed where the broadband would
15 be there all the time. So what we need is to put in place a county wide strategy as to what we're
16 trying to achieve and have a time line of how we're going to get there.

17
18 Then in terms of action 6 developing the transport infrastructure. There was an east/west divide
19 on this point as well. In the east of the county we had a member who lived in Gorey, and Paula
20 O'Carroll from Ulster Bank. She suggested to get to work in Wicklow Town from Gorey, I may
21 be wrong on this, but as far as she understood she had to travel by train up to Connolly to get
22 back to Wicklow. Now what we felt was on the east of the county, each of the main population
23 hubs should be a destination in its own right, so you can easily commute to work to and from
24 any main hub as oppose to these towns being bypassed.

25
26 In the west of the county we were -- the N81 route particularly as you go further south is a
27 significant distance away from main thoroughfares the closest at Baltinglass is the M9 and you
28 are looking at particularly bad roads to get from N81 to M9 at that point, so what we're looking
29 at there is trying to ensure that the transport infrastructure is of a specific standard. Public
30 transport isn't as feasible because there isn't the population to maintain it.

31
32 So in terms of progress we want greater connectivity between towns in Wicklow and upgrades in
33 places planned.

1 Action 7 is to develop a marketing plan that promotes business development in Wicklow. So in
2 terms of that we want to market Wicklow and to, the impact we expect would be a clear and
3 consistent communication to all relevant business groups and awareness that Wicklow is open
4 for business. So in terms of progress, if we could plan develop with supporting collateral and
5 have a new jobs created target. So if we can identify how many jobs we're trying to create over a
6 period of time and have a marketing place to ensure that happens.

7
8 The second bit that I was put up here to talk to you about was how to facilitate maximum
9 economic return from the retail sector itself.

10
11 Number 1 on that is obviously developing a retail marketing plan. There's three elements that
12 really, we want to keep people shopping in Wicklow, get people to shop in Wicklow and build
13 consumer confidence. If you, particularly on the east of the county, you've got Dundrum town
14 centre just on your doorstep. We need to persuade people to come shopping the other way as
15 oppose to moving into Dublin to shop.

16
17 If you take just one county over in Kildare they have the Kildare outlet village and white water
18 which drives a massive amount of foot fall the opposite direction, we need to achieve the same
19 thing, we shouldn't stop at trying to deep people who live in Wicklow shopping in Wicklow,
20 though it should be a prerequisite we should look at people from outside Wicklow into Wicklow
21 to shop, that requires a strong marketing strategy to achieve it. Little things such as car parking
22 and the fact there is far more land and more free car parking to come and shop, the lack of traffic
23 coming one direction could be used as major tools to drive people this direction.

24
25 Progress measures would be actually putting a marketing plan in place and marketing plan and
26 marketing campaign on ongoing basis to drive retail in the area.

27
28 Pay parking is another key issue which comes up . again and again for businesses. Depending
29 on what town you go into there's different strategies, different amounts you pay for different
30 times, different free pay periods and in some places there is no pay parking at all. We felt pay
31 parking should be used to drive the retail sector in towns rather than drive the coffers and we felt
32 a subtle change, but the basic principle would be that you have a short amount of time, whether
33 it's 30 minutes an hour, two hours, that is free of charge, which will help people go into these
34 local communities and shop as opposed to going elsewhere. So what we want is a consistent

1 strategy, with a free element for some period of time to begin with.

2
3 Action 3 was establish a consistent county wide tourist and business signage strategy. So with
4 this, it isn't very clear both from a tourist perspective and business perspective where and where
5 you can't put signage. Another member of our subcommittee was Pat Keogh who runs
6 Rathwood on the border of Carlow and Wicklow, his experience, he said he had one sign in
7 Wicklow he had 13 signs in Carlow. Even though he was right on the border. He found it far
8 easier to engage with Wicklow County Council -- sorry Kildare rather than Wicklow -- Carlow!
9 So what we want for tourist businesses is that there is a transparency as to how you go about
10 getting signage up, obviously we don't want signage up on every hedgerow around the county,
11 but if there was some location in every town, where business could put up their signage to
12 promote the fact they are in business in a town it would obviously help small businesses, so just
13 a progress measure would be a policy, key context within the Council and consistent and
14 appropriate signage approach.

15
16 Number 4 is reinvigorating town images. Particularly after the recession of the last number of
17 years a massive amount of empty premises around the county and empty retail units act as a
18 scourge to the adjacent units, we need to be innovative in how, what we do with these, whether
19 they are used to promote the heritage end of a town or whether they're used to promote other
20 small businesses or potentially just even putting some type of fund in place to keep them looking
21 attractive so that towns don't lose their attractive feel.

22
23 In terms of progress measures we'd like to put a plan in place to develop the key towns across the
24 county, relevant support schemes in place to support investment in local towns and to work on
25 the number of vacant premises.

26
27 On that front we felt development levies and particularly rates for units already there, the way
28 the rating policy could work could be used to innocent advice occupancy as opposed to the other
29 way around. If premises are rated when they were empty and there was a rate break for a first
30 period of time when a new business comes on board it might incentivise landlords to let units
31 rather than leave them empty and incentivise new businesses to open up if there is a little rent
32 break to begin with. So that's me done you'll be happy to know. Thank you very much.

33 MR HANNIGAN: My time back again, pardon me having to speak twice. I always have a lot to
34 say.

1
2 I was asked to chair the tourism entertainment and creative businesses working group. And one
3 of the things that we had a lot of members who wanted to be part and had a lot to say, the reason
4 for that is that they recognise very clearly that the marketing that has been done over many years
5 by the Council and others in terms of creating the garden county has been very successful. And
6 in no way by re branding or suggesting a new brand do we want to diminish that or remove that.
7 Actually it's a critical part of the whole re branding, that we continue to be able to say that we are
8 still very much the garden county, that we still have a huge amount to offer as the garden county.
9 So it is about linking what we do in terms of branding to that.

10
11 In terms of the work that we set out to do and we looked at. We set out talking about a number
12 of things that align to the big idea, don't forget the big idea came from business, from people
13 who are resident within Wicklow and from councillors as well and the workshops so the ideas
14 are trying to link to that as well. So in terms of developing a marketing plan that communicates
15 all that Wicklow has to offer, it has a huge amount to offer in terms of tourism, and things that
16 we're already successful at. For example we have one of the biggest attractions in the country in
17 terms of visitors in Glendalough with over a million visitors a year. The problem is they come
18 and they go.

19
20 They rarely stay or they don't stay very long. And one of the things we want to try and achieve
21 is that stay, because that's where the money is spent. And part of the garden status is that thing,
22 do you buy a room to sit and look out at the garden? No, you buy a room to sit and look at what
23 you're going to do and then participate in activities. And it's creating that marketing plan that
24 enables that to occur. So part of the thing as I've already spoke about is a new web presence, it's
25 actually making it accessible and trying to get everything through the one portal. So that you
26 can book -- I can't at this point in time book all the activities you want to do in Wicklow in one
27 place. You have to search through the web through different sites and visit Wicklow .ie is strong
28 on this but it doesn't do everything, that's the thing we're looking to try and re launch to make it a
29 reality.

30
31 Things like a county wide calendar of events where you look in one place and see everything
32 that's going on and you plan around the calendar what you want to do. Links to accommodation,
33 again you can't get it directly through any one single website for Wicklow, you have to go
34 searching around what hotels are in Wicklow and try do it that way and link that activity to the

1 other activities you might do after you come out of the bedroom, assuming you come out of the
2 bedroom. So there's also things about customising routes, we all know about the Camino, some
3 may have done it, huge opportunity, shorter parts as well as longer parts, there's real
4 opportunities within Wicklow to do that kind of heritage route.

5
6 It also exists but how widely known is it? Where do you find it? Who tells but it? These kind
7 of things are part of what we see as development of that marketing plan. So the measures are
8 very easy, create a plan. But you need expert help around doing that. Then there's a whole
9 range of things we do to monitor how that marketing plan with work.

10
11 The second action was to further develop outdoor activities offer. As I've already said if we look
12 at government policy going into the future we hear what schools are trying to achieve greater
13 activity is something kids are going to grow up with and want to do more of, plus we could all
14 do with a little extra exercise. There's a huge A of stuff that can be done in Wicklow that's not at
15 this point in time marketed effectively or through a single portal. There's a huge opportunity, in
16 fairness it was one of the members here that suggested the blue way, we already had the Atlantic
17 way on the west coast, why not something similar on the east coast where there is a huge amount
18 of maritime activity to be undertaken, plenty of water to utilise that's free of charge.

19
20 But to do that we need the right workforce and the right training. And we need to make sure that
21 between business people and ourselves, in terms of your job, that we facilitate that to occur.
22 That will help to impact on what is a green and lovely county, no doubt about that.

23
24 The other element that we said is promote niche tourism, I'll talk a bit more about that when we
25 talk about the film sister I in a second. We have huge opportunity in terms of niche tourism, we
26 have a great craft tradition and heritage, we have fantastic food opportunities right around the
27 county. We also have the film industry and just in case people think film tourism, one in four
28 people that visit New Zealand visit not because it's a beautiful place to visit, but because Lord of
29 the range was actually filmed there. Film tourism. Massive potential opportunity.

30
31 One that we can't at this point in time exploit, I'll explain why when I come to the next section.
32 But identifying these niche markets and identifying the opportunity that lies within will help
33 bring more people in, generate more jobs and revenue for the county, that's what we're looking to
34 do, how many jobs can we generate from the activities we're looking to promote.

1
2 Finally promote and develop green way project. There's been a successful approach to partial
3 development in Blessington and the Blessington green way development team have been very
4 successful in bringing some economic drivers already into that area. But it needs your input
5 from the Council, need your support and needs the creation of a green way development group in
6 order to do that, which has local community and councillors as well as local authority on board
7 promoting it. There are fantastic amounts of money being ploughed into it over the next 12
8 months to two years and we need to see more. We lost out on this round of funding, but there's
9 an opportunity for more funding to come forward from government in the next 12 months or so.
10 But it needs that group developed, and it needs the support, whole Council support in order to
11 get more. And to link them, so you can have one in Blessington, but what's wrong with having
12 one around the lakes in Roundwood, or having something along the coastline here in Wicklow or
13 in Bray? So there's opportunity there is but it needs a focus to that and we think focusing on
14 business development group is one of the things that needs to happen.
15

16 There are lots of things that you can do to develop these routes, green way routes and there's no
17 doubt that as we go back to saying, say time and time again, greater activity in the outdoors is
18 something we are going to be focused on as a nation in terms of the policy being delivered by
19 government.
20

21 I was also asked to look at the film industry and again our group looked at many different topics
22 and areas of the development that we believe that could bring in jobs and create jobs within the
23 county. This is a ready made one. But it has an urgency attached to it as well. I'll explain why
24 in a second. We estimate, conservatively that over the next five years this particular area could
25 bring in a billion euro worth of revenue, a billion euro worth of revenue to Wicklow. And up to
26 5,000 jobs. Not just actors. But electricians, carpenters, green grocers, landlords, a whole range
27 of opportunities linked to it, that if we don't grab the opportunity now, we may lose and we may
28 lose to other parts of the country. I don't know if people were listening to the news in the last
29 week, but Belfast has launched a project where they want to be named as Hollywood of Ireland.
30 And rightly so in some respects because they also have a studio up there that's been quite
31 successful but nowhere near successful as the studios located here in Wicklow.
32

33 Establish a film industry business development group. There are already very proactive people
34 here in this county, I'm sure most people will know Joe and a few others who are related to

1 Ashford or to Ardmore. They are constantly looking for support, the reality is we need to
2 provide it through the Council to them. By being part of this group and it will be a lobbying
3 group, absolutely no doubt, because not everything that needs to be done can be done at local
4 level, some of it requires national input, but if you're not behind it and this group is not behind it,
5 then the likelihood of it being successful in getting those changes are 0.

6
7 We already know that Joe and others have been offered significant opportunities in terms of
8 creation of new Disney projects, new -- I can't remember half of the other names of the different
9 studios Fox projects, we know for example that there are ten potential movies, five of which are
10 franchise which will have other movies that will spring out of them as well, that could be here
11 located here. The problem is we haven't got the infrastructure to support it. So going back to
12 this, develop film industry cluster in collaboration with local authority and bring people in from
13 the industry as part of it have.

14
15 But also allied industry, so for example people from tourism, film tourism is big business if you
16 get it right. We already have people believe it or not mostly millionaires to go look at an island
17 off the west coast where they made part of star wars they filmed three days, already we have
18 people wanting to go see where it was being made. There are opportunities here that we're not
19 exploiting.

20
21 So get the business development group established. That's not difficult to do you have already
22 some proactive actors in this thing that need to be there. But it needs the Council to be part of
23 that.

24
25 There are certain things that need to be done in respect of it have as well, promote the industry
26 cluster this is where the governmental bit is important. Your support for it, things like Section
27 481 which is being retained but which changed substantially, it's no longer as good for us here in
28 Ireland to invest in it because we don't get the same tax breaks we used to. People from outside
29 Ireland do, but we don't in Ireland. So we're stopping ourselves investing in a more efficient
30 way. Things like reducing capital costs, allowances, levies, seeing it not as a planning of a
31 building, but strategic infrastructure as an important change we think should be considered as
32 well, because that way it gets through planning quicker not that there shouldn't be a process but
33 it's treated in a different way. If you're thinking about 5,000 jobs how much more strategic can
34 that be for the county?

1
2 The planning changes are one element of it but only one element, we do need a lot more to be
3 done and it is about taking this opportunity now while it exists before you lose it to the other
4 competition. Further develop and market film industry tourism, it is there. It's definitely there,
5 we know it is from other countries but we're not making it the priority that it needs to be here.
6 That just doesn't mean the film industry needs to be part of that, it does mean that we need the
7 tourism industry part of it, because we need to promote to the operators, we need them to see
8 there's a real benefit by being involved in it and statistics like that one in four going to New
9 Zealand specifically to see where films were made is one of those things.

10
11 Okay I'll handover now to Dick to talk about our traditional sectors.

12 MR LENIHAN: Thank you John. I was chair of a group that was actually looking at the whole
13 area of the agricultural area, maritime and forestry. It was a very, -- when you look at that it's a
14 very wide brief, as I say you're starting at the sea and heading across the mountains and back to
15 some of the fertile lands on the other side of the hill. So it was quite a wide brief and trying to
16 get it down to focus on where the opportunities were initially was quite a challenge. But we had
17 three very productive meetings which were actual meetings and one which I would term as a
18 virtual meeting, people putting in the last pieces of that. But in the group we had five people
19 who were from food companies, food manufacturing companies as opposed to food service. We
20 had five who were from companies involved in the maritime industry, so in other words people
21 doing shipping, repairs all of those kind of activities really coming out of the particular ports.
22 And then one in forestry on it. So really when the group got down to it, there probably was two
23 main areas focused on as really seen as having opportunities for economic development that
24 could translate into jobs, because that was always the criteria that we had. And particularly in
25 the sector that are so wide and some of them very economically important, trying to figure out
26 where the jobs might come from was a difficult challenge.

27
28 But the first area that we focused on was the food industry and certainly the people involved at
29 the time on it from the food industry were very, very passionate, very, very positive about their
30 businesses. They are all small businesses, and what was interesting from the group is not any of
31 them actually knew each other. So these five people came together, sat around the table,
32 introduced themselves and I think they were fascinated that they were starting to learn about
33 their own businesses, and quite quickly there came out of that really that they as small
34 companies and we recognised when we did a bit of research into it, there was probably

1 somewhere in the region of 35 such businesses in the county all operating independently in
2 different locations, and there was no synergy being generated or exploited by those companies as
3 they actually went been their business. And there was a strong feeling at the table that maybe
4 opportunities of growth of their business by exploiting those synergy is something that could be
5 very, very helpful. Really what came out of that was to establish a food sector forum.

6
7 I think the group were very, very honest in themselves and said we would believe there is
8 opportunity here when we get together and besides the food manufacturing, they're
9 manufacturing different products, there's also a well established food service in Wicklow that is
10 servicing a lot of people on a daily basis, and that the synergy between the manufacturers and
11 those groups could have very, very positive impact.

12
13 So one of the actions is to establish a food sector forum. The second was really, would come out
14 of that and it's not at this stage, wasn't coming across as an absolute, in other words developing a
15 food brand for Wicklow because there was mixed views at the table, but what they felt if the
16 industry came together around a table, facilitated really by Wicklow County Council who
17 actually needed to help them to get together and to encourage participation by all the relevant
18 players, that the possibility of a food brand that they could actually put, form some level of
19 umbrella to try to stimulate group growth for these companies and possibly for the producers that
20 are supplying them, would be very, very positive. But at the end of the day the food sector
21 forum is about getting that industry together, getting them to know each other, getting them to
22 discuss their common problems, common issues, but also the common opportunities.

23
24 And the feeling was at the end of that there probably is in those companies alone maybe 220
25 people employed throughout the county, they are all small companies, if this could actually
26 come together and find those synergies and help them develop and grow their business there is a
27 possibility they can double that within a three to five year period. So really the action there that
28 is being recommended is for a facilitation of the group that will bring that industry together and
29 help to generate the synergies of it. So really that's the first area the food sector.

30
31 The maritime one I'm not going to dwell on this very much for the moment on it, but the basic
32 premise here is that Wicklow has a local coastline, it has two significant ports that are
33 commercial ports in both Wicklow and Arklow, it has also got other port facilities in Greystones,
34 other facilities in Bray, and really all of these are operating independently and within those there

1 is a lot of, let's say interesting companies operating in each of those areas.

2
3 The feeling that again if there is no central co-ordination in how those assets are exploited in the
4 future to provide commercial benefit, but I'm going to just defer on that for a moment, because
5 that actually, the opportunity really evolved out of a larger discussion that was taking place
6 amongst the group which related to the opportunities that could be available for the ports and the
7 hinterland associated with those ports if the opportunity for an interconnector had evolved,
8 which would actually bring a major opportunity into the county for the possibility of offshore
9 wind farms. So I'm just going to defer on that for the moment, because they are both related and
10 it is on the offshore one is one of the last ones we deal with on the slide presentation.

11
12 As I said the area that we were dealing with there is a very large area from agriculture, maritime,
13 which includes the fishing industry, forestry so it's very large and the first question I think the
14 group started to struggle with, well there is significant agricultural industry within the county,
15 there's very, very significant forestry, there's also a maritime or fishing industry out there and
16 some small level of agriculture, very minor, is there not great opportunities to grow the jobs.
17 The reality that came out when we shared a lot of economic information the group was that
18 while these industries are very, very important they are not going to produce an awful lot of jobs
19 in the future, but what is going to be very, very important for the economy of Wicklow is the
20 sustaining of those industries. And ensuring that they optimise. But what is happening in areas
21 like fishery you have the common agricultural fisheries policy which is restrictive in terms of
22 what's possible in the fishing industry. In the agricultural area there's a lot of world dynamics
23 going on, there is opportunities in the area, but there is a need to increase productivity across the
24 country within those industries and the delivery of jobs is not going to be significant in that. But
25 what is important is that they are sustained.

26
27 And really what that brought us to was saying well it is very, very important. There's an awful
28 lot of let's say help available on a national basis. You've got people like Teagasc, you have BIM,
29 Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland, all of these organisations out there providing very sophisticated
30 services to this industry and the feeling was what we need to do is ensure that these are being
31 optimised into the industries that are here within Wicklow and to make sure that the help that is
32 available to them is not being miss to make sure that industry prospers in the future, which we'll
33 be confident it should do, and we feel it's positive, but it just needs again to ensure that we have
34 it on the radar as Wicklow County Council has it on the radar to ensure that that opportunity is

1 being maximised.

2
3 Being alert to new economic opportunities. At the time when we first met, the first meeting I
4 think took place in January so we went through January, February, March and at that point in
5 time there was a lot of discussion and dialogue going on between the British and Irish
6 governments on the whole concept of an interconnector which would create an opportunity for
7 the supply of green energy initially into the UK but then ultimately into Europe, assuming there
8 was a second interconnector connected at some point in time. The feeling of the industry group
9 there, particularly the people who were in the maritime area, that this could be a major, major
10 opportunity for Wicklow in terms of offshore wind energy.

11
12 As we discuss it had and were going through it, unfortunately the negotiations between the Irish
13 and British governments broke down and as far as we're aware at the moment they are still
14 sitting on the table and possibly could come forward again, and the feeling of the people that
15 we've talked to since is that at some point in time this will happen. At the moment it's not
16 happening, but it needs to be kept in mind.

17
18 And when we looked at this area, what certainly came out on it is that the point in time, we were
19 aware that there was somewhere in the region of projects available on wind energy of up to 8
20 billion which could be, possible investment in the short-term assuming those negotiations
21 between the two governments were successful. Of that 8 billion, 3 billion could actually happen
22 on the east coast of Ireland on it, and particularly in close proximity to Wicklow, so there was an
23 opportunity there that started coming forward at that point in time, which unfortunately as I say
24 has slipped back.

25
26 But when we looked at it and looked further at this one of the things that certainly is there on it is
27 that at the moment the cost of offshore energy is actually dearer than putting it on shore at the
28 moment. But the technology is constantly evolving and the feeling is that eventually that gap in
29 terms of cost structure between offshore and on shore will gradually close as technology is
30 developing, particularly around the type of turbines that they're using out on the sea. The other
31 thing that is there is that Ireland had the potential, including offshore of supplies up to 13 times
32 the needs that Ireland can avail of, so there is an export opportunity. And the third thing that's
33 there is the actual shore and banks, look another let's say terrain along the east coast of Ireland is
34 probably very, very coast competitive as a location to actually install offshore energy, compare

1 to other locations in Europe. So in other words the sea bed is the right type of sea bed to do this
2 much more economically than others can do it, and it is an opportunity that will come in the
3 future.

4
5 Really what that brought us down to was saying this could be a very significant opportunity at
6 some stage in the future, yet the group felt as it was nearly merging, let's say all of the people
7 within Wicklow were not actually talking to each other. So in other words there was no
8 co-ordination there between the industry, Wicklow County Council, the various bodies, on a
9 co-ordinated basis understanding the needs of the industry that were the likely investors. What
10 would they like to see happening in Wicklow? How should Wicklow prepare for that? So there
11 was a lot of questions about really getting together.

12
13 So at the end of it now with the status of that opportunity the recommendation really is that there
14 should be an expert group put together really by Wicklow County Council, which would get an
15 absolute handle on the status of this, talk to the industry players, ensure that at first hand that
16 Wicklow is aware of what the opportunity is and what needs to be done so that they don't miss
17 that opportunity.

18
19 I think John in his presentation used the word that there's a lot of competition out there as well
20 and certainly there is people in other counties organising around this and they will be looking for
21 a slice of this, from over in Wales they certainly are certainly well organised on it. There's
22 groups coming together down in the Cork area who are undertaking research into this and again
23 pitching for that business on it. So Wicklow needs to be wide awake to it. So our
24 recommendation is that really a group will be put together that will actually look at this
25 opportunity and if there is other opportunities on the side that maybe that can evolve over time as
26 well.

27
28 Then if that actually happened if it looked like it was happening then it would really be a
29 secondary action or group, which will decide to take the initial recommendations and make sure
30 the infrastructure is put in place, but it is a big opportunity that could come down the tracks and
31 might not happen this year but could happen in two or three years time and it's very, very
32 important everybody is aware of it and taking the right actions now.

33
34 So that's establish an expert group to evaluate the opportunity and then establish a wind energy

1 task force. And the potential impact to that we would recognise would be something in the
2 region of 2,500 to 3,500 jobs and while that opportunity is largely a mobilisation, servicing of
3 the opportunity on it, the construction phase, and also then possibility of permanent on shore
4 facilities which are really the control infrastructure for the actual turbines that are on the scene.
5

6 And that really brings me back to the one I glossed over a little bit, which was the maritime one.
7 What came out of the group this part of it let's say drifted a little bit, was that really the maritime
8 area and trying to exploit the resources and optimise those, of what Wicklow has to offer, should
9 be looked at in a very co-ordinated way.
10

11 Finally I think the last point, it's not up on the slide, but this is just really a personal reflection on
12 being involved in the process, which has been a pleasure from my point of view, the group
13 themselves were fantastically enthusiastic, they were delighted to be invited. They weren't
14 without criticism of Wicklow County Council and felt Wicklow County Council hadn't been
15 proactive but felt that this, the fact of being involved now was a great positive step and to be
16 encouraged on it.
17

18 My own feeling on it is that what you have here is a fantastic resource of people willing to come
19 forward who are people who can deliver on these opportunities, tremendous resource in the
20 county. I think what's very important is that it just doesn't go into a report, that at the end of all
21 of this process, that actions are taken, even small steps, so that the feedback is coming back, we
22 value what you did, we want to work with you, we want to move forward. So that's really it
23 from my point of view, so thank you all.

24 MR HANNIGAN: Just one final slide, just to conclude the presentation, just to remind you that
25 what we presented to you is six Strategic Objectives coming from consultation with the business
26 community when I totted up the numbers we had a lot of people involved, five specifically from
27 local authority, four chairs who represented different parts of the community, 37 working group
28 members and 156 responses to the survey, which is over 200 in total, plus lots of submissions
29 sent in, so we can't quantify the number of people who incompetent putted to the process. We
30 hope to handover to you for any questions as John mentioned this isn't the end of the process, but
31 more work to be done. So just for your consideration. Thank you very much for your time.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks indeed, thanks to all the speakers. John, Killian, Dick and I know
33 Declan was there as well. And for all the business people that bought into this concept. I would
34 like to acknowledge the steering group as well, which included Tom and Lorraine of course and

1 Sheila and Vibecka, and John Ryan of course who has put a lot of time and effort into this.

2
3 So we'll start with questions can I ask you to be short and sweet, a lot of people indicating. Cllr
4 Timmins?

5 Cllr TIMMINS: Just briefly to make a few points. Firstly just like to thank the presenters and
6 people involved in this project, it's obvious that they have given their own free time and very
7 well done. The first thing that comes to mind is next step, what's going to continue? Hopefully
8 it isn't going to sit on a shelf and it will actually develop into something to take further steps?
9

10 I actually work with a company in County Wicklow in Blessington that employs 120 people so
11 I'm familiar with the problems and issue that is face business in County Wicklow. Just a few
12 specifics what we can do here as councillors, a few obvious things. First of all commercial rates
13 in Wicklow, we talked about being in competition, we are in competition with other counties not
14 just Ireland in competition with other countries, we are in competition with other counties. One
15 of the yardsticks is what's the commission rates. Which low's commercial rate is higher than
16 Meath and Kildare, our neighbouring counties an obviously even further higher than Carlow and
17 Wexford to the other side. So we need to, as councillors look at what, we don't put impediments
18 into the way to businesses developing in County Wicklow. So we need to look at harmonising
19 that over time.
20

21 Similarly water charges for businesses, I think we are highest or second highest in the country,
22 bench higher than neighbours so we need to look at what we as councillors, we can talk here all
23 day about different things, but what specific things to do. They are a couple of specifics we can
24 do to try and help businesses in County Wicklow and future businesses and help business people
25 make decisions to decide to locate in County Wicklow and not give them obstacles and reasons
26 not to locate.
27

28 Similarly people living, development levies and houses, that we are not out of sink with other
29 counties as we have been in the past.
30

31 Just briefly a couple of other points, rural broadband I bring it up here every time I can. It's
32 important in towns, even more -- if I want to set up a business in the morning where I live in
33 Grangecon a village in County Wicklow, I would have a lot of difficulty because I have bad rural
34 broadband but what specifics are we going to do? That's a question we have to think, what

1 specifics will we do to improve rural broadband. There wasn't much emphasis on IDA, how to
2 bring multinationals, I don't have statistics and I don't like speaking without full facts not like
3 some people, but it's obvious that Wicklow doesn't do well from IDA inward investment in
4 County Wicklow and I wonder what specifics we can do to try and get the IDA to encourage set
5 up of companies in County Wicklow, they set up in the most obscure parts of the country a lot
6 less attractive than Wicklow we don't get them, what specifics can we do, what contacts can we
7 make with IDA to make them more aware of helping set up business in County Wicklow.
8 Multinationals here it brings a skill base and a lot of things and knock on effect of creating other
9 jobs.

10
11 Tourism, obviously, I'm not going to repeat that, but basically that's my main point, what's the
12 next steps thank you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: We'll take answers at the end. There will be a presentation on rural
14 broadband here next month which we're looking forward to that.

15 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I'd just like to thank everybody for the presentation
16 they made here this evening, I have to say I sat down to read the report last night and the
17 enthusiasm that you have for the project and putting it together just hopped off the page, I was
18 very enthused myself as I read it, so exciting and I could follow along with you all the threads
19 coming together in this, even in my own head I'm thinking we can have this in Bray, this in
20 Newtown and Arklow and it's all coming together as a bigger picture. So I want to thank you for
21 that, even for the document that you put together which is very easy to read, very understandable
22 and very encouraging all the work and ideas that have gone into it.

23
24 I do appreciate having worked with both business sector and the voluntary sector, which aren't
25 mentioned too much in this, but voluntary bodies like festival committees and heritage groups
26 and things like that. I have experienced that myself, when you come to the Council with it
27 you're meeting with a bit of a brick wall or you can't take it any further. So I suppose I would
28 like to see some where that it would be a first port of call for people coming with ideas and there
29 certainly are a lot out there and I did attend the event in glen view, and there were loads of ideas
30 that went up on the boards there to explore further that would include green ways and blue ways
31 and where maybe there aren't many jobs in forestry, fishing and agriculture in people working
32 directly in those areas, there certainly is huge tourism potential in those areas as well as maybe
33 directly working in the area. So that's just what I want to say, I want to say as a member of the
34 Council, I think we should be enthusiastic and very proactive in this process, so thank you very

1 much.

2 Cllr McDONALD: Thank you very much, first of all I want to say congratulations to everybody
3 involved in this particularly my colleague John Ryan, it's tremendous piece of work, I feel like
4 Cllr Kavanagh, it was a joy to read something positive and totally attainable, if we get our act
5 together we'll attain this.

6

7 I have to say we have to say thanks to Jimmy O'Shaughnessy that he had the foresight to look at
8 this in 2012 and ask John to have a look for him, we are now in 2015, it's published and we're
9 now ready to start on the journey, it's a strange journey because now with the start of the LCDCs
10 we can incorporate it into our policies, incorporate it into policies for leader, so when we need
11 money for this, this is not going to be cheap, if we try and go down the cheap route it won't
12 work. We can go and apply to leader for funding for a lot of the aspects of this. I particularly
13 would be looking at the food, agriculture, fishing, all of the aspects that leader are quite happy to
14 fund in the coming years as far as we are aware.

15

16 I sincerely hope it doesn't end up on a shelf, we can't allow that to happen. We need to have
17 really excellent statutes, we need to get a core group together. We should be looking at funding,
18 maybe somebody to actually oversee this. It's not -- we shouldn't have it looking like outlook, it
19 was fantastic to look at and as the years went by funding went out, it didn't happen. This is
20 something for our whole county.

21

22 The only one part of it that I thought was missing, although it was only briefly put on, is the
23 marina element but we are a coastal county and we forget in Wicklow that marine tourism, I'm
24 talking about leisure tourism, not the whole port idea, but leisure tourism, sailing, angling all that
25 aspect is something that we're not focusing on enough in Wicklow, it is something that we could
26 make a huge part of our tourism offer.

27

28 Finally I'd like to say we are starting with wicklow.ie, we're lucky we own wicklow.ie, it's
29 something that I've been going on for years, Wicklow tourism site should not be a different site
30 to the wicklow.ie, I do think that when you go into wicklow.ie site it should have tourism,
31 economic and Council. I've been saying it for years, I'm glad it's identified. I'm certainly here to
32 support you in anyway I possibly can, congratulations.

33

34 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you, well done to everybody who has prepared this, it's most
interesting and hopefully will lead to some action, just a comment on a couple of things. One is

1 about the offshore wind. There was two major proposals in Wicklow one is codling bank which
2 received permission is a years ago and hasn't moved forward the more recent application which I
3 don't think was decided yet was for the Kish bank, that is quite near the coast and much more
4 visually intrusive because of the shape of the bank, long and narrow, over a large section of
5 Bray, Greystones and north Wicklow. And importantly also the Kish bank is to be serviced from
6 Dublin Port not from Wicklow, and whereas the Coddling bank proposal was that it would be
7 serviced from Wicklow. It's worth bearing that in mind when trying to push this forward, that I
8 objected and also to Greystones Town Council, to the visual effect of Kish but not Coddling
9 because the suggestion is different even though that's larger it's much less intrusive. I also agree
10 with comments about maritime tourism.

11
12 Just to talk about rural broadband it's not just a rural issue, certainly in the centre of Greystones
13 myself and many other people can't get fast broadband so there are significant holes in the
14 broadband network in urban areas it shouldn't just be considered a rural issue.

15 Cllr RUTTLE: I want to thank all those involved in the study for a start for all the time and
16 effort put in and the excellent way it was presented in the various sectors. I want to just go back
17 to the presentation made by my neighbour and friend in Blessington Killian MacGreal, I know
18 he was dealing with the retail sector, but a liaison officer, this struck me as something we'd seen
19 attempted in west Wicklow before which worked very, very well. I am referring to the activities
20 of the west Wicklow development association in its time and how it was structured. The akin
21 study to what we have here was set up by Prof Brendan lock loin of Trinity College and got the
22 template together for what was needed, what were the strengths and weaknesses in those days
23 there were a lot of weaknesses in west Wicklow in employment etcetera. The associate was
24 headed up about I the late Jim Blake who had a lot of drive and initiative.

25
26 When I heard about this liaison, it struck me forcefully what happened was Jim Blake had gone
27 to the Department of Finance directly and got a fully paid development officer paid for and
28 secretary to run, paid directly by the Department of Finance and on the instructions of the then
29 finance Minister Charlie Haughey. That worked very, very well, over the years that it was in
30 operation from Blessington down to Tinahely, operations like Tinahely Plastics down to
31 Woodfab in Aughrim, got going about 700 jobs, many of which still around today. But this
32 officer was the one stop shop, he could handle everything, you knew where to go and what to do
33 and it certainly is something worth exploring again on the basis of the success of that.

1 Now both this country and Wicklow itself, I've always been of the believe that we only had three
2 really indigenous industries in the country which no-one could take from us, farming, tourism
3 and fishing, the rest were based on multinationals or coming and going, the vagaries of the
4 industry, and all those three are very important and in Wicklow certainly the first two, farming
5 and tourism are hugely important.

6
7 The development of that is crucial to the overall thing, as is the development of industrial work.
8 When you look at things that can be branded as Wicklow. Wicklow is a great centre as you
9 know Chairman of the sheep industry, and Wicklow lamb is something that could be and could
10 be promoted in a much more vigorous and successful way than it has been. When you see the
11 present invasion in Dublin of the Achill brand name, you see in the restaurants and hotels and
12 Irish Times, and we are here right on the doorstep of the city and that kind of marketing is not as
13 strong, we are not getting as far. Because it can be done. And the other thing we had a
14 discussion here a few weeks ago on a motion of ours, about the proliferation of deer in Wicklow,
15 there must be a great opportunity for Wicklow venison somewhere in this.

16
17 But certainly issues like that, develop the indigenous industry, it's very clean, very green, very
18 beautiful, that can be done. If you look at the number of -- a few weeks ago a table was
19 produced on national media, it showed the number of IDA jobs created or developed in certain
20 places, we are very down the line on that kind of thing. So sometimes, just as the late Jim Blake
21 did in west Wicklow maybe it's better to get up and help yourselves and move forward. Now
22 whoever, when Killian spoke he wasn't prescriptive about who would pay for this type of officer
23 or who would work with them but certainly that approach have very good. When we see the
24 already spin-off of things like development of green way in Blessington and what's happening
25 there and we're excited in the future, even though we're badly treated in the recent past, in the
26 future when developed furthermore things will spread. But getting back as well to what my
27 colleague Edward said, things like broadband are issues as well, that is not good enough in that
28 short a distance from the capital city of the country.

29
30 But certainly well worthwhile next is what can we as an authority do to make more realistic
31 achievements out of the study and what was done. Thank you all.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Brady?

33 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I'd like to welcome this plan, I think it's excellent. I'm
34 listening to the people who made the presentations there, I suppose you can see the enthusiasm

1 there, so overall I want to commend everyone for participating in it, the 37 people that were part
2 of the working groups. Also to the 156 people who took time out to make submissions for this
3 plan, I think any time we put out there looking for expressions of interest or expressions or any
4 input from the public it's always low so I think getting 156 submissions back from the public is,
5 certainly seems like one of the higher feedbacks from the public we've had over many, many
6 years. So I welcome all of that.

7
8 It's true what they say governments or Councils don't create jobs, but we can create the
9 conditions to allow jobs prosper and thrive. I think that's what this is about here, it's critical that
10 all of the areas are looked at, because if we're looking towards the IDA, towards coming in and
11 doing this, unfortunately and sadly their input in this county has been lacking I don't want to get
12 critical or anything like that, but I think it's important to say in 2013 we had only one site visit
13 here from the IDA, 2014 we had only four site visits from IDA. So that begs the question as to,
14 if these aren't out here telling Wicklow, looking for foreign direct investment, who is? And that
15 raises the point, we shouldn't stand back and waiting on others to do it, we have to seize the
16 moment and do it ourselves. So I think that's why this document is so important, that we're out
17 there, we're selling Wicklow, not just nationally here within Ireland, within the island of Ireland
18 but internationally as well and putting the, selling ourselves looking for that foreign direct
19 investment.

20
21 But it is true when we say governments and Councils are the ones who create the conditions and
22 we talk about the retail sector and all of these other issues that need to be dealt with, there's a
23 number of things that should happen, not just at a local level, but also on a national level, and
24 issues such as stimulus plans are needed to invigorate our retail industry and easy ways of doing
25 that would be to put money back in people's pockets through, when you look at Wicklow here,
26 when you think there's 16 million sucked out of local economy here in Wicklow via property tax.
27 14 million hoping to get out of local economy via water charges, is there a need for that? No.
28 There is other ways of bringing in that money, put it back in people's pocket.

29
30 Just a few specifics regarding the plan, one point it touched on the whole issue of parking, and I
31 think in some areas of the county unfortunately it is an issue, there's been different proposals
32 come forward even within our own municipal district of providing free parking on a Saturday,
33 what's been proposed here is or what's being looked at is a free two hour period for parking.
34 They are all commendable, but unfortunately we have been boxed into a situation and it has been

1 unfortunately over many years paid parking is being used as a cash cow, that has been
2 ringfenced in the documents brought forward by Phil Hogan. If we were to look at introducing a
3 two hour free period of parking or free parking on a Saturday, that's going to come out of
4 discretionary spending for each of those municipal districts and that is a terrible, terrible thing.
5

6 We can put forward these incentives, but it's going to have huge implications on other
7 discretionary spending in those districts and that needs to be looked at. I for one would love to
8 see free parking on a Saturday, love to see a two hour free period, but the problem is not within
9 this Council, I think that needs to be taken up at a national level, that this discretionary spending,
10 if we implement the change it is will have huge implications on the services we can provide.
11

12 Another area that I think is very commendable and needs to be explored in more detail is this
13 whole concept of a blue way, I suppose replicating the green way on the west coast. Here in
14 Wicklow in the north end of the county, I'm dealing with a number of businesses out there
15 working, trying to put in place different activities around add venture, water borne activities, I've
16 said a number of times we have an opportunity to develop some sort of centre of excellence, and
17 I think this Council should take the lead on that, a centre of excellent around water borne
18 activities. We have them on the west coast, we don't have anything to replicate that here on the
19 east coast, but when I talk about water borne activities I'm talking about sailing, kayaking,
20 canoeing, scuba diving all of those activities.
21

22 Unfortunately I see through my input with a couple of different businesses, one business, I'm not
23 going to get into the habit of individualising it towards business, but one business that had been
24 in communication with the Council here trying to get a small parcel of land in the northern end
25 of the county, to try and put in place some water borne activities, there was nothing but red tape
26 there unfortunately put in front of that business. Still to this day that business still hasn't got that
27 small parcel of Council owned land. If they did the impact that would have for that particular
28 area, bringing people in from outside of the county to avail of the services they can provide not
29 just in terms of water, but other add venture support, hill walking, rock climbing, ab sailing all
30 that stuff. We need to ensure our interaction with business such as that are meaningful and there
31 aren't the red tape being put in the way. But I think, I sincerely say this, we need to look at the
32 whole issue of putting in place a centre of excellence.
33

34 There is huge investment in Greystones around the harbour and marina, even looking at the

1 harbour in Bray which is seriously delapidated over many years, I think there is an opportunity
2 there, possibly in that area, to develop a centre of excellence. To put in place the infrastructure,
3 as the saying goes, build it and they will come. There's the right people out there, the right
4 business models out there. But they need more interaction from this Council.

5
6 The other area that I think is very important and unfortunately up to this time we haven't tapped
7 into it as much as we should have, we haven't exploited it to our own gain, I'm delighted that a
8 serious amount of consideration has been put into the whole area of film industry. We are
9 blessed. When anyone talks about film or audio or anything like that in Ireland, Wicklow is the
10 one place that jumps out, we have two brilliant film studios here in the county, Ardmore and
11 Ballyhenry here as well. I think more needs to be done there, the whole issue of film tourism is
12 huge. Absolutely massive. When you think back of programmes such as Ballykissangel and
13 you had hundreds of English tourists coming in their droves. Sorry Cathaoirleach I'll finish off,
14 other people had ample opportunity.

15
16 I've spoken a need to tap into that, harness all of that, that is out there. I put forward proposals
17 around an idea around a film museum that there's an area for, somewhere for people to go, some
18 sort of interactive film museum that people can go, we sell all of those Glenroe, the
19 Ballykissangel, all the other movies that have been produced here.

20
21 The other thing I think it needs to be taken up and it's not for this Council, that's the whole
22 Infrastructural Development Fund.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: We're not going there.

24 Cllr BRADY: No there is a huge need for that, and that has the capacity to create 5,000 jobs, I
25 think it would be wrong not to identify that as an issue, as a need for this government to produce.
26 I think there's a call for 15 million euro to put in place an Infrastructural Development Fund to
27 create the additional studio space that's badly needed out there. That needs to be a central part of
28 this plan as well, to tap into all that film industry, 5,000 jobs shouldn't be sniffed at, I don't think
29 we are doing enough to promote all of that.

30
31 Just the last point here, we have a budget of 200,000 now, but there is a real need to carry out
32 market research. No point in us putting in place plans and policies and procedures if that's not
33 what the market wants or what the market needs. I'd hope that some of, I know there has been
34 engagement there with the business, with the service users and that, but we need to go out there,

1 particularly when we're talking about blue ways and film industry, this sort of stuff, what is the
2 that the service, that the public, that tourists want when they come to the county. So I think there
3 needs to be an element of market research in all of this, the plan we put in place is the right plan
4 for now, to promote Wicklow and create conditions so we can get employment in here for the
5 15,000 people still unfortunately currently unemployed in this county. Thanks.

6 Cllr CASEY: Thank you Chairman. First of all can I take the opportunity to thank everybody
7 involved in the presentation today. And indeed the support staff from Wicklow County Council
8 and the LEO office, but a special thank you should go to Cllr Ryan for taking on this and
9 delivering this plan here today.

10
11 Just briefly in relation to a few things that I want to speak on, one is the brand and the
12 development of a brand, and it's vitally important that this brand portray as vision that we believe
13 in and can deliver on. The worst thing possible for a brand is to send out mixed messages. It's
14 critical that both as administration and public we buy into the brand, whatever that brand and the
15 vision be moving forward.

16
17 In my year as Chairman I did speak to Liam Fitzpatrick of the importance of creating a portal,
18 where all businesses can go on to one website and do everything that they need to do or know
19 about the county, I think it is critical that we deliver that portal sooner rather than later. Because
20 sadly the public perception of Wicklow, be it right or be it wrong is that it is not a place that's
21 open for business, actually the public perception of Wicklow is that it's a very difficult place to
22 do business in, that is something that needs to be addressed, whether through marketing or
23 whatever form it needs to be addressed but that public perception has to be addressed, that
24 Wicklow is a place, a good place to do business.

25
26 Because John did say business opportunities arise, and if we don't grab that when they're there,
27 we lose them and we'll lose them forever. So it's critical and important when a business
28 opportunity presents itself that we grab that opportunity and run with it rather than lose it.

29
30 Just in relation to tourism because it's one close to myself. It's a double-edged sword for
31 Wicklow because of our proximity to Dublin and one of our greatest challenges. I think it's
32 critically important that we look at the niche tourism markets, where you are required to stay in
33 Wicklow to carry out that activity. And as a result of that niche tourism we deliver the
34 infrastructure required for that niche tourism. Sometimes I do get worried about, we should be

1 the outdoor recreation capital of Ireland, there's no doubt about it, that's what Wicklow should be
2 of the but I know currently at the moment Dublin tourism is clearly focusing in on the 25 to 40
3 year age group for outdoor activity, ship them to Wicklow for the day for the activity and put
4 them in hotels in Dublin overnight. And that's the challenge.

5
6 We have the natural resources here but we don't get the value for money out of the natural
7 resources, that's a natural challenge for tourism moving forward. I'm going to disagree with
8 John, hopefully he didn't mean it that Glendalough is not a place to do business in!

9
10 Finally this is an invaluable and comprehensive piece of work. I think it will form a significant
11 contribution to the development of the economic plan that we have to do before the end of the
12 year and then at the end of the day the local economic and community plan that this Council will
13 have by the end of this year, I thank everybody involved in what they presented today for all
14 their efforts over the year. Thank you.

15 Cllr MURPHY: A lot of things have been said, but just a few points of my own, first of all I'm
16 sitting here with a lot of bosses around me, Mr Hannigan is my other boss, so very impressed
17 with him, ten out of ten! I'll give him a job any time, any place.

18
19 Just a few things that I pointed out, I think our attitude, both of Wicklow County Council
20 members, executive, public and business people have to change. I think it's a major link in all
21 the presentations there. It's no good sitting any more waiting for something to happen, we know
22 that we have to be there, we have to grab it, we also need the experience of the people that have
23 given the presentation here today and the other people that have sat on those fantastic
24 subcommittees, I think it has given us a good shake up as the other councillors, Pat Kavanagh
25 said, I read it as well, to be honest with you I got, really a buzz from saying it's there in front of
26 us. But now we need to open our minds and our hearts for this to happen.

27
28 Again there are six or seven people on this County Council who have sat on Wicklow tourism,
29 some are new members some are the older group, not saying who they are! But again always in
30 the last two or three years of sitting on the Wicklow board of the tourism signage is always a
31 major issue. Again it's change of attitude, letting people know that we're there. We can see it
32 visually and we need everyone else to see it also. And the youth as Mr Hannigan has said, the
33 youth is another vital link, but as he called us the middle aged here, we are all very young at
34 heart, but the youth is the area where it is the future, and if you look at the young scientists of the

1 year over the weekend, my God, they are our future for business and everything else that's going
2 to happen in this country.

3
4 Also we have very, very large groups in our own county as well who go to other counties to hold
5 their conferences and whatever else, and these groups are the likes of the ICA, the older people
6 network groups, who have fantastic memberships and they themselves could promote Wicklow
7 in their own way as well with networking with Wicklow tourism and whatever else. Again I'm
8 delighted to say I come from a maritime town, and very proud to be, and that does need to be
9 developed. There is absolutely such potential there. And we need to sell that.

10
11 I suppose my worry is the finance and I'd like answers on that in months to come. It's no good
12 having it written up and putting it on the table and getting dust on it, we need to know where
13 finance will come from. Thank you very much.

14 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thank you Chairman. Thanks very much for presenting this document, it's
15 great to see a long-term vision and strategy presented, something, like a lot of those objectives
16 will go beyond the lifetime of this Council and definitely beyond the lifetime of the current
17 government that we have, that's for sure. Some of these issues that we're talking about require
18 input at a national level and some issues that require input from us at a local level and the four
19 key areas that you have covered there, public transport, infrastructural services, energy, tourism,
20 they are obvious things that are required to allow Wicklow to progress for development, attract
21 investment into the area, so in terms of public transport, the provision of service is going to be
22 down to the national level, so that's where we need to lobby government to increase investment
23 in public transport and increase subvention in public transport companies, because it's been cut
24 year after year. The recent government strategy on public transport is all focused on the north of
25 Dublin to the airport, to Swords, there's no mention whatsoever of South Dublin or north
26 Wicklow, and I include the Luas extension from Cherrywood to Bray in that, no mention of that
27 whatsoever, either around this table or from our public representatives and that's crucial.

28
29 Also what's needed is inter town services, whether that's public or private, transport buses
30 subsidised or not that's something that needs to be explored as well, it's difficult to get from town
31 to town in Wicklow. What we can do as a Council in terms of public transport is ensure that
32 there's sufficient land zoned close to public transport hubs and that's a key area that we can have
33 an input into, whether the services are provided after that, that's down to government.

1 Infrastructural services keep coming up again, water and waste water services and broadband.
2 Now I think water and waste water at some point or another will be covered by Irish Water, if we
3 get the level of investment we were promised, I don't know if we were or not, I have a question
4 on what's the main impediment to providing sufficient and adequate broadband throughout the
5 county?

6
7 Energy is obviously key, if you're going to invest you need to know energy costs aren't going to
8 spiral, at the moment we depend most of our energy on imported oils from countries that are not
9 terribly stable, we don't have much control over the price of oil, it's low at the moment, it could
10 be double that price this time next year. I was surprised at the amount of negativity that greeted
11 the proposal for offshore wind farms from Wicklow, I've heard Cllr Mitchell's concerns but I'm
12 hoping members will take account of the submission made today by I can't remember the
13 gentleman's name, but the positive impact that could accrue to Wicklow when the revised
14 application goes in I hope we can put a bit more positivity.

15
16 Tourism, obviously Wicklow is going to be, we all know it's a fantastic and beautiful destination,
17 well known throughout the country, it can compete with any part of this country in terms of
18 natural amenities and recreation. We need to challenge the wild Atlantic way, most tourists that
19 arrive into Ireland arrive into Dublin, only 20 miles up the road, we should drag them down here
20 to Wicklow before they get a chance to get anywhere west of the country at all. One of the
21 proposals I have spoken to a couple of members about, a couple of the executives, is about
22 increasing our walkways, this walkway from the coastal walkway from Bray to Wicklow, and
23 then a walkway that would join up to that from Kilmacanogue through Sugarloaf and across to
24 join up the Wicklow Way, great tourism potential but great opportunity to keep the tourists in
25 Wicklow for more than a day, part of the problem is people arrive out to Wicklow, park the car,
26 do a loop walk, get back in the car and drive home again, no benefit to the county and all there
27 is, is negative impact on the natural environment, whereas you need to keep people there, spend
28 a few quid, go for lunch, maybe stay over another night. Package deals with the tourist
29 attractions to keep people there for at least two days possibly three.

30
31 The blueway, I've heard of this, I think it was Albert Kerr in Bray who coined that phrase, he
32 pitched it to me a few years ago myself and another guy that run a kayaking club in Bray, it's a
33 great idea and Cllr Brady went through some details so I won't expand any more. Great potential
34 for tourism and employment in that. Actually the east coast is very good for maritime sports and

1 most people think you need to go to the west coast to surf, apparently the east coast is a great
2 place to learn then you can head off to wherever you want to go to.

3
4 Film industry, that sounds like a huge, huge amount of money that could come into the county
5 and I think we should explore whether it would qualify under the strategic infrastructural
6 amendments of the act. I think we should explore that possibility sooner rather than later, rather
7 than ending up finding we are running down a dead end at some point, but if it can bring in that
8 amount of money it would qualify under strategic economic benefit for a region or area.

9
10 One question I'd like to factor in is if you do reduce parking within towns, would you give us a
11 costing on that and how much that would actually cost us as a Council? Thank you Chairman.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't think it's fair to ask this particular body to look at costings of the
13 parking, that's something we should do ourselves. Just on the issue of the broadband again, there
14 is somebody from the Department of Communications coming here next month and they will
15 certainly be the relevant people to ask questions on the broadband, I'm just trying to help along
16 here.

17 Cllr BOURKE: Thank you Cathaoirleach, firstly on a point of information, we did actually
18 adopt reduced estimate, amount of money in the estimates for parking I think of quarter of a
19 million for this coming year, from 2015, I just want to state I'm in favour of enhanced reduced
20 parking regime, parking rate regime in County Wicklow.

21
22 First of all I think that Cathaoirleach I'm asking yourself and the manager insofar as you possibly
23 can to include as many changes to the review of the County Development Plan that would
24 enhance the recommendations that are in this report, I believe that it would be a good
25 opportunity now that we're in the middle of the review process, to make some amendments
26 which will enhance things, for example the signage was one mentioned earlier, and people I
27 notice applying for signage throughout the county, I'd say the vast majority are refused for finger
28 post signs for example, I believe we need to make some changes at least to take on board those
29 recommendations of the working group.

30
31 Secondly just in relation to the film industry, I certainly would be in favour of doing all we can
32 to enhance the film offering in County Wicklow and even if that means foregoing development
33 charges, which possibly might become, be seen as a subsidy to the industry, would it be possible
34 that we would be able to, perhaps rather than charging the development charges, have a claw

1 back that in the event of a change of use of the studio buildings or facilities in the future that we
2 would get back our levies that we had fore gone perhaps a few years earlier as a way around
3 trying to facilitate expansion of the film industry in County Wicklow, thanks Cathaoirleach.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor, it is a matter for councillors to change the
5 Development Plan, not the manager or myself, okay.

6 Cllr BLAKE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I too want to thank all the members associated with the
7 presentation here today, thank you sincerely for that. A couple of points, first of all there was
8 reference made to the east/west divide in Wicklow, we've acknowledged for too long because of
9 the hills there, we used an excuse, hopefully this type of think tank on the outcome from the
10 whole thing might break down that barrier that we had there for far too long, talking about an
11 east/west divide, it's given people an excuse and reference was made by Killian to it as well,
12 about people not engaging with each other in the county, the difficulty certainly from our own
13 point of view we do find it difficult to get people to engage with each other at any level of form
14 whatsoever. That was one of the most positive things to come out of this. People did engage
15 and hopefully at the end it will be a more positive engagement with each other.

16
17 One of the main things I see, it was referred to as well about the creation of somewhere of
18 excellence of an establishment of employment. We see in all other counties around here,
19 Wexford becomes a main hub of activity in Wexford, Carlow, Carlow town, Kilkenny is the
20 same, Kildare, Naas is the centre of excellence in terms of establishing employment, in Meath
21 it's Navan, but here in Wicklow, we've four towns along the coast from Bray a large town,
22 Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow, all the time they seem to be competition between all four
23 towns of establishing which is the most premier town in the county. I just ask the members there
24 said at the outset we should be establishing somewhere specific in County Wicklow where we
25 should be going after the IDA and saying look we have all the infrastructure in this particular
26 location and this is the place to go to. So I'd ask did they actually establish anywhere in
27 Wicklow that we're heading in that direction where we nearly have, whether Arklow, Bray,
28 Wicklow or Greystones where we have the infrastructure necessary, if we haven't got it there is a
29 need to establish. Because they did say at the outset there was a need for Wicklow to establish a
30 certain location where we can actually encourage industry to come in to us, so I'd just ask the
31 members of the panel there that gave the presentation, did they establish somewhere we should
32 concentrate in this county and say this is the location we can bring the IDA to and they can
33 establish long-term good employment in this town.

34 MR O'NEILL: Just briefly again I'd like to thank the committee, the group there for this whole

1 project, they have been critical at the outset there of our, or Wicklow County Council role in all
2 of this, and maybe that is justified, but I know Tom Murphy is, has his heart and soul in this
3 anyway, so we might move on from here.

4
5 But I would accept the criticism, because I'm heartened here for a while, even before I was in the
6 Council in May, of the large resources we have in Blessington, we have a lake there over ten
7 mile long and it's still under the control of the ESB, who do not generate electricity from it.
8 Dublin City Council are the only people making money out of our resource in the county.

9
10 Now we have Irish Water in charge of that, and over the last two and a half years there's been 35
11 objections to one off houses alone by a serial objector, which I did mention again on the Vincent
12 Browne show the other night. What I really hope for is that we get this by the scruff of the neck,
13 that the national resources -- Cllr Casey pointed out earlier on, there are hotels in Dublin now,
14 selling Wicklow, but you stay in Dublin. Investment alone, you don't have a hotel even, we have
15 a huge amount of resource that can create plenty of environment tourism but we don't have one
16 hotel, we have one B&B in the whole area, so the infra structure has to be put in.

17
18 But I believe we should seriously consider as a Council the taking over of the Blessington Lakes.
19 Cllr Brady pointed out earlier on there is huge amount of activities that could be used and I hope
20 we just don't forget about that, a lot of talk here today is on the east coast, but we have huge
21 resources on the west coast and I think the sooner the better we seriously look at the lakes the
22 better for everyone. Again thanks to the group.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor. I'm going to let in the chief executive.

24 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just to agree with the councillors in thanking the group who have put
25 together this plan, it's very important plan, the work was done on a voluntary basis, I know it was
26 intrusive on the personal time of the various people, in particular the chairs and so on, and thank
27 Cllr Brady for the enthusiasm with which he pushed -- Cllr Ryan, I'm sorry if I insulted you.

28 Cllr BRADY: Don't get credit from the manager too often...

29 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: You get it when you deserve it councillor!

30 Cllr BRADY: Even at that you wouldn't give me much in fairness.

31 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Chairman, just to thank everybody involved in the project, I think it's a
32 very important report, coming at a time when the national economy has turned around. And I
33 think we're poised for growth in the future. I think there's a lot of very good idea in the plan
34 which will feed into the economic Development Plan that the Council has to produce, will feed

1 into the local community economic Development Plan which also has to be produced and into
2 the County Development Plan process that we're engaged in, there's a lot of issues which will
3 impact on that. And also into corporate plan which the Council is in the process of producing at
4 the moment. So it will tie into a lot of plans, it won't gather dust on the shelf, in addition I was
5 very pleased that at the Budget Meeting the councillors agreed there would be funding provided
6 specifically to fund projects which will emerge from this, so there is some funding in place.

7
8 Again there are a number of things that would require very little funding but which would make
9 a big impact, so there are a number of quick wins that we'll need to address over the coming
10 months, so just to say Chairman, that myself and the executive are very enthusiastic about the
11 plan, very appreciative, want to emphasise that, of the input that has been put in by everybody in
12 getting us to where we are today. And to assure everybody of our commitment to work with
13 business in the future to make Wicklow a better place to do business and attract business to.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thanks I know there was a lot of general points and statements
15 made, but we'll take, Niamh has taken note of those, I'll ask Niamh just to come in on any
16 questions, there wasn't too many questions, but is there any Niamh?

17 MS COONEY: First just thank you very much for all the comments I have noted them, we'll go
18 back as a group and consider how best to incorporate what's been said. Just a couple of things I
19 know that came up a few times, one was the broadband issues you have already referred to how
20 that will be addressed.

21
22 The other was reference to the IDA that came up very clearly in the group Declan is not here, so
23 I'll take the question, he will be most familiar with the IDA the feeling was is what IDA does is
24 market Ireland they are not specific about where in Ireland they don't care where business ends
25 up, so it's down to the county to secure the interest of the businesses. In if I can also the role of
26 the IDA changed over the years and now companies come to the IDA telling them where they
27 want to go not asking where them to suggest. Because they have the internet which is one of the
28 reasons the portal is so important, people know what they want before they come near Ireland.
29 They have weighed up against the rest of the world. So there is an onus on the county not on the
30 IDA in the same way as there was in the past.

31
32 That's why we didn't go through that in detail in the plan, it's in the document, at the moment
33 there it's difficult to figure out, (inaudible) being clear where different parts of the county have
34 development services to support different scale of business, also with dialogue with business to

1 develop a plan of action to build out capacity to locations where one is possible and business
2 would like to locate. That's a combination of dialogue with local businesses to expand in the
3 county and also businesses to potentially come into the county the idea of the map is to bring a lot
4 of that together. So the interactive map posted on the portal would allow the county to be
5 promoted constantly by itself without having to physically having to do it.

6
7 The other one I mention quickly the blue way was mentioned a couple of times, it was brought
8 up at a couple of workshops we didn't name it in the document there were lots of different ideas
9 and brand ideas suggested by groupings, we referred to the fact that we saw outdoor activity
10 space as particularly important in tourism and that's very much an under developed area in the
11 county, you have all the facilities but also a huge opportunity in terms of healthy living and that
12 that's popular.

13
14 Finally to last steps, next steps, for the group here it was a case of coming to yourselves and
15 presenting the output and consultation processes at length, and to ask you for your endorsement,
16 and if you support us yes the next step is outlined in the first slide, we do need to cost them.

17 Costing the actions takes a lot of time, so we want to get your endorsement first before we get
18 (inaudible), so with endorsement we prioritise actions, look at costs associated with them,
19 resources needed, it's an iterative process from here on with yourselves to figure out how it go.

20 MR MURPHY: Very, very briefly I know the clock is running down. Just again to thank most
21 sincerely John Ryan, Niamh Cooney, John Hannigan, Killian, Dick Lenihan and Declan O'Neill,
22 just to remind the members that the next steps include the, if this is adopted today by the
23 members, the prioritisation of the Strategic Objectives, the costing and resource allocation, the
24 timeline and metrics and to feed forward to the LEP process. The manager, chief executive
25 mentioned funding has been provided by the Council for some of these initiatives, Strategic
26 Policy Committee, economic development and enterprise support policy committee will play a
27 key role in prioritisation of next steps and that's all I have to say.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay thanks Tom. Thanks again everyone. We're going to adopt this.
29 Now I know Cllr Casey is the Chairman of the economic development SPC. So Cllr Casey do
30 you want to make the formal proposal?

31 Cllr CASEY: Thank you Chairman, I formally propose that we adopt this plan. I also propose
32 that it will form the basis eventually of the Local Economic Plan, which in turn will form the
33 basis of the Local Economic Community Plan, which in turn will be adopted by the members
34 here in this chamber, I think it's important that we know that this will be coming back at some

1 stage in the future to be formally adopted by the Chamber. But in the interim, if there's action
2 points in the plan we feel we should progress and cost out as being identified, I think that should
3 be done as well, and anything in relation to that line we'll bring back to the chamber here and let
4 them know.

5 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I'd like to second that.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kavanagh. Okay. Is that agreed? Agreed. Okay. Thanks again.

7
8 Okay, I want to fast track a motion with the members' agreement. Some of the members in the
9 south indicated that they could, they would invite in somebody from Merck Sharp and Dohme
10 on the site in Rathdrum, there is a motion in, I think we should discuss the motion before we
11 extend any invitation, so with the members agreement I'd like to take motion number 8 next if
12 that's agreeable? I'll let in Cllr Fitzgerald if you could be brief.

13 Cllr FITZGERALD: I will be brief, just obviously some time back we had the announcement
14 that MSD was to close in Rathdrum, albeit that it would be a lead in time before all work ceased
15 but they are obviously reducing in terms of the time about the effects it will have on workers and
16 families in the media area we had a Special Meeting, we had all the speeches, all the plans, we
17 had people in here from Merck Sharp and Dohme and IDA, in the meantime we have had little
18 on replacement industry and/or sale of the site. And what I'm proposing or what Cllr Kennedy
19 can, who is in touch more regularly with MSD than myself can elaborate but we need something
20 to happen question quickly and we seen the figures last week of IDA's involvement in Wicklow
21 over the last year, I think it was alluded to by Cllr Timmins, I wouldn't hold out massive
22 prospects the way things are going in the county. They seem to be quite clearly neglected when
23 it comes to provision of jobs. I just looked at the figures for Arklow municipal district last week
24 and it reports 12% drop in unemployment over the last year, those figures include people that
25 have left the country, people who left the county, work elsewhere, so the figures are deceptive to
26 say the least. The fact is we have been forgotten as a county, particularly in the south of the
27 county, and I'll pass you over to Cllr Kennedy who has been in contact with MSD.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. Cllr Kennedy?

29 Cllr KENNEDY: Thank you Cllr Fitzgerald, thank you Cathaoirleach, at the moment MSD
30 currently employ 270 people at their plant in Rathdrum and as I understand it, it is to finish
31 production by the end of the year 2015. 30 people finished work before Christmas, with the
32 remainder of the workforce to finish from April onwards but all employment to be finished by
33 the end of the year. That's this current year. The loss of the company is huge not just to
34 Rathdrum but to the county as whole, it is worth 20 million annually to the county. To the

1 economy.

2
3 As Cllr Fitzgerald said Cllr Fitzgerald and myself have been in touch with the management in
4 Rathdrum plant. I would propose Cathaoirleach with your permission is that we invite
5 Mr Steven Rush, the factory manager of the MSD in Rathdrum, come into the chamber here and
6 give the members an update on what the situation is at our next meeting in February with your
7 permission Cathaoirleach I will propose that.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Certainly you have my permission. Are the members agreed to invite
9 Mr Rush? Agreed? Do you want to do it formally or personally invite him?

10 Cllr KENNEDY: I think we should do it formally Cathaoirleach.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: We'll formally invite him. Cllr Casey bear in mind we are going to have
12 a discussion next month on this.

13 Cllr CASEY: I was Chairman at the time when this was made we did bring in Mr John Smith at
14 the time who was manager of the plant and we did say we would invite them back, I think it's an
15 appropriate time, nearly 18 months now since we had that presentation from John Smith, I think
16 it's vitally important we get an update on where the company stands.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you councillor. Cllr Behan.

18 Cllr BEHAN: I fully support the motion, I am wondering is it possible to invite the IDA
19 whatever is going to happen with Merck Sharp and Dohme we'll find out, but as Cllr Fitzgerald
20 said it's not only the south of the county IDA ignored, they ignored the full county, I'm sick and
21 tired of listening to announcements by government Ministers and IDA about jobs, projects all
22 over the country, Wicklow is never, ever mentioned. And they have a remit as far as I'm
23 concerned for the whole country. And whether we, maybe councillors who propose the motion
24 don't want to confuse it with the IDA with their particular proposal and maybe we'll have it on
25 another day but I think it's urgent for the whole county that the IDA are invited here, and we get
26 an opportunity to interrogate them about what their plans are for this county. So I want to
27 propose that.

28 Cllr MATTHEWS: I'll second that

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Well I suggest we offer the invitation to the owners of MSD first. And
30 we can certainly invite the IDA if they can't come in February we'll proceed with the other
31 gentleman's presentation.

32 Cllr CASEY: Chairman my only fear of the IDA come something that it will take the focus off
33 MS D.

34 Cllr FITZGERALD: I agree with that.

1 Cllr CASEY: John Smith the manager 16 months ago promised certain things that Merck sharp
2 Dohme wouldn't do which is break down of the company and sell it bit by bit on the market we
3 need reassurance from the company, I would prefer to have them on their own and leave the IDA
4 another day.

5 Cllr BEHAN: Another day, but not too long away.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Even if we have to have a Special Meeting, but at a later date than Merck
7 Sharp Dohme. Okay. We'll move on. Just while they're getting set up, we might as well
8 consider the request from PPN to add additional member to the housing and corporate estate
9 SPC, the policy group considered this and recommend that we would facilitate the PPN, I'll let in
10 Cllr Snell chair of the housing.

11 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Yeah it's a straightforward request, we have fulfilled our
12 duties in regards to fulfilling the various positions on the SPC, housing SPC, the PPN
13 unfortunately didn't have an AGM until the end of October. They have put in a request to have
14 an extra member on board, the name put forward is Mr Eamon McCann he sat on previous SPC
15 for the last five years, he brings a lot of experience and gives representation for the travelling
16 community as well. We do have representation from homeless sector and the other PPN name
17 that was put forward to us is an individual from west Wicklow which I think gives us that
18 geographical spread that we're looking for throughout the county on the housing SPC, so it's a
19 straightforward request, we're very open in regards to the housing SPC to this recommendation
20 and we recommend it to the members.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: So you're happy to propose it?

22 MS GALLAGHER: Just the proposal is that you're extending membership to include the social
23 inclusion sector so social inclusion seat.

24 Cllr SNELL: That's right.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you, that's agreed? Okay, a few members requested that
26 there would be an update on the Wicklow County Campus so Tom is going to give a quick
27 presentation.

28 MR MURPHY: As Cathaoirleach mentioned there he asked me to put together a few slides to
29 provide a context for Council's involvement in this project. And also to outline to you the
30 progress to date on the venture as well as setting out what next steps might be.

31
32 The first slide there just provides an overhead image of Wicklow and the Rathnew area, as you
33 can see the footprint of Wicklow County Campus college and the lands have been delineated
34 there in a white line.

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Just to give the members, particularly the newer members a brief background to the project, in the mid noughties former County Development Board in their strategy document identified a need for a third level college. Over the years IDA and Enterprise Ireland had advised Wicklow that we were at a disadvantage in competing for, with other counties in that we did not have a third level college acting as catalyst for economic activity.

Fortunately in late 2005 Clermont College in Rathnew came on the market and was purchased by the Council in conjunction with a private sector partner. The property comprises college, country house and associated lands of approximately 27 hectares. Around that time we were seriously concerned that the entire property would be purchased by a large developer and ultimately end up as a massive housing development. So at Council level there was general consensus that Wicklow County Council should purchase it.

It's located in an area that has been designated as primary development centre under the national spatial strategy as you know it's ideally located just off the N11 euro route E 01 and also well served in terms of infrastructure and services.

The next slide shows the drawing which delineates the boundaries of the campus and it's zoning, this is taken from the local area plan.

As many of you know in 2009 Wicklow County Council adopted a five year strategy for the campus, the main aims of the plan include the creation of a centre of excellence in innovation, enterprise and education with the third level college acting as a catalyst for economic development, and in conjunction with IT Carlow the development of a wide range of third level lifelong learning education and training programmes.

The next two slides just give an indication of the type of lifelong learning courses being run by IT Carlow at Wicklow County Council and as you can see these courses have been develop to address demand across many different areas, including business, legal studies, applied social sciences early childhood studies, web design, online marketing, energy management, health and safety and so on.

A little over five years ago the Oireachtas committee on Enterprise Trade and Employment

1 requested proposals from local authorities on the feasibility of creating jobs through the
2 establishment of local enterprises that would be provided with combined heat and power from
3 locally produced renewable energy resources. A working group comprising many different
4 interests was established and a vision document was prepared.

5
6 The vision document sought to develop Wicklow county campus as centre of excellence in
7 innovation, enterprise and education. It was subsequently invited to make a presentation to the
8 joint Oireachtas committee, which it did in January of 2011, four years ago now.

9
10 The main aims of the vision document and strategic plan include the construction of a building
11 innovation park, construction of a renewable energy centre, the expansion of existing
12 relationships with IT Carlow, the establishment of associations with leading universities and
13 other centres of excellence and retrofitting of Wicklow County Campus with low energy,
14 renewable energy systems.

15
16 The working group which drew up the working document estimated at that time about four years
17 ago that the proposal would have significant job creation potential and would cost approximately
18 10 million euro.

19
20 To date Wicklow County Council has invested approximately 11.5 million euro into the project,
21 this amount includes the cost of purchasing the college and ancillary lands, the significant
22 refurbishment works that had to be carried out, including access improvement works,
23 development of lecture and training facilities as well as development of conference facilities.
24 The number of students enrolling right now we have approximately 350 students which is an
25 increase of about 50 on last year. To date approximately 300 students have graduated, an Area
26 Action Plan has been approved.

27
28 The Wicklow local enterprise office is located on the campus, Teagasc also has an office on the
29 campus. We have office space available to rent to different groups, we have hosted a number of
30 enterprise and business community events and most recently finals of the Wicklow best young
31 entrepreneur competition was held there. We have prepared a promotional DVD for the campus
32 and every opportunity we get we showcase facilities to local and national development agency,
33 IDA, Enterprise Ireland and I propose to play a short DVD on the campus at the end of the
34 presentation.

1
2 Some of you will recall that Wicklow County Campus hosted the conferring of freedom of
3 county ceremonies for Daniel Day-Lewis and Katie Taylor and of course the economic
4 development enterprise support SPC has agreed to hold all their meetings on the campus.
5

6 What are the next steps? One of the first things we must do is review our strategic plan. We
7 have been liaising with IT Carlow in relation to this and we hope to make progress on this
8 shortly. The key to the determining the best way forward of course is develop a business
9 marketing plan, we've made a number of efforts in the last two or three years to secure funding
10 for this. Wicklow County Council has already demonstrated its commitment to the project by
11 investing significant amount of money but if we're to develop the vision and bring it to fruition
12 we have to identify and secure funding from other sources.
13

14 The next few slides just showcase what Wicklow County Campus has to offer. The first slide
15 shows the access improved works that have been carried out by the Council to improve safety
16 and also improve visibility. The work entailed moving back of part of the wall and setting in of
17 the gate, all this work has dramatically improved the sight line for motorists and pedestrians.
18

19 The next slide shows a photograph of some of the last year's graduates, all told 111 students
20 graduates in 2014. This slide shows the launch of the Wicklow LEO which was attended by An
21 Taoiseach Enda Kenny. This slide shows images from the Wicklow Best Young Entrepreneur
22 ceremony in 2014. This is a slide of the student enterprise award 2014. During the summer a
23 film called My Name Is Emily was, part of it was shot out in Wicklow County Campus. That's
24 just some of the images of the Chapel, the conference room. The tiered seating which is a
25 condition of some of the classrooms, we've 11 classrooms there plus the IT room.
26

27 That's an image of the board room and I'll now just very briefly play for you our DVD. I'll just
28 remind you that this is four years old, so there will be references to the County Enterprise Board
29 that is now the LEO and also references there to regional planning guidelines. So it is -- it does
30 require updating. But it will just give you an indication.
31

32 (Video played)
33

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Tom. Okay Cllr Kavanagh?

1 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thanks Cathaoirleach, thanks for the presentation Tom, I suppose I was one
2 of the people who looked for an update on what was happening and certainly by looking at the
3 pictures, everyone who visited, that we have a most fabulous college there in Rathnew and on
4 most fabulous grounds and everything. But I have to say, my heart sank watching the video a
5 bit, and throughout your presentation, because I know five years ago when I joined Wicklow
6 Town Council we had a presentation and what was happening at the time with Clermont and one
7 of the questions I asked at the time was about daytime courses going on, college courses going
8 on in Clermont. The college courses that are happening there at the moment are I believe,
9 correct me if I'm wrong, they're evening courses and fee paying courses, while they are of an
10 excellent standard and a lot of people have accessed those, they are not the kind of courses that
11 you would apply for under the CAO or that students would apply for under the CAO, that would
12 be daytime courses that would be funded by the department for students, third level students in
13 the normal manner where they go to universities and colleges. And I had hoped that five years
14 down the road we would have that facility here in Wicklow, in Rathnew, that we would have day
15 courses running by Carlow IT to facilitate the growing number of students and particularly the
16 growing number of student who is can't access, can't get into work because there is no work. So
17 students might return to college.

18
19 I see the presentation in 2011 to the joint Oireachtas committee, and the mission at that time was
20 that it would be renewable energies and sustainable design that would be a key component of the
21 courses that would be run there. I suppose my concern also is that Carlow IT are now in
22 discussion with Waterford IT and now we'll be at the loss of any potential courses in the future
23 that can be run there, I'm hoping you'll clarify that for me, because it would be a huge loss to us
24 if we were to lose out on that opportunity to establish a daytime college there that could be
25 accessed through CAO and that's I suppose the information. So while it looks beautiful on the
26 video, I'm not over the moon I suppose to hear that the Leo offices are there and Teagasc is there
27 and there is office space to rent, that's not what I had hoped for, for the college. I had hoped for
28 a fully operational third level college there that these other agencies are of course wonderful that
29 they can be re located somewhere else and we'll have the full third level college there, I'd like to
30 know what's happening with Carlow IT and how we can expand the college services there before
31 they get lost to Waterford.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you councillor. I'm under time pressure I want to get to the
33 suspension.

34 Cllr SNELL: All right work away.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead.

2 Cllr SNELL: I think it's important to be honest. Thank Tom and his small team, it's only ten
3 years since Wicklow County Council got involved in this building out there, a lot has happened,
4 you couldn't help but be impressed that there's 350 students registered, 300 have been enrolled or
5 350 enrolled and 300 out the other side of it. But I think it's important going forward that you do
6 pursue and get other agencies involved in regards to trying to get the green energy, renewable
7 energy centre that we were talking about back in 2009 and the innovation part, because it's all
8 about employment. There's 27 hectares out there, there's huge potential for growth. I think
9 what's gone on is excellent. I think getting the Leo involved out there, has enhanced what's
10 going on, on the campus, it is to be welcomed. I certainly want to say on behalf of the people
11 that live locally and see what's going on, on a daily basis you are to be commended and I hope
12 that we'll see employment there at a future stage.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks councillor. We'll let Tom in.

14 MR MURPHY: Very briefly Cathaoirleach, just in relation to Cllr Kavanagh's comments, there
15 has been huge changes in relation to third level college policy in relation to universities and
16 ICTs. The government policy now is, there is a number of reports out there, to rationalise and
17 merging the universities and ICTs. In relation to Wicklow, the President of IT Carlow at the
18 conferring ceremony in November indicated that the discussions between IT Carlow and
19 Waterford IT were ongoing, there had been some glitches along the way, but that they were
20 determined to see the government policy through. Ie, the creation of a university of the east, a
21 university of the South East I think is the term. So that's the ultimate goal, that's been driven
22 nationally.

23
24 In relation to the lifelong learning courses, IT Carlow at the beginning indicated that the
25 government policy now was more towards lifelong learning courses rather than increasing
26 campuses with day courses, that is government policy and we're pleased that the numbers have
27 continued to grow, we're now at 350, the President of IT Carlow is very, very pleased with that
28 number, given that there are a number of other outreach colleges affiliate to IT Carlow that are
29 also running lifelong learning courses, but in terms of the progress being made by Wicklow
30 County Campus, we are above the average in terms of how we're growing in numbers. So it's
31 very much a success story, the IT Carlow are very happy with it and we're very much committed
32 to growing the numbers.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thanks Tom. Okay we have to leave it there. Before we move
34 onto the suspension okay. We have to consider item number 6 because as you know Irish Water

1 will not attend a full Council meeting, when we corresponded with them, they said they would
2 not attend this forum. The best that could be got I suppose would be that they will come to a
3 clinic type arrangement. Now they have indicated the times available which is from 10 to 2.
4 The members indicated the preference the last time we discussed this, that we'll meet as a
5 municipal area, so each municipal district members would meet as a group and that we would
6 pre-submit questions that they would have the answers on the day.

7
8 So if we're going in five groups that would leave five 45-minute sessions at this clinic on the 2nd
9 of February. So we have to sort out the arrangements of what groups are meeting at what
10 particular time. So the slots available are 10 to 10.45. 10.45 to 11.30. 11.30 to 12.15. 12.15 to
11 1 and 1.1.45. So could I maybe ask...

12 Cllr WINTERS: Chairman there's a JPC meeting that morning. So anybody who have involved
13 in the JPC will have to be either on the 1.1.45 slot.

14 MS GALLAGHER: They are in Carlow, Kildare, Galway and Roscommon today. They won't
15 stay -- they normally do three hour sessions they have agreed to four hours and they won't stay
16 past 2 o'clock.

17 Cllr CASEY: God love them.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: I have a number of people want to indicate. It's quarter to five. We have
19 a suspension of standing orders. So do you want to extend the meeting? Or want to have a
20 discussion on this?

21 Cllr BEHAN: I propose we extend the meeting. Quarter past five even.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay John, we'll get to that. Okay Cllr Brady?

23 Cllr BRADY: Just on this, I stated this at the protocol meeting, that I think it's totally
24 disrespectful of Irish Water not to come to this full chamber. There had been invitations
25 extended to them going back over a lengthy period of time and they have basically given not just
26 this chamber and the elected representatives for County Wicklow, but also the entire population
27 of Wicklow the two fingers. I think it's really, really unfortunate. Irish Water, it's a toxic brand.

28
29 Bear in mind this chamber not so long ago passed a motion looking for the abolishment of Irish
30 Water, they have no credibility. And I think this is an exercise now being used by them on the
31 2nd February to come, not to this chamber but behind closed doors and have meetings with
32 councillors, democratically elected councillors in some sort of, as far as I can see give them
33 some sort of credibility that they are engaging with public representatives. I think it's very, very
34 disrespectful to the Irish people, to the Wicklow people and to all the elected members here

1 within this chamber.

2
3 So the entire Sinn Fein group are going to boycott any clinics taking place on the 2nd of
4 February, we are not going to engage in that because of the two fingers approach being given to
5 democracy, to this chamber and the people of Wicklow. So Sinn Fein are sitting out of those
6 clinics, we're going to boycott them. I hope all members, as I suppose a message to Irish Water,
7 would seriously consider their participation within those clinics, yes there are questions there
8 that need to be asked. Questions that need to be anticipated. But I don't think this format is the
9 appropriate format.

10
11 I'd ask other members of this Council to seriously consider their participation in those clinics, I
12 think by boycotting it, it would send a powerful message to them, look we are not part of your
13 little PR game here in some sort of attempt to give yourselves some credible. So I asked other
14 members to seriously consider boycotting.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm going to attend, I want questions I want answered I don't care if it's in
16 here or the next room.

17 Cllr BRADY: This chamber passed a motion...

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: They won't come to this forum. Cllr Behan?

19 Cllr BEHAN: I totally understand your point of view and the point of view of the people at the
20 Protocol Committee, but I have to say I agree with everything Cllr Brady said. I'm not
21 represented at the Protocol Committee, otherwise I would have made my point clear on that
22 occasion. But I think it's outrageous that a publicly funded organisation is blackmailing public
23 representatives by saying that we won't meet you unless you can meet us in small groups in
24 secret, where the press can't attend and public don't know what's happening. That's pure
25 out-and-out blackmail of the public representatives of this county and this country, it's a
26 disgrace.

27
28 I fully agree with Cllr Brady we shouldn't co-operate with this, but I totally understand your
29 point of view, that we want questions answered. But never in all my time as a councillor, I'm a
30 councillor since 1985, almost 30 years, I have never ever heard of a publicly funded organisation
31 setting the group rules as to how and when and where they are going to meet public
32 representatives, when they are being funded by public money. It's a disgrace. And I honestly
33 would appeal, I stand where people are coming from, but I really do think we have to make a
34 very strong stand about this.

1
2 Otherwise the people that send us here, as their representatives won't be able to see what the
3 answers are to the questions we're asking on their behalf. As a compromise I was thinking, this
4 came up at the Bray Town Council, municipal committee last week, what about inviting them to
5 come to the municipal district meetings? Where they would meet in public, but meet the
6 councillors just for each municipal district and let them reorganise their schedule so they actually
7 come, I have no problem meeting as a group to discuss the mattering pertaining to our area, but
8 not in secret, in public. Where we can question and ask and get answers to the issues that we
9 seek to get answers to.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: They have left us in no doubt that they are not prepared to attend this
11 meeting, and they are not prepared to attend municipal district meetings that's what they have
12 corresponded. Now they did say they would meet on an individual basis, but at the last meeting
13 we stated that the municipal areas was the best forum. That's what the members agree here.

14
15 Now this summer when people of Kilmac and Enniskerry have no water and they want to know
16 why they don't have any water, what the solution is? I want to have the answer.

17 Cllr BRADY: There is mechanisms to get answers other than going behind closed doors.

18 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. About four months ago Irish Water had a meeting
19 with councillors and all members of this Council were asked, 32 of us, I was the only one who
20 attended, and it seems that Sinn Fein didn't bother to attend that. Now they are boycotting the
21 next meeting. I want to know and I actually discovered quite a bit about the water supply to
22 Greystones and Delgany and what they were doing to improve it, which I found interesting, I
23 want to see what's happened in the meantime to ensure that we don't get the cut offs when we got
24 the Algae season in April and May this year the whole town was cut off, that's why I'm going to
25 go. I think for different bodies here to say, not to bother to go to one form of thing four months
26 ago, now to say they are going to boycott a different forum, just get on and meet them and get
27 questions answered, stop fiddling around, it's up to the Dáil to set national policy, not us, we
28 should get on and make sure that there's water and sewerage in our areas for the development
29 and the people.

30 Cllr CASEY: I will be brief, I fully agree with Cllr Brady and Cllr Behan, but regretfully
31 everything associated with Irish Water has been rammed down our throats, it didn't matter what
32 stance we took or what way we proceeded they went ahead and did it anyway. We need to know
33 critical information about this county infrastructure moving forward how it's going to happen,
34 how we influence how it's going to happen and how democratic right in deciding how the

1 population of our county grows, we need to get a full understanding of exactly what's going on
2 there, that's why I don't think we can ignore it moving forward.

3
4 Secondly Irish Water are taking over commercial water charges at the end of this year. Starting
5 charging commercial properties in 2016. We need to know what they are going to be charging
6 commercial operations at the moment. If they charge 3.77 as proposed at the moment, that's
7 nearly 350% increase on what Dublin City is being paid at the moment. And these are critical
8 for jobs moving forward. While I fully agree with Cllr Behan and Brady we need to engage with
9 them, regretfully we need to engage and get answers out of them. If this is the only format we
10 can do it well I'm going to take that opportunity so I know what the hell they are at.

11 Cllr WINTERS: I don't ever think anything is achieved by not speaking with people. I would
12 prefer if Irish Water would come here, but if they did come to a full public forum I'd imagine the
13 public gallery would be filled, it would be hard to keep order, and not an awful lot would be
14 achieved on the day other than publicity for the right to water campaign. And that doesn't
15 answer any of the problems that we have in County Wicklow in relation to water.

16
17 So I do wish that we could meet in public, but I'm prepared to engage with them however we
18 need to engage to get what we need for the people of Wicklow. We were elected to engage with
19 the State bodies and whether we agree with them or not, that's what our job is, that's what we've
20 got to do.

21 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. I said at the municipal authority meeting in Bray last
22 week, when people were objecting to this, to I would be attending and the simple reason is that, I
23 see my job as a County Councillor as getting information for people and telling them what that
24 information is. My job is not to not engage with people, not know what's happening with
25 probably one of the major sources that we need to have to keep us all alive, water, and how
26 important that is to people, and more important it becomes very important when people haven't
27 got it.

28
29 So the attitude really of not engaging is a non-event as far as I'm concerned for the simple
30 reasons that I'm elect to provide the information for the people that we all represent. Now it may
31 not be the ideal forum, we all know that, but this was discussed in protocol and it was decided
32 that this may be the best forum that all the different authorities could get so that they could get
33 all the information that was relevant to the areas that they represent. There was nothing about
34 any question I believe that people put down can be answered. I know I have engaged with a

1 number of councillors throughout the country that have had, actually had a private meeting and I
2 was told by one of them that it turned out to be absolutely top class, because in every village in
3 that particular county they got information on water, the water infra structure and future needs as
4 well because there was an awful lot of work put into it. That's really what I want, at the end of
5 the day, getting into a row or publicity stunt that you are not going to engage with Irish Water,
6 that might get you a few lines in the paper but it doesn't help you represent the people we're all
7 here to represent and that's my attitude. My attitude would be to engage with these people, get
8 the information and try and, elicit when they are going to carry out the particular works, how
9 soon and what are the inherent dangers to water supply in the County Council area in the future.

10 Cllr O'BRIEN: I was just wondering as a new councillor was it 14 Councils that voted for the
11 abolishment of Irish Water and what happened as a result of that, was there any talking between
12 the 14 Councils to put forward something united that would influence national policy? It seems
13 if we are going ahead like this and sit down and talk willy nilly with Irish Water what we
14 decided means absolutely nothing and 13 or 14 other Councils. When you look at some of the
15 Council that is voted, Galway was another very similar one, a lot of the numbers of Councils that
16 voted when they voted against it were huge margins, we are living in a democracy, surely the
17 numbers can be added up to see what was the total in the whole country of Council that is volted
18 for the abolishment of Irish Water and surely that information should be fed back to the national
19 government and surely policy should be influenced as a result of that I'm wondering was that
20 done, which I very much doubt it was.

21 Cllr BLAKE: On two occasions at the Baltinglass meeting we actually passed a motion
22 requested Irish Water come and talk to us, the last meeting we actually put forward a number of
23 questions, I have already formulated our questions at the last meeting of the Baltinglass district
24 because we're conscious our meeting is not until the last Monday of January, we'll have a short
25 time in order to formulate that and send on the questions, so we did it at the last meeting and we
26 were to engage with Gail Walsh about any other questions we needed to add to the list that we
27 actually drew up on the December meeting. So we actually have already done it and like our
28 preference would be to come to the Blessington office, but that is not to be, if we have to come
29 here, certainly we'll come and engage with them and we have already, as I said done it at our
30 meeting above in Blessington in December, and formulated the questions as well.

31 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I would like to propose that the Greystones meet at 10 o'clock, Greystones
32 municipal district meet at 10 o'clock on the 2nd.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed?

34 Cllr CASEY: I propose the Wicklow municipal district meet at 1 to 1.45.

1 Cllr RYAN: I was one of those employees of Irish Water, I don't think I would really look
2 forward to coming to this Council meeting, if you had a full range of people in the gallery,
3 probably very vocal, and members here probably having a go at the Irish Water people.
4

5 At the end of the day, they are implementing government policy, I think they should be
6 respected in doing that. People have a problem with it, it's a problem with the government
7 policy they may have an issue with, that's where it should actually stay. And I think maybe one
8 of the things we could actually offer to Irish Water is to say you can trial it at one of the
9 municipal districts to have it at a normal municipal district, when the media is there, just to see
10 whether or not it can actually work, whether it can be an effective meeting. I wouldn't hold out
11 much hope, I think it would be hijacked by people who have actually no interest in getting the
12 information, but rather just want to make a political point and I think that's sad. For me, I
13 definitely will be going to the meetings, because I absolutely like you want to know what's
14 happening to get over the problems that people in Enniskerry and Kilmacanogue have had over
15 the recent years and to find out what capital plans Irish Water have in place for Wicklow,
16 particularly for the Roundwood reservoir.

17 Cllr DORAN: Chairman I think if we think we're going to solve the problem of Irish Water in
18 three quarters of an hour I honestly think we're wasting our time. I agree we should meet them,
19 but I tell you, I would want a week to sort out what, the problems that we have in our area. We
20 just don't know where we're going. I met a man outside there this morning, he came in to report
21 leaks somewhere in this area, I didn't go into anything, he was so upset, he came in to report
22 leaks and he was told in here to go and ring Irish Water and Irish Water would ring them back.
23 Now where in the name of God are we going? We are going to solve all this in three quarters of
24 an hour? As Cllr Blake said, I understood they were going to meet us in our different areas and
25 we were writing out a list, that doesn't seem to happen.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's not the correspondence we received, they have categorically stated
27 they are not attending municipal district meetings.

28 Cllr TIMMINS: I would just like to propose that the Baltinglass district meets sometime as late
29 as possible I know the slot from 1 to 1.45 is gone so 12.15 to 1 o'clock, in the west we have
30 slightly longer distances to travel than you guys in the east.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm proposing Bray from 11.30 to 12.15.

32 Cllr WINTERS: What's the one in between?

33 MS GALLAGHER: Arklow 10.45.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Before we move onto the suspension, there will be four people from Irish

1 Water present. Somebody from metring, somebody from assets, somebody from operations and
2 somebody from communications. So what we're proposing is from 10 to 10.45 Greystones.
3 10.45 to 11.30 Arklow. 11.30 to 12.15 Bray. 12.15 to 1 pm Baltinglass/Blessington. 1 to 1.45
4 Wicklow.

5
6 Okay we'll move on. Suspension.

7 Cllr WHITMORE: Sorry chair, I take it as read now that my motion won't, will be deferred for
8 another month is that correct? Or will we be getting to the motions?

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: We won't be getting to the motions.

10 Cllr WHITMORE: I suppose I'm quite frustrated by this. We had some really great
11 presentations earlier on I would have loved to have partaken in the discussion, I decided not to
12 because I understood we were time limited, so I haven't spoken yet today at all this is the second
13 time this motion has been deferred. So I think as a Council there is 32 of us, I think we need to
14 re look at how we, how the Council meetings operate. Whether we need to be stricter on times
15 per person or the times, the number of times each person talks, or perhaps if we have a
16 presentation like the think tank one, that was quite a meaty presentation we all wanted to partake
17 in the discussion, perhaps we have a special meeting to discuss it.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: If the members want me to vigorously apply the five minutes rule I'm
19 happy to apply that.

20 Cllr RUTTLE: No problem.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am allowing a bit of slack but I can apply it. I have a timer here on this
22 system. When your five minutes is up. I'll cut you off.

23 Cllr RYAN: You should be able to say what you want in five minutes.

24 Cllr VANCE: I think Cllr Whitmore is dead right, you go to the trouble of putting in a motion,
25 the least you can expect is that it should be handled the next month, now the problem is because
26 there is too much long-winded contributions from around the table and it's not strictly, to be fair
27 to you, that it is a new Council and you have given a bit of leeway to a lot of people. But really
28 and truly if we want to get down to this, or we look at in the protocol and say listen the meeting
29 stops at a certain time and then motions come in at that particular time so they're handled at that
30 particular meeting, because we have had the situation -- Cllr Whitmore wouldn't be aware of
31 this, where sometimes these motions, the last Council were going back for a year some of them,
32 it's ridiculous, if you go to the trouble of doing it, you should be able to discuss it in a reasonable
33 timeframe. So maybe the protocol should maybe discuss it to see what could be proposed to
34 help you out there. Because it's a difficult enough job controlling 32 people within a particular

1 timeframe, but it has to have the co-operation of all the counsellors to get through the business.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: No more Mr Nice guy.

3 Cllr WHITMORE: It's important because a lot of motions actually relate to action items, they
4 are things that we can achieve. It was mentioned earlier on that we have four meetings left and
5 we'll all be here a year, to be honest if someone asked me what we have achieved in that year I
6 would be -- I wouldn't be able to identify something.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: The problem is when someone speaks they all think it's the most
8 important contribution.

9 Cllr WHITMORE: Absolutely, but there are 32 of us and we are entitled to speak and today I
10 have not had a chance to speak.

11 Cllr TIMMINS: Just briefly I have my light on for a while now, briefly I agree 100% with Cllr
12 Whitmore and I ask you to really enforce the time limit, even reduce it strictly. People who go
13 on for a long time in this Council, they are showing lack of respect to all the other councillors
14 and in particular to the new councillors, so I'd urge you to enforce it.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, five minutes it is.

16 Cllr BEHAN: Can we not take it now. It's a very straightforward motion.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: With agreement we can take it.

18 Cllr BRADY: In fairness, no disrespect to the motion, there is a suspension of standing orders
19 there.

20 Cllr WINTERS: Can I just say...

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: In fairness you're bypassing the motion system. You are coming in with
22 suspensions all the time instead of Notice of Motions.

23 Cllr WINTERS: Chairman, can I just say, the suspension of standing orders, although it's a vital
24 topic, it's a topic we have very little chance of having a real input into, at least on some of the
25 motions it's something we can actually do something about. It's not just a talking shop.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: There is no doubt, suspension of standing orders are getting abused. Now
27 it's up to the members to say no. I put it out to the members do you want to suspend standing
28 orders and members have agreed, Cllr Brady made the request and to be fair the members
29 agreed. So if you want to disagree, disagree. We'll take Cllr Whitmore's and then the
30 suspension.

31 Cllr WHITMORE: Thank you very much chair, it's a simple thing. I think as a Council we need
32 to start communicating more effectively with our commercial and residential constituents, there
33 has been a couple of incidents over the past year where I've seen commercial residents were not
34 kept up-to-date with the situation that was happening in their areas that had a direct impact on

1 their business, the main is when water was cut off in Greystones, there was a press release put
2 out and it was on the radio at 4 o'clock saying water would be cut off at 7 that evening, the
3 businesses went home, were not aware, came in the next morning, they were not aware that they
4 weren't going to have water. If we had a text messaging service in place, we could have texted
5 each of those commercial properties and informed them that it was going to be an issue. This is
6 also something that we can translate into residential property using a system similar to that, that
7 the Garda text alert system uses, whereby you contact the head of the residents association and
8 it's their responsibility then to transmit that message to the rest of the residents, it's relatively
9 cheap to put in place, easy to put in place, schools do it, the guards do it. We have all the contact
10 details for commercial premises, so it wouldn't be a huge overhead in gathering all that data. But
11 I think it's something we can easily do that will recognise the importance of communication and
12 it was highlighted during the think tank presentation this morning, we need to build relationships
13 with our commercial premises, to open dialogue with them and we need to recognise that they
14 actually, it's nearly a third of the income of the Council is from commercial rates and we need to
15 actually respect that, communicate with them and enable them to do their business, to run their
16 business and give them that information when they need it.

17 Cllr SNELL: I'll second that Cathaoirleach.

18 Cllr WHITMORE: That's the proposal to set up the text message system.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: We can't have a discussion.

20 Cllr RYAN: I was going to say I put that and it was passed two years ago by this Council.

21 MS GALLAGHER: The Council is favourably disposed to extending its communication
22 mechanisms. We currently use a number of forms of communication channels, including social
23 media such as Facebook, the website, we have a large Twitter following, some 1,200 followers
24 and there is a substantial re tweeting of our important notices, local radio is used as a vehicle of
25 communication, as well as newspaper notices. So we take on board the request and will report
26 back to the Council within a period of two months.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

28 Cllr RYAN: All I will say is Bray Town Council have it and it works really well.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr Brady?

30 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Thanks for eventually getting to this. But it's a very
31 important issue, unfortunately we're dealing with another crisis, we're limping from one crisis to
32 another from a housing crisis and now we have a crisis within our health service. I suppose
33 that's borne out last week when we had 601 patients lying on hospital trolleys throughout the
34 entire State and some of those are from our own county here, I've listened to some of the horror

1 stories where elderly people are left lying on trolleys in St. Vincent's and other medical facilities,
2 unfortunately this is as a direct result of a combination of, culmination of cuts over many, many
3 years, when you have a look at not just the closure of the A and E but in Loughlinstown, a
4 couple of years prior to that we had an entire ward close down in Loughlinstown, St. Brigid's
5 ward closing down with 23 beds closing down. We had the orchard welfare home in Bray
6 closing down, here in Wicklow Town we had the Wicklow district hospital close down as well.
7 Then we have other threats over facilities such as hooks lane over in Saggart in west Dublin
8 which serves west Wicklow. So when it comes to provision of health services, unfortunately this
9 county has been forgotten over many, many years, I think that is why we have this serious crisis
10 now within the health service.

11
12 I think a couple of things need to happen Cathaoirleach. Firstly, going back to 2011 just after
13 Wicklow district hospital closed down, we had a lot of play by ex Labour and some Labour
14 people, particularly candidates saying a new site had been identified for Wicklow district
15 hospital and it was progressing. I think we need to get a full report on that to see where exactly
16 that is. Unfortunately it's allowed completely fall off the agenda, we should ask a question of the
17 HSE what is the situation with regard to Wicklow district hospital.

18
19 We should be also, and I'm proposing we write to the HSE with regard to Wicklow district
20 hospital. But also asking for the re-opening of St. Brigid's ward in Loughlinstown hospital
21 which would supply immediately 23 beds in that ward to alleviate some of the chronic shortages
22 in the system which resulted in 601 people lying on hospital trolleys. Other issues, other things
23 that I think need to happen, I think we should have a senior representative from HSE asked to
24 attend this Council Chamber here, there is other issues that I don't intend to get into now, but I
25 think I can't remember the last time we had someone here from HSE, so someone like a
26 manager, like Martina Creedy or someone more senior than that should be asked to attend a
27 Council meeting here, just to outline exactly where does Wicklow fit into the overall provision
28 of health services?

29
30 Because unlike other counties we don't have our own county hospital. We have been
31 unfortunately at the remit of other hospitals such as Loughlinstown, we've seen what successive
32 cuts have been put in place there. Can I ask those couple of things happen. We write to the
33 HSE, also write to the Minister for Health and to the five TDs asking for an immediate
34 re-opening of St. Brigid's ward in Loughlinstown hospital, we get a full report on the status of

1 Wicklow district hospital and the plans that Labour candidates had promised us that were going
2 to materialise with regard to identifying alternative sites that some, particularly one site had been
3 identified and plans under Labour were progressing well and that I also ask that we invite a
4 senior representative from HSE to a Council meeting in the near future to get a view of overall --
5 I suppose health service strategy for the county, because unfortunately 601 people lying on
6 hospital trolleys you know it, I won't get into it, it's totally disgusting, disgraceful, many of those
7 people come from within this county here, and when you see step down services such as the
8 Orchard welfare home in Bray closing down, Wicklow district hospital, Brooks Lane constantly
9 under threat or having closed under successive governments; we need to get serious answers
10 Cathaoirleach, so can I ask, it's a proposal that we do those items.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed?

12 Cllr BEHAN: I was going say I'll leave it, I think we all agree Chairman. It needs to be
13 addressed.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay just some correspondence and...

15 MS GALLAGHER: A question as well. Just elected members would note the circulation of the
16 information regarding donations at local elections to be submitted to the ethics officer by the
17 31st of January deadline. You have also been circulated with public liability insurance there is a
18 copy of insurance being offered at a cost of 63 euro if you want to partake contact Susan. If I
19 have a proposer and seconder for protocol meeting on the 8th of the 12th? Thank you. We have
20 an urgent question from Cllr Fitzgerald.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay last item of the day.

22 MS GALLAGHER: I'd like to put down the following question. "Arklow Town Council and
23 Wicklow County Council have spent considerable funds in advancing a proposed waste water
24 treatment plant for the four. Currently there are four cases in the High and Supreme Courts,
25 given that Irish Water is not proceeding the Seabank site following a consultation process, I'm
26 requested information on what plans are being prepared to fund costs associated with these
27 cases? Will Irish Water be requested to fund the costs and is there any statutory obligation on
28 them to do so? Will the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
29 provide financial assistance and lastly and importantly will Wicklow County Council have to
30 fund the costs which will be substantial?"

31
32 The response is, "Irish Water commenced a process of review and consultation with regard to
33 provision of a new waste water treatment plant in Arklow, preliminary work identified a number
34 of sites being considered for the process, the work is ongoing. Arklow waste water treatment

1 plant is included in the Department of Water Services investment plan. Financial assistance has
2 been forthcoming from the Department. The court cases are an integral part of the planning
3 process scheme, the Council expect Irish Water will be responsible for any costs arising from
4 same. The Council has not received any response from Irish Water as regards the court cases."

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

6 Cllr FITZGERALD: Sorry just one point. It's missing a point, a lot of money has been paid in
7 by the objectors, who will repay that money? The people, the objectors, the people have paid in
8 a lot of money.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: You mean to?

10 Cllr FITZGERALD: You have to pay your costs if you lose cases. The money has been paid in,
11 will Irish Water repay that money?

12 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No, that goes towards the cost of the case, we expect any difference
13 between the costs that are borne and what is paid by the objector we would expect Irish Water or
14 the Department to take up the balance. The same way as the assets are going to Irish Water, we
15 would expect any outstanding liabilities would go to them as well. We don't expect there to be a
16 net cost, but obviously we are at a very early stage.

17 Cllr FITZGERALD: I'd like to see the answer to that this time next year. I'm taking you at your
18 word.

19 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: My position with the Department and Irish Water is this should not be a
20 cost to Wicklow County Council that any cases that have been lost, costs have been awarded
21 against the objector and it should, we've collected a considerable amount of money already, we
22 should collect any outstanding amounts and if there is still a deficit then it should be made up by
23 Irish Water or the Department. That's our position on it. It may well be that the Department and
24 Irish Water have a different view, but we'll be fighting for that.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

26 Cllr LAWLESS: Very quickly under correspondence, back in November when we passed a
27 motion for the abolishment of the water charges and stoppage of the installation of water meters,
28 we asked that this was communicated to the Minister, I'm just wondering have we got a response
29 in, because people of Wicklow are actually wondering, we did vote unanimously for the
30 stoppage of the meters but they are still going ahead. I'm wondering has there been a response
31 back from the Minister in regards to that and what is our situation on it? Thank you.

32 CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Chairman, I don't recall a response, but as you know this is really a
33 matter for government, and government has decided that the metering programme will continue.
34 It is continuing and whilst we have conveyed any motions that were passed in relation to Irish

- 1 Water, we conveyed any such motions to the Department, but at the end of the day it's a
2 government decision.
- 3 Cllr LAWLESS: I do understand it is a government decision, but as councillors here if we're
4 passing motions and not being taken...
- 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's...
- 6 Cllr RYAN: Exactly. There's no point.
- 7 Cllr LAWLESS: I have been asked to ask by the people of Wicklow and I've asked the question.
- 8 Cllr BRADY: On a point of information, it was also asked to correspond that motion to the five
9 TDs.
- 10 MS GALLAGHER: Anything that's requested at Council level is...
- 11 Cllr BRADY: Have we got any acknowledgement of this Council which represents the people
12 of Wicklow, not one of the five TDs...
- 13 MS GALLAGHER: You can rest assured any request made is forwarded.
- 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Everything is sent on.
- 15 Cllr BRADY: That's disappointing.
- 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you members.
- 17
- 18 Meeting adjourned at 5.30pm
- 19

57:5,6 62:28 63:33
64:2,3
governmental 20:26
governments 24:6,13,21
32:8,21 62:9
grab 19:27 35:26,28
36:22
gradually 24:29
graduated 48:25
graduates 49:19,20
great 8:9 13:22 18:26
23:16 26:15 31:8,15
37:15 38:24,33 39:1
58:10
greater 8:24,31 9:1,4
13:17 14:32 18:12
19:17
greatest 35:31
green 5:12 11:15 18:22
19:2,3,5,16,26 24:7
28:30 31:17,24 33:13
51:6
greeted 38:10
grocers 19:26
grounds 50:4
group 3:9 5:1 6:6,26
7:25,27 17:2
19:5,10,14,21,33
20:2,3,4,21
21:12,18,22,30
22:7,19,28 23:6,14,17
24:8 25:6,14,24,29,34
26:7,12,27,34 29:17
36:3,29 39:29 40:34
41:22,24 42:18,22
43:14 46:9 48:3,16
52:5 53:3,31 54:7
groupings 43:9
groups 3:10
6:7,8,10,27,28,32
7:9,17,21,24 15:3
22:11 25:22 28:25
32:2 37:4,5,6 48:29
52:8,9 53:23
grow 18:13 22:26 23:16
51:27
growing 50:15,16
51:30,32
grows 55:1
growth 8:21,34 22:4,19
41:33 51:8
guaranteed 14:14
guards 1:24 60:9
guidelines 49:29
guy 38:32 59:2
guys 57:30
Gail 56:26
Galway 52:14 56:15
Garda 60:7
GAA 2:5
GALLAGHER 1:11
3:18 46:22 52:14
57:33 60:21 62:15,22
64:10,13
Gerry 1:16
Glendalough 9:32 17:17
36:8
Glenroe 34:18
Glenview 4:2
God 37:1 52:17 57:23
Google 11:29
Gorey 14:19,20
Grangecon 27:33
Grant 5:7
Greystones 1:26 22:33
30:5,8,12 33:34
40:22,28 54:22 56:31
58:2 60:1
H
habit 33:23
had 1:9 2:4 3:11 6:6,7,23
7:6 8:8 9:28 12:33
14:19,21 16:6,7 17:3
18:16 21:16,18,20,24
23:7 24:12,31 26:26
29:7 30:24,26 31:1,13
32:5,12,13 33:23
34:13,14 40:2,10
44:13,16,17 45:15
47:4 48:22 50:6,13,27
51:19 52:24 54:18
56:1 57:2,14 58:10,30
59:10,34 60:6
hadn't 26:14
half 2:28 20:8 41:10
hand 25:15
handle 25:15 30:32
handled 58:25,29
handover 9:10 12:19
21:11 26:30
happen 8:26 19:14
24:15,21 25:31
29:16,19 32:23
36:21,26 37:2 44:20
45:19 54:33,34 57:25
61:12,23,32
happened 25:28 30:26
51:3 54:23 56:11
happening 23:20 24:16
25:10,28 31:24
50:2,6,8,30 53:24
55:24 57:14 59:34
happens 15:6
happy 2:2 16:32 29:13
46:21 51:31 58:19
harbour 33:34 34:1
hard 5:32 12:7 55:13
harmonising 27:18
harness 34:16
harnessing 8:25
has 2:7 3:4,5 8:23 9:14
10:6,8,19,27,32
11:7,26 12:10
17:4,5,15 19:6,23,29
22:32,33 23:34 24:24
26:8,12 27:1 29:33
31:10 32:11,34 33:1
34:8,24,33 35:23
36:24,32
41:2,16,32,34
42:1,11,15 43:25
44:27 47:15
48:20,26,28
49:4,10,14,17
51:3,9,15 54:31 58:13
59:
hasn't 30:2 33:26
haven't 20:11 34:6,7
40:28 55:26 58:12
having 2:19 8:20 9:7
12:7 16:33 19:11,12
21:23 28:24 37:12
43:5 57:3 59:24 62:9
he's 5:11
head 28:19 39:2 60:7
headed 30:24
heading 21:14 40:27
health 2:17 12:11 47:31
60:32 61:8,10,28,33
62:5
healthier 12:13
healthy 43:11
hear 1:29 7:5 18:12
50:26
heard 30:26 38:11,31
53:30
heart 36:34 41:2 50:4
heartened 41:5
hearts 36:26
heat 48:2
heavily 3:5
hectares 47:10 51:8
hedgerow 16:10
held 48:31
hell 55:10
help 9:15 11:33 15:33
16:12 18:8,22,32
22:17,26,29 23:28,31
27:24 31:21 39:15
51:4 56:6 58:34
helpful 22:5
helping 28:7
her 2:9
here 1:29 2:19,20 3:9,10
4:2,7,28 9:8
10:4,12,13,15,16,20,2

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| I'll 2:28,33 3:5 5:29 6:11 7:5,30 9:10 10:4 12:21,22 18:24,31 19:23 21:11 34:13 36:17 42:15,23 44:12,27 45:28 46:9 49:27 58:22 60:17 62:12 | 13:6 14:12 15:14,17 16:12,20 18:27 19:26 21:6 23:4,9,33 26:11,20,24,31 27:5,11,14,31 28:15,17,33 29:34 30:12,14,16 31:20 32:17,23,30 33:29 34:31 35:11,30 36:15,19 39:13,15,19,31 40:23,30,34 41:20,24,31 42:10,15,17, justified 41:2 January 1:7 24:4 48:8 56:24 62:17 Jenny 1:12 Jim 30:24,26 31:20 Jimmy 3:14 29:7 Joe 19:34 20:7 John 5:2,6,29 6:7 9:12,13 21:12 25:19 26:30,32 27:1 29:3,8 35:26 36:8 43:21 45:13,15 46:1 52:22 JPC 52:12,13 | lacking 32:11 lady 2:5 lake 41:6 lakes 19:12 41:18,21 lamb 31:9 land 2:31 15:22 33:24,27 37:32 landed 5:23 landlords 16:30 19:26 lands 21:15 46:33 47:10 48:21 large 13:6 23:12,13 30:4 37:4 40:21 41:6 47:11 60:23 largely 26:2 larger 23:5 30:9 last 1:17,21 2:17 7:34 16:16 19:28 21:18 23:10 26:11 28:16 34:31 36:30 41:10 43:14 44:20,21,23,24 46:15 48:25 49:9,19 52:4 54:4,12 55:21 56:22,23,24,25 58:31 60:33 61:25 62:21 lastly 62:29 late 1:23 6:24 30:24 31:20 47:8 57:28 later 10:3,4 35:19 39:6 46:6 latter 5:23 launch 11:6,22 17:28 49:20 launched 7:3 19:29 lead 14:3 29:34 33:17 44:14 leader 29:10,12,13 leading 48:12 leaks 57:21,22 learn 1:28 21:32 39:2 learning 47:26,28 51:24,25,29 leasing 2:31 least 38:29 39:28 44:26 58:25 59:24 leave 10:14 16:31 46:3 51:33 52:8 62:12 lecture 48:23 leeway 58:27 left 44:55 54:10 59:4 61:1 legal 47:30 leisure 9:27 10:33 11:9 12:11 29:24 length 43:15 lengthy 52:25 less 28:6 30:9 let's 23:1,28 24:33 25:6 26:7 let 3:5 16:30 41:23 44:3,12 46:9 51:13 54:6 letter 1:20 letting 36:31 level 2:18 6:25 13:8 20:4 22:18 23:16 32:23 33:9 37:18,22 38:3 40:13 47:4,6,12,24,25 50:12,28,29 51:15 64:10 leverage 10:27 levies 16:27 20:30 27:28 40:2 liabilities 63:15 liability 62:17 liaising 49:7 liaison 13:29 14:2 30:18,26 lies 18:32 life 2:8 12:23 13:18 lifelong 47:26,28 51:24,25,29 lifestyle 12:13 lifetime 37:16 light 59:11 lights 12:8 like 1:33 3:3,18 4:19 9:30,32 10:26 12:5,11 | 13:12,21,28 14:9 16:23 17:31 20:26,30 21:8 23:21,28 25:10,28 26:34 27:5 28:2,15,25,26,28 29:3,18,28 30:30 31:17,24,27,33 32:5,12 34:9 37:11,15 39:4,10 40:34 43:2 44:5,11 50:29 56:13,27,31 57:13,28 58:16 61:25,26 likelihood 20:5 likely 6:21 25:9 likes 37:5 limit 59:12 limited 2:31 8:15 58:12 limping 60:31 line 7:34 14:16 31:20 44:3 46:34 49:17 lines 56:6 link 17:14,34 19:11 36:20,33 linked 19:27 linking 17:9 list 56:26 57:25 listen 58:28 listed 60:34 listening 19:28 31:34 45:21 little 10:3 12:19,21 15:21 16:31 18:14 26:6,7 42:8 44:17 47:34 53:13 59:24 live 8:11 9:22 10:2,12,15,16 11:1,11,17 13:12,22 15:19 27:32 51:11 lived 14:19 living 13:15,16 27:28 43:11 56:16 loads 28:29 lobby 3:25 37:22 lobbying 20:2 locally 2:7 48:3 51:11 locate 27:25,26 43:2 located 19:31 20:11 47:15,16 48:28 50:29 location 8:10 13:6 16:11 24:34 40:26,30,32 locations 13:3,5,10,21 22:2 25:1 43:1 lock 30:21 loin 30:21 long 1:24,34 2:26 17:20 30:4 37:15 40:8,10,33 41:7 46:5 52:29 58:26 59:13 longer 18:3 20:27 57:30 look 4:19 5:28,32 9:23,32 11:9,10,25 13:4,30 15:20 17:22,31 18:11 19:21 20:16 21:13 24:33 25:24 27:17,18,22 29:7,8,19 31:8,18 32:25 33:2,31 35:32 36:34 39:12 40:25 41:21 43:18 53:12 56:14 57:1 58:14,28 61:3 looked 6:8,20 8:21 10:23 17:11 19:21 24:18,26 25:28 26:9 32:10,33 33:7 44:23 50:2 looking 2:16 7:1,11 10:1,18 12:8,25,27 13:7,13 14:13,28 16:20 17:28 18:33,34 20:1 21:12 25:20 28:14 29:13,17,18 32:3,10,14,18 33:34 46:18 50:2 52:29 looks 50:25 loop 38:26 lose 11:19 12:10 16:21 19:27,28 21:3 35:27,28 50:24 63:10 loss 44:33 50:22,23 | lost 11:34 12:10 19:8 50:31 63:20 lot 3:5,24 4:25 6:4 10:3 11:7,8,14 13:15,25 16:33 17:3 21:2 22:10 23:1,17,18,22,28 24:5 25:11,19 26:26 27:1,3,33 28:5,8,29 29:12 30:23,24 36:15,16 37:15 41:20,33 42:2,4,14 43:3,17 46:15 50:10 51:3 55:13 56:4,15 58:27 59:3 61:13 63:6,8 lots 6:10 7:11,15 19:16 26:28 43:8 love 3:8 10:13,15 33:7,8 52:17 loved 58:11 lovely 18:22 low's 27:15 low 32:4 38:9 48:13 lucky 29:28 lunch 38:28 lying 2:18 60:33 61:1,22 62:5 Labour 61:13 62:1,3 Lambe 1:23 Lane 61:7 62:8 LAWLESS 63:25,26 64:3,7 LCDC 4:23 13:18 LCDCs 29:9 Lenihan 5:15 21:12 43:21 Leo 8:12 35:8 49:20,29 50:26 51:9 Lewis 49:3 LEP 4:23 43:24 Liam 35:17 Lillian 1:14 Links 8:14 17:32 Local 4:1,23,24 6:4,6 9:4,14,21 10:12 13:24 15:34 16:24 19:6 20:3,12 22:32 26:27 32:23,26,27 36:12 37:18 42:1 43:2,32,33 47:20 48:1,2,28,32 60:24 62:16,28 Lord 18:28 Lorraine 3:18 26:34 Loughinstown 61:3,4,20,31,34 Luas 37:26 | managed 5:20 45:3 47:31 manager 5:20 39:22 40:5 41:28 43:24 45:5,14 46:1 61:26 managers 6:20 managing 5:3 9:12 manner 50:13 manufacturers 22:10 manufacturing 21:19 22:8,9 many 12:2 15:5 17:4 18:34 19:21 28:31 30:13,31 32:5 33:1 34:1 39:23 42:16 47:22,30 48:3 61:2,9 62:6 map 12:34 43:3,4 margins 56:16 marina 29:23 33:34 marine 29:23 maritime 18:18 21:13,20 22:31 23:12 15:24 29:9 26:6,7 30:10 37:8 38:34 market 8:15 13:10,22 15:2 21:4 34:32,33 35:3 42:24 46:2 47:8 marketed 18:15 marketing 11:33 12:5 15:1,6,11,21,25,26 17:4,14,23 18:7,9 31:12 35:22 47:31 49:9 markets 18:32 35:32 massive 13:27 15:18 16:17 18:29 34:12 44:21 47:12 materialise 62:2 matter 40:4 54:31 63:33 matting 54:7 maximised 24:1 maximum 15:8 may 1:5 14:20 18:3 19:27 41:6 54:24 55:30,32 57:7 63:23 maybe 2:5,26 22:3,24 25:25 28:31,32 29:18 31:21 38:28 41:2 45:23,24 52:11 57:7 58:33 mean 10:25 21:6 36:8 63:9 meaningful 33:30 means 12:27 14:9 39:32 56:14 meantime 44:17 54:23 measure 11:3 16:13 measures 4:20 11:1 15:25 28:31,32 29:18 measuring 12:33 meaty 58:16 mechanisms 54:17 60:22 media 7:4 31:19 44:16 57:9 60:23 medical 61:1 meet 7:17 52:4,5 53:23,31 54:5,12,26 55:17 56:31,32,34 57:18,24 meeting's 2:12 meetings 1:3,4 3:13 9:20 21:17 49:4 52:31 54:5,11 57:13,27 58:14 59:4 meets 57:28 member 5:12,20 14:19 16:5 28:33 46:8,14 members 2:13,22 3:3,18,27 4:1,8 7:9,25,27,28 9:20 14:11 17:3 18:16 26:28 36:20,29 38:12,21 40:6,23,31 43:22,23,33 44:8,11 45:6,8 46:20,25 47:2 52:4,5,34 53:6,11,14 |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| wind 8:19 23:9 24:10,19 25:34 30:1 38:11 | 27:10 28:22 29:3,12 31:7,23 36:10 41:25 42:12 44:14,25,31 49:16,17 50:16,34 56:4 57:10 62:33,34 | writing 2:6 57:25 written 37:12 wrong 14:21 19:11 34:25 35:20 50:9 Wales 25:21 Walsh 1:26 56:26 Water 12:27 13:9 15:17 18:18 27:21 32:27 33:15,17,19,25,29 38:1,2 41:10 52:34,24,27,30 53:6 54:15,16,18,21,28,31 55:4,12,14,15,25 56:3,5,9,11,13,18,22 57:1,3,8,15,17,22 58:1 60:1,2,4 62:23,25,27,32,33,34 63:1,3,4,11,13,14,19, 23,24,27 64:1 Waterford 50:22,31 51:19 Wexford 27:17 40:19 What's 4:6 7:3 8:34 10:26 11:28 13:29 19:11 23:22 26:20 27:7,15 28:11 31:24 32:33 37:29 38:4 42:18 50:30 51:9,11 53:24 54:23 55:1,24 57:13,32 Whether 4:20 11:3 12:5,27 15:32 16:18,19 35:22 37:29,33 39:5 40:27 45:23 55:19 57:10 58:14 Whitmore's 59:29 WHITMORE 58:7,10,24,30 59:3,9,12,31 60:18 Wicklow 1:3,7,12,13 2:19,31 3:2,8,22,29 5:4 6:2 8:14,22 9:5,7,22,23,25,29,31 | 10:1,4,6,8,14,15,19,2 9,32 11:6,7,8,12,13,22 12:1,10,19,22,25 13:3,6,16 14:20,22,32 15:1,2,3,12,19,20 16:6,7,8 17:13,15,26,27,33,34 18:4,14 19:12,25,31 22:9,15,16,32,33 23:19,31,3 Wikipedia 9:30 William 14:11,14 WINTERS 52:12 55:11 57:32 59:20,23 Woodfab 30:31 Www 11:6 X Y yardsticks 27:15 year's 49:19 year 1:10 11:27 17:17 22:27 25:31 35:17 36:3,12,13,14 37:1,24 38:10 39:19 44:21,24,31,33 47:22 48:25 54:24 55:4 58:31 59:5,33 63:17 years 1:17,25 4:31 5:16,24 6:18 10:15 16:17 17:4 19:8,24 25:31 29:14,19,29,31 30:2,29 32:6 33:1 34:1 36:30 38:32 40:2 41:10 42:26 46:15 47:4,34 48:8,16 49:9,28 50:5,13 51:3 53:30 57:15 60:20 61:3,4,9 yes 43:16 53:7 yet 12:10 25:6 30:3 58:12 you'd 9:33 | you'll 2:24 3:6 10:3 16:32 50:23 you're 2:9 10:9 12:27 17:23 20:4,33 21:14 28:27 38:7 46:21,22 59:21 you 1:9 2:2,4,6,8,9,11,12,16,2 4 3:3,4 4:3 5:25,29,30,31,32 7:5,26,30 9:10,11,25,26,27,28,2 9,30,31,32 10:2,18,19,20,27,28,2 9,30 11:1,2,3,9,10,11,12,2 9,32,33,34 12:13,21,30 13:30 14:14,23,26,27 15:8,13,17,29,32 16:5,9,32 17:22,25,26,27,31,32, 33 18:1,6,8 19: younger 11:25 12:4,6,17 your 2:2 4:4 9:15,16,25 15:14 18:21 19:4,5 20:26 26:31 43:15,17 45:4,6 50:5 53:12,19,28 58:22 63:10,17 yourself 39:22 yourselves 31:21 43:14,19 53:13 youth 36:32,33,34 Yeah 2:30 13:7 46:11 York 5:18 You've 11:34 15:13 23:28 Young 5:7 36:33,34 48:30 49:21 Z zoned 37:32 zoning 47:19 Zealand 18:28 21:9 | ... 41:28 52:11 53:17 59:20 62:14 64:4,5,10,12 000 4:12,13,14 19:26 20:33 34:24,28,31 35:5 100 4:12,13 59:11 111 49:19 120 27:10 12th 1:7 62:19 145 2:6 154 8:3 156 26:28 32:2,4 1985 53:30 200 4:14 26:28 34:31 60:23 2005 47:8 2009 47:22 51:7 2010 5:3 2011 48:8 50:19 61:12 2012 3:13 4:25 29:8 2013 6:9,24 32:12 2014 7:3,6,17 32:13 49:20,22 2015 1:7 29:8 39:19 44:31 2016 55:5 220 22:24 270 44:30 2nd 52:8,31 53:3 56:32 300 48:25 51:4,5 30pm 64:18 31st 62:17 350 48:24 51:4,5,27 55:7 400 5:4 450 5:4 481 20:27 500 26:2 601 2:18 60:33 61:22 62:5 700 30:31 8th 62:19 |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|