

# WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Wicklow County Council  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

## **Transcript of the County Council Budget Meeting Held on 28 November 2016 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow**



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7 Wicklow County Council Budget Meeting, Monday 28th November 2016

8  
9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, we will go ahead with the meeting please. Hello? Hello  
10 members? We need to get going. Just have we a vote of sympathy to start with?

11 MS GALLAGHER: Okay, members, votes of sympathy for John Doyle, brother of Hilda Doyle  
12 and Sinead. Brother-in-law of Pearse O'Doherty and Rickey Scales. Any other votes of  
13 sympathy?

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kennedy, you had a vote of sympathy.

15 Cllr KENNEDY: Cathaoirleach, I would like to send our sympathies to Catherine Lambert on  
16 the death of her husband Mick Lambert, from Knockananna and a good friend of mine, but he  
17 also reason the very successful Lambert hardware store in Hacketstown and I was very saddened  
18 when I got a phone call last Saturday week to say he had died tragically. I would like to extend  
19 our sympathies to his wife Catherine.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

21 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I would like to be associated with Cllr Kennedy's remarks for Mr  
22 Lambert. I worked with him for years, he is a big loss to the area and a very tragic accident and I  
23 would like to second that proposal. And also for the late David Halloran there, Principal of the  
24 school in Baltinglass, his tragic passing as well Chairman.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Vincent Blake.

26 Cllr BLAKE: Just to add to what Cllr Kennedy was saying with regards Mr Lambert. Most of  
27 the members would be aware the fact that when we went to the St Patrick's Day parade in New  
28 York, Pat Lambert was the main organiser of that on behalf of Wicklow County Council, it was  
29 actually a brother of Michael Lambert. So in that connection we have a serious involvement  
30 with the Lambert family in that regard.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, maybe we will have a minute's silence please.

32  
33 (A minute's silence was held)

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, just before the meeting I was presented with a document by  
2 Cllr Behan. And Cllr Behan, we will read it out first?

3 Cllr BEHAN: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Members, I am sure may be aware of the fact that we  
4 operate under Standing Orders here, and standing order number 16, motion for a purpose of  
5 dealing with urgent business states as follows: "Notwithstanding any other provisions of these  
6 standing orders, a motion may be proposed without notice for the purpose of dealing with urgent  
7 business related to a function of the Local Authority subject to the requirement that not less than  
8 a majority of members present vote in favour."

9  
10 So as per standing order number 16, I propose that this Council withholds its consent to the  
11 alteration of planning conditions at Ballynagran landfill as proposed by the Chief Executive.  
12 Calls on the EPA to rescind its amendments to the waste licence for the Ballynagran landfill;  
13 requests an immediate explanation from the Chief Executive for his refusal to consult with the  
14 democratically elected members of this Council or local residents on this matter; and condemns  
15 the incompetence of the system of monitoring of landfill capacity in this country, which allowed  
16 this emergency to develop so suddenly.

17  
18 Cathaoirleach, I am sure many members have opinions on this arched I know you are anxious to  
19 deal with the business of the budget and I am sure everybody else agrees with you on this, but  
20 this as far as I am concerned is an extremely urgent matter. A decision was made, a unilateral  
21 decision was made by the Chief Executive who is responsible and answerable to this body to  
22 alter the conditions of a planning permission for a highly controversial landfill at Ballynagran.  
23 He chose not to inform members or consult with members, although we had a meeting four days  
24 prior to him writing a letter. He chose not to consult with you, as I understand it, as  
25 Cathaoirleach, a representative of all of us. We get the letter at five minutes to five when the  
26 office is about to close, when there is no possibility of getting further information. We then find  
27 that the EPA who is supposed to be the body responsible nationally for monitoring the  
28 environment, has also unilaterally changed the terms of its waste licence, again without any  
29 consultation with local people or public representatives. And we find that in the small print,  
30 what has happened is loopholes have been used in the planning and environmental legislation of  
31 this country to allow this dump to accept an extra 40,000 tonnes of refuse before the end of the  
32 year.

33  
34 Now there are many questions arising from this decision, and I am sure members would like

1 answers to many of the questions, but one that I particularly want to get an answer to is how this  
2 system has arisen, that a body, there are three bodies tasked with managing the waste disposal of  
3 this country and the capacity of landfills and how it arrived to a situation that four days before  
4 we got a letter, the County Manager, the Chief Executive suddenly discovered that there was  
5 going to be a national crisis that bins were not going to be collected up and down the length and  
6 breath of this country, and how this system could have been prevailed over by the Minister for  
7 the Environment, or whoever is supposed to be responsible in Government for this department.  
8

9 I would also ask members to note the role of the City and County Managers Association in this  
10 decision. Because the City and County Managers Association is a select body obviously of the  
11 chief executives of this country and it would appear to me that they're the ones who effectively  
12 made the decision that we, in Wicklow, are going to have to accept this refuse. They're a body  
13 which are unaccountable to us or as far as I can see to anybody else. Mr Doyle is the only  
14 member of the body from Wicklow. We never get a report back from him as to what discussions  
15 are held at these meetings. But effectively, the county managers in this country have imposed  
16 this decision on us. Now as far as I am concerned, this is an urgent matter. Officials have said  
17 to me before the meeting, well you couldn't really say it can't wait. I firmly believe this can't  
18 wait. I would have looked for a Special Meeting at the end of last week, but I felt well logic  
19 would dictate we are having a meeting today, people would have it in their diaries, but I am  
20 certainly determined we discuss it here fully and get answers to the questions I have raised and  
21 questions other members might want to raise.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor I did say to you when you rang me last Friday evening that we  
23 would discuss it today. Whether we discuss it at 11 o'clock or 5 o'clock, we will discuss it. I am  
24 proposing we discuss it after we have dealt with - after the budget is dealt with. And that's what  
25 I am proposing to the members. And I think that's a reasonable - I mean there is not much going  
26 to happen between 11 o'clock and 5 or 6 o'clock this evening. I don't want it, we need a  
27 proposer -- a seconder.

28 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I'll second it there. Can I just say...

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just a minute, Cllr McLoughlin was in first there and I don't want this to  
30 become a full debate either because we have to put it to the members whether we take it or not.

31 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I just want to say I have no issues at all with the proposal, I just have an  
32 issue with the whole discussion taking place before we go ahead with this. We are wasting time  
33 at these meetings where people having full discussions, so please I would ask you as  
34 Cathaoirleach to please intervene to stop people talking on and on.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: I have already said that we will discuss it after the budget and I think  
2 that's a reasonable proposal.

3 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I do think so.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think we should agree to it, we are going to be in here until 6 or 7  
5 o'clock. We are not going to sort it out between now...

6 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Hang on Chairman. Don't be rushing us...

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not rushing anybody.

8 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman you should be as concerned here today as Cllr Behan is.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't need a lecture on it.

10 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: It's a very serious...

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's why I agreed we would discuss it.

12 Cllr RYAN: Have a vote on it Cathaoirleach.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are proposing...

14 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, this matter was dealt with under emergency legislation.

15 Now if it was dealt by -- under emergency legislation, why wasn't the emergency county plan  
16 enacted? Also Chairman therefore if it was dealt with under emergency legislation, Cllr Behan  
17 is quite right, it is an urgent matter and it is covered under Standing Orders because it's deemed  
18 to be an emergency and therefore should take priority at this meeting.

19

20 Now saying they're going to put it back to 6 or 7 or 8 o'clock this evening and I understand Cllr  
21 McLoughlin's problem with this because her party has obviously sanctioned this dump.

22 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Absolute rubbish.

23 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I have seconded Cllr Behan's proposal. If they can get away with using  
24 emergency legislation in this case, they can do it in any Councillor's electoral area. If it's dealt  
25 with as an emergency, then it's deemed to be urgent at the first opportunity. You didn't call a  
26 Special Meeting Chairman when I think you should have called one. But I think you should not  
27 be trying to deter an urgent discussion on this this morning before we get into the business of the  
28 budget.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Cllr Lawless.

30 Cllr LAWLESS: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I agree strongly with Cllr Behan. I think this is  
31 urgent business that needs to be discussed today. I do realise we have a lot to get through. You  
32 are saying we will talk about it at 11 or after the budget. To me that's pushing it again down the  
33 road. This needs to be discussed. This is a huge issue and there is major concerns for people  
34 living in the area and I think...

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, I just mixed up, I meant to say 11 o'clock is an hour away I  
2 know, what I meant is, what I was proposing that we discuss it when the budget process has been  
3 gone through and we can give it a good time. That's what I am saying. I have no issue with that  
4 and I did say that.

5 Cllr LAWLESS: I know you have no issue with that but I have sat here through many Council  
6 meetings and it's the same story time and time again. We say we will discuss something and  
7 time runs out. This is urgent.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: We are here until finish this evening.

9 Cllr LAWLESS: I think we should take a vote on it.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I just ask the meeting administrator to come in here please.

11 MS GALLAGHER: There are two things here: One is standing order number 16, which says  
12 "Notwithstanding any other provision of these standing orders, a motion may be proposed  
13 without notice for purpose of dealing with urgent business related to a function of the Local  
14 Authority subject to the requirement that not less than a majority of members vote in favour."  
15 That's the first thing. It's been proposed by Cllr Behan and seconded by Councillor T Cullen.  
16 And I think from listening to the elected members, all is in agreement that this motion should be  
17 discussed.

18  
19 The second thing is when it's to be discussed. And if it's to be discussed either at the beginning  
20 of the meeting or later on in the meeting, that would be under suspension of standing orders, so a  
21 vote should be taken on that.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

23 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, what's more important than a budget meeting? 95 million we are  
24 going to be discussing today to distribute in Wicklow and really what's more important than a  
25 budget meeting when an awful lot depends on what we are going to decide today. Like what you  
26 said yourself Chairman, nothing is going to change in regard to Ballynagran between now and  
27 when this is going to be discussed. And I agree, we should discuss it, but let's do the important  
28 business of what we are here for today and the important business is the budget is the number  
29 one priority. As a matter of fact, like what Cllr Lawless was saying, she thinks this is the  
30 number one priority. To my mind anyway, the budget is the most important meeting that we  
31 have throughout the year and can we not just get on and get through this budget. And it's up to  
32 every member then to get through it as quickly as we possibly can and as thoroughly as we  
33 possibly can and then we can discuss the Ballynagran situation. But let's get first things first, we  
34 are here for a budget meeting, I think we should go ahead and take a vote on it and I'll be voting

1 for to go ahead with the budget meeting and then have the suspension of standing orders after  
2 that.

3 Cllr MITCHELL: I would agree with Cllr Vance and second that, that we should - the budget is  
4 really important. We need to get it done and finished and then we should discuss the issue of  
5 Ballynagran, which is also important, but it should be when we have completed the budget.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan are you coming in again?

7 Cllr BEHAN: Unless anyone else, I was going to reply to what was said. I mean I have  
8 proposed a motion...

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have to take a vote on it.

10 Cllr BEHAN: That's fine, now I am prepared to be reasonable, I know everybody wants to have  
11 a budget passed or discussed and so on, you suggested 11 o'clock as a suitable time.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, no, I said that was - I thought we were at 11 now. We will take it  
13 until later on.

14 Cllr BEHAN: Later on now to my mind - in fairness now, sorry Chairman, can I just finish what  
15 I was going to say. I think in fairness, I have made sure that everybody had proper notice. I  
16 have had the thing photocopied, put on everybody's desk. Everybody is aware of the standing  
17 order. As Lorraine has said it's up to us to decide what time to take it. As a compromise I am  
18 proposing we discuss it at 2 o'clock.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Cullen.

20 Cllr Shay CULLEN: It is an extremely important situation that's arisen and I would agree with  
21 Cllr Behan from the point of view that it definitely needs to be discussed. I accept also Cllr  
22 Vance regards to the budget, we are here for the budget today and that's the main focus of our  
23 attention today. But I would suggest Chairman that we set a time for discussing Ballynagran in  
24 the afternoon and stick to that time, because it is an extremely situation and needs to be  
25 discussed today. Look, get a time organised in the afternoon and I think we should stick to that.

26 Cllr VANCE: Chairman as a compromise, could I suggest 4.30. I am just suggesting 4.30.

27 Cllr BEHAN: I proposed 2 o'clock.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can we have a seconder?

29 Cllr FORTUNE: Okay.

30 Cllr VANCE: That's in the middle of the budget.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't want to come out of the budget process. I think we should  
32 compromise on 4.30.

33 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: If you had called a proper meeting...

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan spoke to me on Friday evening, I said we would meet, do it

1 today.

2 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Why are you opposing that?

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: I have no problem, I am suggesting we do it at 4.30. I need a seconder  
4 for Cllr Vance's proposal of 4.30.

5 Cllr VANCE: I am proposing 4.30.

6 Cllr RYAN: I second that.

7 Cllr BEHAN: I propose 2, Chairman.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Then we take a vote then.

9 Cllr VANCE: My proposal is seconded by a member.

10 MS GALLAGHER: This is for 4.30.

11 Cllr BEHAN: Which one are we voting on again?

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Half four.

13 MS GALLAGHER: Is that the way Councillors want me to call it, 2 or 4.30. When I call your  
14 name, you say 2 or 4.30.

15

16 (A vote was taken)

17

18 MS GALLAGHER: That's eleven for two o'clock, 15 for 4.30 and six not present. 4.30.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan, you raised another issue which we can discuss I think  
20 about -- you brought it up with me about the libraries. It will come up under that. Okay. We  
21 will go ahead with the budget then if the members agree. Sorry, Debbie is going to give an  
22 overall presentation before we start the budget process.

23 Cllr WINTERS: Debbie, can you use a microphone.

24 MS CROMIE: I am told I can be quite loud at times! Good morning everybody, and welcome  
25 to budget 2017. I just want to - well I was going to kick start proceedings but they've already  
26 started just in relation to what we have to cover today for budget 2017. So there are three tasks  
27 ahead of us: To adopt the statutory budget with or without amendment. Then the commercial  
28 rates, we have to determine the base year adjustment, the harmonisation, we are into year three  
29 of a five year cycle and the rates relief on vacant premises, whether we are going to continue  
30 with the 100% relief for vacancy.

31

32 So this is the draft revenue budget. Our total expenditure for 2017 is 95 million. So it's broken  
33 down over the following areas. So housing and building, so that's 20.6 million, which is 22% of  
34 the budget. We have road transportation and safety, which is 21.2 million, that's 22% of the



1 budget. We have water services, 8 million, that's 9% of the budget. Development management,  
2 11.3 million, that's 12% of the budget. Environmental services 11.7 million, that's 12% of the  
3 budget. Recreation and amenity 7.5 million, that's 8% of the budget. Agriculture, education,  
4 health and welfare, 1.5 million, that's 2% of the budget and miscellaneous services, 12.8 million,  
5 that's 14% of the budget.

6  
7 When we look at the 95 million of the budget, 80 million of it is non-discretionary. So that  
8 includes what we would call contra items, where expenditure and income are linked. This would  
9 include RAS, HAP, road grants, site cap, leader, Civil Defence, machinery yard, stores. Then  
10 we have payroll, and as an employer, we employ approximately 1300, over 1300 people on our  
11 payroll. So that's salaries, wages, it's members, it's fire fighters, it's pensioners.

12  
13 Then we have other costs, energy, public lighting energy, public lighting maintenance, we pay  
14 Local Property Tax. We have statutory contributions. We pay rates, coroners, etcetera.

15  
16 So how is the budget funded? So it's financed by the Local Property Tax, 11.9 million. That's  
17 13% of the budget. Government grants and subsidies, 22.4 million, that's 24% of the budget.  
18 Commercial rates, 27.9 million, 29% of the budget. Goods and services 32.8 million, that's 34%  
19 of the budget.

20  
21 Just bringing you back then to the Local Property Tax, so we have the 100% of the LPT income  
22 allocation for Wicklow was 17 million. We have to give 20% to the national equalisation fund  
23 of 3.4. 80% of the LPT to be retained locally is 13.6. However, of this money, 1.6 is to self  
24 fund housing. So the discretionary LPT funding for the budget is 11.9. Now back in September,  
25 when the members voted to maintain the basic rate, so that was 2.5 million. And I just want to  
26 kind of give a breakdown in budget 2017 of where the LPT money is used. Now this is just a  
27 selection of where LPT money is used because I know members are always concerned that  
28 where does the Local Property Tax money go? So I am just going to go through it as I said, it's  
29 only a list, it's a selection.

30  
31 So we have the Tinahely Recycling Centre gets 30K; Residents Association in the budget, there  
32 is 40K for that. Arts Grants 63K. Co Wicklow Tourism, 80K. Homeless funding 100K. Rates  
33 incentive scheme 150K. Community grants 200K. Swimming pools in Arklow and Wicklow  
34 are 200. Playgrounds are 245K. The recycling centres 250K. Library services, 250K. The

1 Mermaid and Tinahely arts centre is 343K, and the Municipal Districts discretionary funding of  
2 630K. That's 2.8 million. And then they have been in the budget in previous years. Now these  
3 are new budget lines for 2017. So we have the County Wicklow volunteers, 5K. Jigsaw 20K,  
4 invasive species 50 the Charlesland running track, 52K. So the monitoring of our river basins,  
5 oil pollution, 118K. Public lighting energy efficiency is 150K. Central heating and electrical  
6 upgrades is 150K. That's a sub total of 545K. Totaling 3.4 million. It's just to give an idea to  
7 the members that when you voted to maintain the basic rate of LPT, this is what we are able to  
8 do.

9  
10 And really after that, it's thank you and if there are any questions. I suppose at this stage if we  
11 want to go to housing and building, just to say the total draft expenditure estimate for 2017 of  
12 20,607,744 and a total draft income of 21,882,035 and it's detailed on pages 71 to 73 in the draft  
13 budget book. Then we are going to take road transportation safety as well, the total draft  
14 expenditure estimate for 2017 of 21,285,675 and a total draft income of 10,718,422, and this is  
15 detailed on pages 74 to 76 in the draft budget book.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Annesley, you wanted to come in.

17 Cllr ANNESLEY: Thanks Cathaoirleach. As a self-employed gentleman, I have just returned  
18 my tax returns at the end of October. If I put down on my tax returns that I miscellaneous 100  
19 euro, that would be questioned. We have a figure here of 11 million for miscellaneous. Could  
20 you explain that to me a little bit please Deborah and how you would describe 11 million as  
21 miscellaneous, thank you?

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

23 Cllr MURPHY: Just on the housing if that's appropriate now. Just to see there is a shortfall  
24 there in the DPGs is there? And I am just looking for an understanding of a breakdown on the  
25 disability DPGs, like the small aids, the special adapted housing for children, and mental health.  
26 What I mean by mental health, I mean the right environment and is there a breakdown? I mean  
27 we are going back again to not being specific -- it's all in housing, but I think we need a  
28 breakdown of specific and why is there such a shortfall.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

30 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks very much Cathaoirleach. I just have a couple of questions. Firstly I  
31 would like - I welcome the funding provided for Jigsaw. I think it's a really, really invaluable  
32 service and I look forward to it beginning operation in Wicklow. In relation to the monitoring of  
33 our river basins, that's coming out...

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: We are on the housing now.

1 Cllr WHITMORE: Oh, are we not...

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: We are just dealing with housing.

3 Cllr WHITMORE: We have just mentioned this two minutes ago.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: You have a question for Debbie, we are going through the programmes at  
5 this stage. Regarding programme A, housing and building. Michael Guiney is dealing with that.

6 Cllr WHITMORE: So just can I just ask when do I get to ask a question, Debbie has covered the  
7 LPT in her presentation.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: We can do it when the programme comes up. Michael Heaney will be  
9 dealing with them. Councillor O'Connor.

10 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks very much Cathaoirleach. There is a quite appalling and widespread  
11 difficulty within local housing authority in Wicklow, namely difficulties with damp and mold in  
12 Local Authority housing. Families have been in contact with us on a regular basis to say that  
13 their children are suffering from asthma and other lung disorders, which have either been caused  
14 by - that remains to be seen, or certainly exacerbated by mold and damp in Local Authority  
15 housing.

16  
17 Aside from the potential liability of Wicklow County Council for damage to health, this is an  
18 urgent matter which needs to be addressed. I am demanding now that this matter be addressed as  
19 a matter of the utmost urgency. There are citizens of Wicklow, in particular our younger  
20 citizens, who have to live in these damp and almost squalid in certain occasions, circumstances.  
21 And it has to be addressed now. I am calling for an increase in the amount of money which is  
22 available towards housing maintenance to address this very particular issue. I don't think it's  
23 good enough.

24  
25 Secondly, if I could ask a question about the housing assessment, there would appear to be some  
26 one quarter of those who were sent out the housing assessment forms who have either not send  
27 them back or have disappeared. A full quarter. There was 3,800 applicants were contacted  
28 during the assessment. 3,082 remained eligible for housing support afterwards. That's an  
29 enormous chunk of the people on that particular list. I would ask that that get, if there is any  
30 possibility, that that could be extended allow some more people on that because certainly we are  
31 going to be seeing problems with this in the future.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Cllr Mitchell.

33 Cllr MITCHELL: I would just like to ask a question on the roads programme, we are doing  
34 them both together I gather? I would like to ask does the roads expenditure cover enough money

1 to provide for the Delgany to Blacklion road for the route selection, and for the design of this  
2 road? If it doesn't make any more sense to be giving any more planning permissions to vastly  
3 increase the town or re-zonings, if we are not proceeding with this road. Thank you.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Snell.

5 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Just in regards to the housing section here, there is a note  
6 that the paper that Debbie gave us here that central heating and electrical upgrades is 150,000  
7 from the LPT. I suppose when we talk about central heating we are talking about families who  
8 don't have any form of central heating, other than an open fire, it doesn't heat - they don't have  
9 rads to heat, so no back boiler even. 150,000 and the members will recall that we ourselves as  
10 members put 150,000 in one of our more recent budgets. But it equates to 30 houses, which is  
11 six in each district. And I think that's - unfortunately, it's not enough, to go anywhere near  
12 addressing, as landlords Wicklow County Council are obligated to make sure people have some  
13 form of central heating, and 150,000 is just not going to go anywhere near addressing the  
14 problem that's there.

15  
16 Could I just have clarification in regards to after the rent review, the Local Authority - it's my  
17 understanding that there is an increase. Could I have the figure in regards to the increase to this  
18 Local Authority from the rents from all the Local Authority houses - over 4,300 Local Authority  
19 houses and does it equate to 2.2 million or maybe you could give us a breakdown on what it  
20 does. Also just to point out that the vast majority of income into this Local Authority comes  
21 through the housing section. Yet little over 20% is retained to be spent on housing, and while I  
22 look down the list and I certainly won't name projects or otherwise, because I think it's very  
23 unfair, because there is people here in the various SPCs that will be trying to retain money for it,  
24 and that's their prerogative, but I feel that housing is a major issue. And without putting the  
25 necessary resources into it, it's very hard to tackle it. Thanks Cathaoirleach

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Joe Behan.

27 Cllr BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, just a question in relation to development levies. Can I raise that  
28 question during the planning and development, development management programme which I  
29 think is programme four, but it relates to roads as well? I am easy, I just want to make sure I can  
30 raise it either now or at the development management so, can I raise it at that point then?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Please, yeah. Councillor Oliver O'Brien.

32 Cllr O'BRIEN: Debbie said circa 20 million was spent on housing, if we were to set about  
33 sorting out the housing problem overnight in this county, what sort of a budget would we  
34 actually be looking at? The way I see it at the moment, the way we are going, I don't think the

1 housing crisis will ever be sorted out going that way. I am wondering how much should we be  
2 applying to the Government for and has there any work been done on that area all over the  
3 county to find out what the budget should actually be. Cllr Vance said a 95 million budget. I  
4 reckon if we were to sort out the housing problem and sort it out straight away as we should be, I  
5 don't think anybody should be on a waiting list at all at all in my view, because it's children you  
6 are talking about, and I am asking what sort of a budget would you actually be looking at if we  
7 were to sort this problem out within a year? Is what I am asking the housing?

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

9 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, I just want to make a comment in regard to the housing. I mean we all  
10 realise that housing is a major priority in the Council, but the amazing thing about it is a lot of  
11 the people that are saying it's a major priority in the Council, when they had an opportunity a  
12 couple of months ago in September in regard to the property tax, they decided not to fund it, or  
13 not to fund extra money going in there. So I find it ironic really that we have a situation where  
14 the majority of members in the Council here supported the property tax and effectively, that  
15 effectively meant a substantial amount of money of that would be going into housing. And I  
16 find it very ironic to say the least, that members here are calling for more money to be spent on  
17 housing and when they got an opportunity to do that, they didn't take it, thank you.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

19 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I think there on page 8, there is - on the housing  
20 assessment allocation and transfer, it states there that there is limited success in securing new  
21 properties for RAS and social leasing private stock is not being made available. That's  
22 absolutely true. However, I think that we have to address the reason why that is. The right-wing  
23 parties which are in power in this State have again, they haven't learned any lessons, put their  
24 faith into the magical abilities of the market to address this issue, which is affecting our citizens  
25 on a daily basis. It's not going to happen. The market isn't going to sort out these issues. The  
26 Government parties present in this Chamber should be putting pressure on their colleagues in  
27 Government to try and intervene in the market to try and sort this issue out. Cllr Vance says that  
28 housing is a major problem, but again him and his right-wing colleagues in party are prepared...

29 Cllr VANCE: You are not...

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry Councillor.

31 Cllr O'CONNOR: If I could finish my point Cllr Vance. (THEY ALL SPEAK TOGETHER).

32 Cllr VANCE: It's ridiculous what's going on.

33 Cllr RYAN: Put your money where your mouth is.

34 Cllr O'CONNOR: You can speak through the Chair, Cllr Vance, when it's your turn. If I could

1 just finish. It is not the market or any kind of right-wing agenda or right-wing economic or  
2 neo-liberal answer that's going to sort out the problem for our citizens in getting house. There is  
3 a vacant site levy there. There are all sorts of houses that are sitting around the county boarded  
4 up. They need to be brought into the market now so that our children and our families can have  
5 a place to stay. And I put it up to those parties, particularly Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael in this  
6 Chamber, to go up to their pals up in Leinster House, and to tell them to get their fingers out and  
7 sort out the housing situation in this country, which lumbers from boom to bust every couple of  
8 years. Thank you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien again.

10 Cllr O'BRIEN: If you look at what the Local Property Tax was spent on, you will see that only  
11 100,000 was spent on homeless. It's a Local Property Tax, but what it was, it was scattered out  
12 keeping the status quo. I wouldn't mind if it was a property tax if all that money was spent on  
13 housing, but a very small minimal fraction was spent, to call it a property tax is ridiculous when  
14 you look at some of the projects it's scattered out amongst.

15 Cllr VANCE: Is Cllr O'Brien and Sinn Féin then saying that what the - what was said up there  
16 by Debbie, that they should be funded then, is that what they're saying, that what the property tax  
17 was funded that was up there today that they should not be funded, is that what you are saying?  
18 That's exactly what I think you are saying. We are 2.5, 2.6 million down in the budget and we  
19 would be 2.6 million down in the budget if you had had your way. Do you think that would  
20 have improved the situation in regard to housing and providing the services? The number of  
21 members around this, the majority of members around this Chamber decided to provide services  
22 for people that people would have to pay for them and provide services, and you are saying that  
23 2.6 million could be taken out of the budget and you could still have an improved service, it's  
24 absolutely ridiculous.

25 Cllr SNELL: Only 250,000 could be...

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: If you want to talk switch on.

27 Cllr SNELL: Only 250,000 came out of the Local Property Tax, out of 2.6 million went to  
28 housing. I wouldn't be waving the flag here today to say that the members who voted for the  
29 Local Property Tax supported and made a difference to the housing section.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, do you want to come in again.

31 Cllr O'BRIEN: I tend to agree with Cllr Vance in one way, you can't have the same level of  
32 services all the time is what I am saying. I am saying there are people that could have took cuts,  
33 could last for a year, children can't last for a year or anything like that. Housing is the priority  
34 here and I think the Council has to start putting priorities, not putting forward a status quo

1 budget for the past three years and keeping everybody happy. Unfortunately there is an  
2 emergency here and there are people on that list and I could look down through them there and  
3 you could have slashed what they got in the Local Property Tax. We won't be able to deliver the  
4 same amount of service, but they'll survive, children won't survive.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. There is no other lights. Questions to be answered there.

6 Cllr BLAKE: Sorry Chairman, it's disappointing to hear us getting into an argument here at our  
7 own budget with regards left wing, right-wing, who is in power, who is not in power, but it has  
8 to be said as well, Sinn Féin are in power in Northern Ireland where they're getting 12 billion a  
9 year of the English taxpayer as well and they have a crisis in housing, they have a crisis in  
10 health. They have crisis up there as well with all the money they're getting in grants from the  
11 British taxpayer as well, but I don't want to get into an argument about that aspect. We are here  
12 to discuss our own budget and aspects. I have always supported Cllr Snell in regards that the  
13 housing aspects and the spending of this Council in regards of our budget. I have always  
14 supported him in that regard since he took up the SPC, Chairman in the SPC in housing,  
15 certainly for people who wouldn't vote for the property tax here, what almost 2.6 million extra  
16 that we have there in terms of spending right across all aspects, it can't all go into housing, some  
17 has to go into roads. There is a long list of where all the money is being spent in terms of the  
18 Local Property Tax. But we have it there, we have a budget and we have to deal with it in that  
19 regard. To me getting involved in petty arguments about left-wing, right-wing or whoever they  
20 are, I am here to represent the people to get the best deal we possibly can, to get the best services  
21 and I do support the aspect of looking after Local Authority housing people. And I have always  
22 done it, irrespective of where I am in regard, whatever right-wing, left-wing or whatever else. I  
23 have always supported Cllr Snell in his arguments about getting extra money anywhere we  
24 possibly can to look after our Local Authority housing. But for people who are voting against  
25 everything in this Council, everything we come up against, even our own local area meetings, we  
26 have people voting against adopting budgets as well. So we have to be responsible in firing out  
27 small innuendos about right-wing, left-wing is not going to get us anywhere in regards to our  
28 dealing with looking after the people we are asked to look after.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

30 Cllr WALSH: It is accepted that the housing stock situation is in dire straits, and we have the  
31 introduction now of the HAP scheme, is it envisaged that will go hand in hand with RAS, I take  
32 it temporarily until HAP takes over. Is it envisaged that will free up extra stock or have an  
33 impact on the overall housing supply?

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Ryan.

1 Cllr RYAN: Cathaoirleach, just to support my colleague Cllr Blake, I think it's really important  
2 that it's too easy today in this meeting to say other things that we need to fund. I think we have  
3 got to be realistic and we have got to sort of say if there is something I am putting forward that I  
4 think should be funded other than what's there in the budget already, I should be big enough to  
5 turn around and say that's where the money is to come from. And to be really clear to the people  
6 of Wicklow. This is about making choices. As Cllr Vance said at the very start, this is the most  
7 important meeting of the year of this Council. This sets the priorities. This tells us what people  
8 actually around this table want to spend money on, invest in and make better. But I think you  
9 have got to be honest and not just throw out populist stuff. You have to say I think we should  
10 spend more on that and that money should come from here. Be honest to the people of  
11 Wicklow.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

13 Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, I am going to be honest. I mean I voted against the property tax  
14 increase, as I did last year. And the reason I did is because despite what some Councillors here  
15 might think, people, many people in this county are struggling to make ends meet. And a flick  
16 of a pen here might mean nothing to Councillors who vote for it, but it can make a huge  
17 difference to people who have to pay that property tax on top of all the other levies and charges  
18 that are imposed on them.

19  
20 Now I do agree with Cllr Vance and Councillor Ryan and that's why I don't make proposals for  
21 extra expenditure in the estimates. I make it very clear here and now I'll be voting against this  
22 on the basis that it's including an extra 15% on the property tax that did not have to be there.  
23 And in fact in agreeing with -- Councillor Christopher Fox has said on many occasions before,  
24 we are actually handing back 3.5 million to the Government under the present property tax  
25 system anyway. So we are not actually - we are not even spending the money that's being given  
26 in the normal property tax and then we are being told that we have to increase it by 15%.  
27 However, I do accept if you are going to vote against the budget, you can't be proposing extra  
28 items and that's fair enough and I think that's - I think I am being honest when I say that. But I  
29 think people also should realise that many people in this county are suffering and struggling still,  
30 eight years after this recession started and we should not forget that as well Cathaoirleach.

31 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just on one matter of clarification, the budget in the six  
32 counties is set by the British exchequer. My colleagues in the six counties -- can I have a word  
33 please, you brought it up, if you would like to address the meeting afterwards, you can go  
34 through the Chair Cllr Vance, thanks a million for that. The budget in the six counties is set by



1 the British exchequer. My colleagues in the devolved administration in the six counties are  
2 given a budget every year that they have to deal with, whether they like it or not. And they do  
3 the best that they can with it. It's all very well for the usual suspects in here to come out and try  
4 to blame Sinn Féin for a housing emergency in the six counties and also problems with the NHS  
5 and all the rest of it. What they should be addressing is the issue of why the British exchequer  
6 sees fit to give a second class service to some of their alleged citizens living in a part of Ireland.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor. We will have some answers now from Joe Lane  
8 please.

9 DIRECTOR LANE: Simplistically, if we take the numbers you gave me, 3,000 units multiplied  
10 by an average of 200,000 a year, it's 600 million, if I haven't lost a zero in that, for Wicklow  
11 alone. Lads, it's not going to happen. We wouldn't have the capacity. The State hasn't got the  
12 capacity. The whole State budget was increased by one billion. We will be taking 0.6. That  
13 isn't the solution.

14  
15 What you see from Rebuilding Ireland and from the housing programme is there is a range,  
16 which includes a mix between the private sector, the public sector and also between current and  
17 capital. You have part fives gone through, we will be continuing with the schemes and we will  
18 come back to you with a new priority in 2017. As part of the social housing, traditional units,  
19 that's from the - the State will be paying it from capital. On top of that there is CAS, which we  
20 had in 2015, alleviated particular pressures in 2015 in particular. And also we would hope there  
21 would be more in 2016. The improved housing bodies which have started or we passed, we all  
22 sat here and passed a Part VIII in - this year for the Rathnew site. There is the part 5s, which is  
23 10%, it's the new thing, they're beginning to filter in as the public and private sector are  
24 producing houses. There is the PPP and the one we have looked at incumbent land and RAS,  
25 HAP and social leasing which is available, the private sector. All of that is part of the solution.  
26 Like people said is it kicking in quickly enough? Look that's what we have at the moment. We  
27 will try to accelerate it the best I can, but there is a capacity issue there.

28  
29 Going down through some the issues regarding particularly the specific questions: DPGs, it is  
30 allocation driven Miriam, so we have to wait for the allocation from the Department. What you  
31 have is 70 - 25% funded on the estimates. So whatever we get, we provide money for it in our  
32 estimates as the 25%. It's not a shortfall. We wait for the allocation from the Department and  
33 then we - across each allocation, it wouldn't be determined today, what we are doing is providing  
34 money for the gap when the gap comes.

1  
2 Damp and mold, again if there is any issue, individual cases, I would ask members and we will  
3 take a look at it. However there is a gap between some of the houses and we are going through a  
4 big fabric upgrade at the moment, people will be familiar with that. That's allocation driven on  
5 the capital account and there is practices out there that we will look at, the area staff will look at.  
6 Some of the practices add to mold too. However there is some of the older units need to be  
7 looked at, the central heating has been mentioned and we are building up a database of units that  
8 need to be upgraded in that regard. The money is tight. But again - and it's not quite cross per  
9 area. It can be specific. Some of the units are not as good as the others. So older units. Again  
10 we are building up, if Councillors give individual cases we will try to deal with it, we will put it  
11 on the databases and when we get more money available. If there is pockets, we can look and  
12 see if fabric up care can become available, we will see what we can do regarding that. But get  
13 the information into us.

14  
15 Housing assessments: First of all, I believe the State is talking about doing this on a much more  
16 regular basis. We advertised, the members were helpful in this regard, and got information out  
17 to try to get people in. Some people had gone above the band and it's not they didn't apply, it's  
18 that they, they were above the bands now. Every case can be appealed and if there is individual  
19 cases again, send them in, we will look at them. Anybody who is entitled to social housing will  
20 be put on the list if they need to be. It's just a matter of getting back to people and we will look  
21 at it on appeal. Everybody who applied who is eligible is in that list. It's the others that - well  
22 we can't put them on if they haven't applied or given us information we require. Central heating,  
23 we have that. Rent review, there is 12.4 million included in the incoming estimates this year.  
24 That answers that specific question.

25  
26 RAS and HAP. HAP is new for us, it is a supply issue. There are landlords who RAS may not  
27 have suited who we will be looking for under HAP. We are always looking for replacements.  
28 We have replaced always the units in RAS. It's just to continue with supplies is going to be  
29 difficult. Some people have moved across from RAS to social housing. We have purchased 30  
30 again, plus part 5s are beginning to not come in, but they should be coming in in 2017, 2018.  
31 That will deal with some of the supply. Again as units get, and people can see in certain areas,  
32 there are - in certain areas there are supply issues starting now and that will sort some of the  
33 housing demand in the short-term. I think they're the specific questions

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks.

1 MS CROMIE: Sorry, Cllr Annesley, about miscellaneous, the budget book is a statutory  
2 document and this is how we are obliged to present our budget, if you look at pages 90 to 92, it  
3 outlines what is covered by miscellaneous. So we are looking at the machinery yard, we are  
4 looking at rates, the Register of electors, coroner fees, local representation of civic leadership,  
5 Motor Tax. They're all listed between pages 90 to 92.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien.

7 Cllr O'BRIEN: I had a question for Director Lane. I think you mentioned Joe was it 600 million  
8 or 600 million with a zero that would sort the problem out.

9 DIRECTOR LANE: I am just - 3,000 units which is - if you talk about everybody got a house  
10 by 200,000 average a unit -- I came up with 600,000,000 or so, so our budget is a long way off,  
11 so there will be people on housing lists...

12  
13 A lot of people, sorry, some people on the list, social housing is part of the option but they're  
14 quite happy with RAS. You have to interpret that (INAUDIBLE) so there are people on the list  
15 who social housing may not be their first choice. (INAUDIBLE) State provided State funded  
16 houses. People remember last year the CAS, where we had targeted particularly people in  
17 vulnerable homeless, and that provided 32 units nationally. It was approved by the Department.  
18 It is, I believe it's capital funded, I am not absolutely sure, but that's straight into (INAUDIBLE).  
19 They were 32 family units who were delighted with that type of unit. I wouldn't include that  
20 then in that 600 million. So we have a spread. 2,000 bodies would be across there, there is a  
21 whole lot of options, but there is a whole lot of solutions too.

22 Cllr O'BRIEN: My idea is you are talking about different ways of dealing with -- you gave me  
23 the figure...

24 DIRECTOR LANE: That would be crudely putting 100,000 across a unit by -- everybody, local  
25 authorities provide State funded costs. RAS is working for a lot of people.

26 Cllr O'BRIEN: Would you not think that that would be the way to go -- I mean you are going to  
27 be waiting on the other schemes...

28 Cllr O'BRIEN: You mentioned a figure there, whatever it was, a massive figure. That's the  
29 amount of money that needs to be invested in housing whether by the Local Authority or  
30 whoever done it. If it's left and it's not the Local Authority, the point I am getting to is it's going  
31 to be years before it's sorted out and there are going to be children that are...

32 DIRECTOR LANE: There is always an acceptance it is going to take years to sort it out.

33 Cllr O'BRIEN: The other point is the capacity point. What exactly were you talking about?

34 DIRECTOR LANE: I can't build 3,000 units in the next three years.

1 Cllr O'BRIEN: If you go to Bray and an assessment of the plumbers, etcetera, etcetera, that are  
2 lying idle there, the workforce is there and if they were mobilised in some way much more  
3 quickly than you can do it, would that not increase your capacity?

4 DIRECTOR LANE: I know the capacity at the moment is not there, very little.

5  
6 The State will provide a certain amount of money and I don't know is it allowing me 12 or 13  
7 schemes we have live at the moment, 160 units. That's basically where we will be for the next  
8 three years on that issue. But we also have the PPPs there, the approved housing bodies and we  
9 will be releasing particularly in Bray and North Wicklow some of the land that's available to us,  
10 that Wicklow County Council have, we will be giving it to approved bodies to see can they build  
11 on it, because we the State basically won't be building on it. We will be trying to do that for  
12 2017.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

14 DIRECTOR LANE: To put it another way, there was an ad in the paper recently for approved  
15 housing bodies asking them for an expression of interest. We got 14 or 15 bodies in. We will be  
16 giving them land in 2017 to move along. That will be part of the scheme along with some other  
17 issues.

18 Cllr O'BRIEN: You have to go and buy the houses there.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: There is a queue here. Councillor Shay Cullen.

20 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Just a couple of questions for Joe there. The housing acquisitions, we  
21 purchased 30 dwellings in 2016. Is that going to continue into 2017, or have we been allocated a  
22 figure of money to purchase homes?

23  
24 And secondly, the housing loans, I noticed two houses were purchased loans, were approved in  
25 2016. That seems a very low figure, what's the explanation for it being such a low figure and is  
26 that actively being advertised and pursued at the moment?

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Ryan.

28 Cllr RYAN: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I think it's really important what Joe has just said there and  
29 that message just simply isn't getting out, that the housing list is not a list of housing need. And  
30 that's absolutely important that the people of Wicklow know that. That there is a lot of people on  
31 that housing list who actually are very happy with their present situation. And if we built houses  
32 and actually offered them to them, they'd say no. I think it's really important that the people of  
33 Wicklow know that Wicklow County Council aren't sitting on their hands with the gift of  
34 actually solving in one magic wand the issue of homelessness in this county. I think that's really

1 important that people know.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Joe Behan.

3 Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, that's a breathtaking statement for a public representative to make.  
4 That the people who are on the housing list don't want a house from the Council. Many of  
5 them...

6 Cllr RYAN: Don't misquote me, as usual, that's probably what you would do.

7 Cllr BEHAN: I didn't interrupt of course, but you will because you don't want to hear any point  
8 of view only your own. Cathaoirleach, that's a breathtaking statement for any public  
9 representative who allegedly is representing the people of this county. And I would like him to  
10 go and talk to the people who are on the housing list and tell them that in his humble opinion,  
11 they don't want a Council house that they're quite happy where they are. Like I don't -  
12 Councillor Ryan does not have any concept of what it's like for many people who are on the  
13 housing list at the moment. However that's not really what I wanted to say.

14  
15 What I wanted to say just in the figures we were given in the document, one in four of the people  
16 who were on the housing list before the housing assessment have now been removed from the  
17 housing list. And they're people who applied to remain on the housing list because they replied  
18 to the forms, they sent back their forms. And 800 of them have been removed in the assessment.  
19 Now that's a - those 800 people obviously did want to be on the housing list but they've been  
20 removed. Now I notice that in Limerick County Council, or there is a Councillor from Limerick  
21 had raised the point and it's obviously not only just in Wicklow, it's throughout the country: One  
22 of the reasons why many people have been removed from the housing list and the Director  
23 mentioned it, is that there is an upper income limit of 35,000 per annum for family income  
24 before a family can qualify to be on the list. If you are over that limit, the officials have no  
25 discretion, the family is removed from the list. I definitely think it would be extremely difficult  
26 for any family to house themselves on an income of 35,000 or more than 35,000. In which case  
27 they may not qualify for any other assistance either. I do think we could agree as a body to write  
28 to the Minister for Housing and ask, as I think Limerick have done and I think other councils  
29 might, we ask for that income limit to be raised to a more realistic level. I propose we do that. It  
30 doesn't affect the estimates but I think we should do it.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Miriam Murphy.

32 Cllr MURPHY: I would just like to say, going back to the disability as well, I do not want to be  
33 the only one in the chamber here shouting or questioning the list of people with disabilities on  
34 the housing list. These people are all in our Municipal Districts but I seem to be the only one

1 that ever brings it up, which I am quite actually getting fed up about. Because we are all here for  
2 the same reason. But I would like in the future to have a breakdown specifically of the list, of  
3 the requirements, and gender and whatever else, at any housing report back. And especially for  
4 the SPCs to bring it up specifically as well.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

6 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks Chair. I just have a question for Joe in relation to the housing loans.  
7 There doesn't seem to be any provision for the essential repairs grants, other housing grants  
8 payments or mobility aids housing grants. And there didn't seem to be any for last year, I am  
9 just wondering is that that those categories are defunct or are we just not getting grant aid from  
10 the State in which we can transfer over to constituents?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Snell.

12 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Cathaoirleach, quite recently here you put housing on the  
13 agenda, so all the members could ask questions of the senior executive officers and the Director  
14 of Housing. And at that meeting it was quite clearly stated that anyone who hadn't returned the  
15 Housing Needs Assessment form, that they would be looked on favourably and there is an onus  
16 on us as 32 public representatives to get that message out. There was ads taken out in the paper,  
17 everyone was contacted. There is 800 who haven't returned their forms, and perhaps today we  
18 can renew our energies, we the public representatives, to get the message out through social  
19 media or through our hard work on the ground, which I assume we are all doing. But definitely  
20 the 800 people have been given a commitment by senior management within this Local  
21 Authority that they wouldn't be taken off the housing list once they come back within the next  
22 couple of months. So I think to say today that 800 people have been taken off the housing list at  
23 the stroke of a pen or otherwise is just not true. Unless something has happened in the meantime  
24 since that commitment was given in this chambers, and if it has, I haven't been informed. But  
25 certainly that's the commitment that was given by the housing section at the time.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Edward Timmins.

27 Cllr TIMMINS: Thank you Chairman, just a question for Joe, just again following up on Shay  
28 Cullen's question on housing acquisition. What's the policy on housing acquisition and in  
29 particular are you targeting particular areas of the county? Because I know in the west of the  
30 county there are houses available that are relatively new that people would be willing to sell to  
31 the Council at a relatively modest price. And there is housing demand in that area, in every area,  
32 every village and town of the county, I think there is pretty much a housing demand. I would  
33 ask is there a policy and what do you anticipate the spend will be this year in the coming year  
34 and how many houses do you expect to get? I am just concerned that certain parts of the county

1 the policy is maybe not being applied.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

3 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I would like to second Cllr Behan's proposal that we  
4 write to the Minister to increase the level of income for applicants

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. I have already seconded that myself, but anyway. Cllr Cullen  
6 wants to come in.

7 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: About housing? Yeah. Chairman, yeah, I think that the housing crisis  
8 in this county is now gone completely out of control, and any practitioner on the frontline would  
9 see that. I am not blaming this Council for the problem. It's a number of years of neglect by  
10 Central Government in the funding of social housing, where basically in the boom times social  
11 housing was abandoned so as to force people on modest incomes to buy private houses, which  
12 many of them couldn't afford, and left them with huge mortgages at a time -- the same people in  
13 that, the income categories simply couldn't afford these houses, but they had no choice because  
14 the Council, the Government wasn't funding the councils. I don't believe in a lot of these - the  
15 Government are now trying to redirect the funds away from local authorities into these voluntary  
16 charitable trusts. Because that's very unfair to tenants of local authorities. Because people who  
17 want to buy out their houses will not be able to buy their houses with this new programme of the  
18 Government of effectively privatising social housing away from public ownership. Which  
19 would give people the opportunity to purchase and buy out their houses. I firmly believe that if  
20 we are left in a situation where nobody can buy out their house in an estate, the same - I suppose  
21 people would have - they would be stakeholders in that estate, because they'd own property on  
22 the estate. I think that's what we should be aiming for, a good balance of mix in that. I don't  
23 believe this privatisation going off to these voluntary charitable trusts is the way to go forward.  
24 People living in Local Authority houses, if we build houses and this is the theme of the  
25 Government policy now, to take them away from local authorities and give them to the  
26 charitable trusts where people will be prohibited by law from purchasing their house. They'll be  
27 basically paying rent for the rest of their lives without an opportunity to purchase. That's not fair  
28 on hard-working people who want to own their own house. I think that's what we should all be  
29 striving for.

30  
31 Chairman, I think we should as a policy make sure that the Government, that the local authorities  
32 should be given the primary role of providing social housing, because we have a lot of  
33 experience in doing that down for over a century, maybe 120 years now. And it was a primary  
34 source - and I think that's just - if you think of taking away the water and sewage from local

1 authorities, housing now seems to be the new policy of taking that away from local authorities as  
2 well and I think that's a retrograde step and the privatisation of this we should oppose.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Annesley.

4 Cllr ANNESLEY: I am clued in this time Cathaoirleach, thank you. Just housing loans, I am  
5 just at this section here and I can't see the numbers, I do apologise, but there is five things, it's  
6 housing, DPG grants, repair grants, under the housing loans section Joe, okay, in the budget, on  
7 page 72 okay. It doesn't say how much housing loans we have given out in this Council. And if  
8 you are on 35,500, you have slipped through that very important net. You will be taken off the  
9 social housing list, okay. You don't qualify to go into the bank and get a loan. Like I know  
10 people are stacking shelves in Tescos, they're not getting enough money to go into the Bank of  
11 Ireland, or AIB or Ulster Bank and take out a loan. Where do they go then? They go to the  
12 Local Authority, but we have given out no loans, not according to this anyway. We are not  
13 estimated to give out any loans. Can we ever see ourselves giving out loans to people that want  
14 to get up on the property ladder themselves, that are well able to pay a loan back to this Local  
15 Authority? And we all remember the local council, Council mortgage and the Council payments  
16 and the Council, and we depended on the Council. But we seem to neglect this here in this  
17 budget again. Is there no Government grants, is there no Council grants, is there no Council  
18 loans? Maybe you could answer that for me please.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Cllr McLoughlin.

20 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I just want to know why is there a discrepancy between the actual income  
21 that's estimated for 2017 and the expenditure in housing? It seems to be about 1.2 million in the  
22 difference, where is that coming from? Why are you planning to spend less than your income?  
23 Thank you.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Joe Lane.

25 DIRECTOR LANE: The last question is not for me. Purchases, we don't have an allocation as  
26 such, but we are told to purchase or not purchase. We at times have to risk it, I think it was June  
27 last year when we got our allocation, we were told that they would honour any purchases  
28 finalised by the end of 2016, so we have no idea what we are getting next year. The purchases,  
29 we have a policy of purchasing and we will be watching with the SPC. The problem with  
30 purchases is it's a short-term solution while we wait for the other schemes to come in, and the  
31 Department gets monies available. If the State got moving ahead with building, it is unlikely  
32 there will be purchase money available. So the State's trying to work out how much we are all  
33 going to be working on. Sometimes we will be told towards the middle of the year there will be  
34 money available to purchase. I can't answer that. As you saw, we purchase with the money we



1 had last year. We have our policy, we work off demand and houses and try to get value for  
2 money. In certain areas, there is - we also try not to crowd other markets. We try not to go into  
3 an area and take too many units out, because we are all looking for the same type of units. That's  
4 why we spread them as best we can.

5  
6 There is also a cut off regarding -- the Department has indicated by email that if we are to spend  
7 more than 7,000, they don't want it without us going to them first, that creates a work difficulty  
8 for us. We are trying to get units in absolutely perfect condition that we can move in straight  
9 away to. Because it's in nobody's interest to have us buy and then spending a couple of months  
10 waiting to get it out. It's quite a complicated process.

11  
12 We do tend to move around. It is getting more difficult as there is less units out there available  
13 to us.

14  
15 As regarding tenant purchases, I am talking about specifically the loan that was asked. All  
16 housing applicant loans are stress tested by the housing agencies. They go through it, they go  
17 through the viability of the applicant to pay back their loan and then they give us a  
18 recommendation. They're the applicants that applied and the housing recommended that were  
19 provided us to. As regards the loans, the loans in the estimates, there is no essential repair or  
20 DPG new grants. That scheme has gone for a few years now, I'll stand corrected, I am 99% sure  
21 they're gone. They're pay-backs, as people paying back. We have loans with the housing agency  
22 and we are paying back, so the people who got those loans, they appear every year, that's the  
23 income they're giving to us that we are following on to the housing agency and we get - I think  
24 it's six monthly or three monthly payments to the housing agency. Again I can stand corrected  
25 on that.

26  
27 Progress report, we changed the progress report last year to include allocations. We will take a  
28 shot at something for the DPG is dealing with in 2017. If it's not right, come back to us and we  
29 will try to haul it over. We do the progress report to you once every two to three months, I am  
30 not quite sure. We will take a shot at it, ask us for it, we will see what we can do. There is no  
31 issue there at all. Whatever information we have we will get it out as quickly as possible.

32  
33 That's that. 3,000, any idea, okay. No, I think that's it.

34 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, just Mr Lane, is it correct that if these private charities, these

1 voluntary trusts do build houses, they're not open for the tenants, the housing applicants to  
2 purchase?

3 DIRECTOR LANE: Very simplistic answer, but it's extremely simplistic. Answer is yes to that  
4 specific question. You are talking about the approved housing bodies are just a suite of units,  
5 they're there to supply units to a certain percentage of people.

6 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: What I am asking are those voluntary houses, those voluntary groups,  
7 associations, can tenants, as I am understood that tenants are not allowed to buy out those houses  
8 like they are from local authorities?

9 DIRECTOR LANE: Yes, but neither are people in apartments.

10 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I understand that, but tenants, they're not a -- you are answering me yes,  
11 is...

12 DIRECTOR LANE: I have answered you yes twice, do you want a third yes?

13 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: You are being Jesuitical here now.

14 DIRECTOR LANE: I haven't qualified it.

15 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Is no to the answer that they're not allowed to buy out the houses?

16 DIRECTOR LANE: Yes! (LAUGHTER)

17 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Is that the answer. No? They're not allowed.

18 DIRECTOR LANE: You have answered the question in negative, but listen...

19 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: I don't like Fine Gael's privatisation of social housing. I certainly don't  
20 like that now.

21 DIRECTOR LANE: They cannot buy out their approved housing.

22 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: That's what I am objecting to, every person should be entitled to buy  
23 their own home, whether it's a social house or anything else.

24 DIRECTOR LANE: People who got part five houses cannot buy houses under the new scheme,  
25 people who are in apartments can't buy them.

26 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: They can buy out apartments...

27 DIRECTOR LANE: Not in the last scheme.

28 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: In Dublin that they can, I understand but there is a fundamental point  
29 historically that people were able to buy out their Council house, but under the amount of houses  
30 now being put into these private voluntary groups, people won't be allowed to buy out their  
31 house and I think that's unfair and it's a policy the SPC should look at and reverse. It's a national  
32 policy, I know it's nothing got to do with the County Council that you are under the directions of  
33 the Government, but it's indicative of the privatisation of public services by this Government.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen please.

1 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Just to link up on Joe's explanation for the housing acquisition. I am still  
2 not sure exactly how it works Joe. Have we applied for a funding for 2017 for to purchase  
3 houses?

4 DIRECTOR LANE: No, it doesn't work like that, they tell me how many houses I am going to  
5 be supplied. Last June they told me to work away and buy houses. The problem is on average it  
6 can take up to 22 weeks to buy a house. So it depends on the allocation. All indications so far  
7 are that as the housing programme nationally, and the Part Vs are kicking in, the money won't be  
8 available for purchases. Purchases are short-term solutions (INAUDIBLE), a 22 week period,  
9 there is no other scheme, 2015 in -- when the programme started, you couldn't start building a  
10 house. 2017, we would hope to be on site, there are other people on site. On top of that part 5 is  
11 beginning to kick in. This is all the money centrally they have for capital and they're spreading it  
12 out. If it becomes apparent in 2017 there isn't housing money available, they'll come back and  
13 tell us to buy. But it is a short-term quick solution. So I can't answer the question. I do not have  
14 an allocation. I don't apply, they tell us to go ahead or stop. So far what they've said is they'll  
15 only honour purchases that are completed by end of 2016.

16 Cllr Shay CULLEN: I do think that it may be a short-term solution, but it's an important solution  
17 for any Council, particularly this Council if we can purchase another 20, 30 houses for 2017, I  
18 would certainly think we should be looking at that and pushing as hard as we can.

19 DIRECTOR LANE: It's a straight answer again, if I am authorised I'll purchase as quickly as I  
20 can.

21 Cllr Shay CULLEN: But can we apply for the funding?

22 DIRECTOR LANE: There is no - it doesn't work like that. They tell us when there is an  
23 allocation available.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Fortune.

25 Cllr FORTUNE: Just a quick question on regarding A0501. The housing grants for other  
26 bodies. I just want to try and get an understanding how do we spend that? The homeless grants  
27 for other bodies, how do we actually - what do we do with that, how do we spend it?

28 DIRECTOR LANE: I have to check, but I think that's the overall homelessness, it's not just  
29 other bodies, I think it should be slash and other bodies. But it's everything, it includes Sonas,  
30 Simon, Chill Mhantain Hill, some of the other short-term solutions, people are quite familiar  
31 with. It's also the homeless programme in general, isn't it? Yes.

32 Cllr FORTUNE: The only reason I ask it is it does seem a little bit inadequate and particularly  
33 when you now break it down across all those bodies. Particularly in the environment we are  
34 currently in.

1 DIRECTOR LANE: The drop would be Brighton Terrace was funded directly for Bray in 2015  
2 and provided for in 2016. We no longer provide that term. So that option where we have split  
3 into smaller units is not as expensive or heavy resource as it was the other way. That's where  
4 you see the drop. Look, it's demand driven, we have no idea what's ahead of us in 2016, but we  
5 had sufficient in 2016, you provided extra, and on top of that, with the money you provided, in  
6 the estimates in 2017, we provided the extra resource officer on from approved housing bodies  
7 which has provided an invaluable support service within the housing section. We are providing  
8 a second body in 2017 concentrating in the Bray/North Wicklow area and particularly the  
9 Greystones Bray area. You have asked for that, that's provided for and that will be in there.  
10 That might answer the specific question.

11 Cllr FORTUNE: I understand what you are saying all right, but if we find that as we get into  
12 2017 that this particular problem, which is a problem out there, as we all know, if that appears to  
13 get worse, are we capable or have we got the ability to look for additional funding from whoever  
14 to cover?

15 DIRECTOR LANE: We have got extra money through the split from the other regional  
16 authorities. No, we would be on our own in that regard. We think it's adequate. Look I have no  
17 idea what's going to hit the housing - people will agree it's an extremely challenging situation.  
18 So far we haven't been restricted by resources in that regard. There is, if you look at Rebuilding  
19 Ireland, what they're saying is the thrust of that was that long-term hotels and B&B type thing  
20 would not be used. We have not fallen into that situation. We have not been in a situation - look  
21 we have used it, and we have used it for particular challenges, but we haven't had the long-term  
22 usage that say some of the Dublin has had to resort to and has created resources issues. But I  
23 think that's in Rebuilding where there is almost, there is, what's the word, by June most of those  
24 people will be out and I don't know where those -- we haven't fallen into that situation in  
25 Wicklow where we have had to resort as a sole way of supporting families.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Councillor.

27 Cllr FORTUNE: I think it's something we need to watch very carefully.

28 DIRECTOR LANE: We do and watch and even to the homeless and families presenting, it's  
29 particularly challenging yes.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thanks Joe.

31 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Just to address Cllr Mitchell's question regarding whether there was a  
32 provision for the Delgany Blacklion road in the budget; I suppose the short answer is no, there  
33 isn't. It's not a revenue expenditure item. We have appointed consultants to look at the options  
34 for that road, whether it's widening the existing road or building a new road. And whichever

1 option they come up with, it will be a capital scheme. So it won't ever appear in the budget.

2 Cllr MITCHELL: Which budget will it be in?

3 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: It won't ever appear in the revenue budget, it will be a capital item.

4 Cllr MITCHELL: Where does the money from the consultants come from?

5 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: From capital, from development contributions.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

7 Cllr WHITMORE: Can I just ask a question on that as well Sean. So the consultants have been  
8 engaged? When do you expect they'll have their assessment completed?

9 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: I would expect to have it by the end of January, start of February.

10 Cllr WHITMORE: It will come through the District Council.

11 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: We will keep you up-to-date on what's happening, yeah.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins.

13 Cllr TIMMINS: Briefly, Sean, just Knockroe bends, it's an important project for West Wicklow  
14 for the N81 our second national route in the county. There haven't been any bends taken off that  
15 road in 50 years, certainly before my time. I just want to raise that and hope that that goes  
16 ahead. And that we see movement on the ground as soon as possible to eliminate that extremely  
17 dangerous bend which has had a couple of deaths on it over the years. Again furthermore on the  
18 N81, just mention the Hollywood Cross to Tallaght new road, I would just like to keep that on  
19 the agenda, it's not a wish list. It's something that will happen and I think we should treat it as  
20 something that will happen and try and make it happen.

21 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: The Knockroe bends will progress in 2017. The next step is to appoint  
22 archaeologists to do a study and assessment and to carry out the architectural -- or archaeological  
23 investigation of the site. TII formerly NRA are committed to progressing it, so thankfully there  
24 will be money provided for that next year. I think the Tallaght to Hollywood, which Knockroe  
25 will be the southern end of that, the Tallaght to Hollywood is probably more a long-term  
26 proposition and the feeling at all times has been that it would probably start in Tallaght and not  
27 in Hollywood. But there hasn't been any mention of it for the last couple of years.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

29 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: It's actually quite brief, it's to do with the development contributions and I  
30 see they do remain a priority and there is 3 and a half million taken in already this year. Is it  
31 possible to have a breakdown as to where those development contributions are coming in and  
32 where they're being spent? I feel there is no correlation between the amount of money that's  
33 coming in in some areas and where it's being spent elsewhere. I am just wondering is that  
34 possible to get a breakdown and exactly where they are being spent?

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

2 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Director just on the local roads, general maintenance,  
3 there seems to be a difference of 600,000 between the 2016 outturn and the estimated figure for  
4 2017? Is there a reason for that?

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is your light on again Cllr Mitchell? Pat Kennedy.

6 Cllr KENNEDY: Just to say to the Director, Director you know the junction on the main  
7 Rathdrum to Arklow road at the right turn to Ballinaclash, this is a regional road and that  
8 junction needs re-alignment. If that could be kept on the agenda, I would much appreciate it.  
9 There has been a fatality at that junction in the past and I think if you follow the new guidelines,  
10 it states that roads of equal importance should meet at a 90 degree angle where possible. The  
11 angle on that road is 30 degrees. If that could be kept on the agenda, I would appreciate it.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Joe Behan.

13 Cllr BEHAN: I just wanted to ask in relation to Glenview park in Kilpedder. I know I have  
14 spoken to the Director before about this. Half of that estate is in perfect condition and the other  
15 half is in a diabolical state and some residents would blame the NRA for this when the new  
16 access road across to Greystones was being constructed and the overbridge and so on. But the  
17 NRA or TII are now completely refusing to take any responsibility for it, and I am just  
18 wondering whether the roads Director has - it may be a Municipal District matter now of course,  
19 but if there are any plans to do anything with the section that is completely and utterly  
20 substandard.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh.

22 Cllr WALSH: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just in relation to the proposed half a million for footpath  
23 maintenance, I would just ask the Director how does he propose that money to be allocated, is it  
24 across the districts according to their needs or is there going to be an assessment done?

25  
26 Secondly is that money coming from the development contribution scheme or is it coming from  
27 the LPT?

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Christopher Fox.

29 Cllr FOX: Thanks Chairman. Well like Cllr Walsh, I would be interested to know on half a  
30 million for footpaths, whether it's going to be allocated on a Municipal District basis or just on a  
31 priority list, all county wide. I would also welcome the fact that there are going to be more  
32 general operatives out on the ground. I think that's a positive - we have had a few years now of  
33 retirements and a lot of the staff out on the ground have - it's gone down to a skeleton staff really  
34 because numbers have gone down so dramatically with retirements, so I would welcome the fact

1 that we are now going to put more people out on the ground, because budget after budget, roads  
2 becomes a bit of a soft target, and when there are cuts to be made, roads always seems to be the  
3 first one where the axe falls, and it's a false economy really to keep cutting the budget on roads.  
4

5 One other point there, public liability has gone up 200,000, which is quite a dramatic increase. I  
6 know insurances generally have gone up, but that is a very significant figure to have risen in 12  
7 months, and I would like to know what sort of figure are we paying in not just public liability,  
8 but in general insurance, because if it's gone up 200,000, the general insurance bill is obviously  
9 pretty significant. Thanks Chairman.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

11 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Thanks Chairman, just as previous speakers have said there, the proposed  
12 money for the footpaths, 500,000, obviously we would like a breakdown on that, but also how  
13 which propose to spend the money

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Would you just lean into the microphone.

15 Cllr Shay CULLEN: I think it's important that we get value for money with regards to these  
16 footpaths and I would be suggesting that there would be tenders put together for the likes of this  
17 work. Also while I am speaking of footpaths, the road from Rossmore over to the  
18 Newtownmountkennedy GAA club is something that's urgently requiring a footpath and it's an  
19 extremely dangerous road, and a lot of children walking this stretch of road, so it's something I  
20 would like to see remain on the agenda for the roads, on the roads budget. Thank you.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

22 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thank you Chairman. Just regards to the upgrading of public lighting with  
23 LED, aside from the energy saving and the reduced maintenance that goes with LED lights, I  
24 have also been told that LED lighting is - it's great for viewing CCTV for Garda and other  
25 CCTV. Now I see it's likely to be undertaken on a regional basis. Does that mean you will be  
26 doing it region by region, or you will be doing sections within regions and how do you decide  
27 where the LED lighting will go and do you liaise with Gardaí on that? Thank you Chairman.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Nolan.

29 Cllr NOLAN: Again just to echo what Cllr Cullen said, what will be the situation be with the  
30 funding for footpaths and will it be allocated on a Municipal District level? Because as you  
31 mentioned there is a footpath in the Wicklow district that is in urgent need, and will we have a  
32 say and discretion over where that funding goes? Thank you

33 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Okay just to take it from the top. The development contributions where  
34 they can be spent is set out in the development contribution scheme. There isn't - we can only

1 apply them to schemes that are within the development contribution scheme.

2  
3 The local road outturn, there is 500,000 there on that, and that relates to a severe weather  
4 allocation that - which was additional to our ordinary allocation that we got. We got two  
5 tranches of it during the year and it amounted in total to about a million. So it's a one-off. It was  
6 for damage caused by flooding by and large. And it - well I hope it doesn't appear next year. It  
7 would be a relief if it didn't.

8  
9 The junction for Ballinaclash there on the Rathdrum to Arklow road, yeah, I think it's been in  
10 discussion since forever. It will require land acquisition and certainly it is worth keeping on the  
11 agenda because it is a particularly difficult junction, especially when you are coming from  
12 Ballinaclash and turning either way to Arklow or Rathdrum.

13  
14 Glenview park, that will be a matter for the district to address. But of course the district can only  
15 address it if we provide the money for it, the NRA have said they're not going to provide any  
16 money for it, they've categorically said that, we have beaten that drum, it's not going anywhere at  
17 this stage.

18  
19 The footpath allocation, look at, it's not going to change the world but it will certainly make a  
20 start. It actually relates to the point about public liability claims as well. A lot of public liability  
21 claims are trips and falls on footpaths where footpaths are in poor condition. I would see it being  
22 allocated for footpath replacement or new footpaths rather than just ordinary small repairs. I  
23 think we should do something that's worthwhile with it and something that's significant.

24  
25 The allocation of it, we have a formula that we allocate roads income on. If we were to do it on  
26 the basis of road length as the Manager for the Baltinglass district of course would be very happy  
27 because most of the roads are over there, but it just doesn't work like that. I would see every  
28 Municipal District getting an allocation, but it's not going to be huge, and then I think that will  
29 go through the Municipal District meetings where that money is going to be spent, what footpath  
30 is either going to be provided or replaced.

31  
32 The staff recruitment is certainly welcome, because it is at critical levels in some districts, where  
33 for instance you have only got to have somebody out sick for a day and maybe then you don't  
34 have enough from health and safety point of view, you don't have enough of a crew to go out and



1 actually do anything significant. You have to go and reorganise your workload. So I think  
2 everybody in the room recognises that there is a need for that recruitment to take place, and I  
3 would just urge when you get down to the tyre kicking at the end of it, that there is staff  
4 recruitment and the money for that stays in place. I think - I hope everybody would agree with  
5 that.

6  
7 The public lighting, yes it does give - it gives a different light, it gives a white light, so it is  
8 probably better for CCTV. There is 150,000 in there this year to provide LED lights. The cost,  
9 per light, is about 400 euro. So you are going to get about 380 units now. It gets a little  
10 complicated after that. Because we did a pilot scheme, or we are about to do a pilot scheme in  
11 Arklow and your immediate reaction will be we will take out all the older estates where the  
12 problems are. So we went and did an assessment on that, and when you look at it, when you  
13 look at replacing the head, in most cases you have to replace the column as well. And the cost of  
14 replacing the column is about another 400 euro. So I think we will do an assessment on the  
15 estates that we are doing at the moment as a pilot, and then we will move on from there. I think  
16 really to be honest with you, it needs a national initiative I think. There is two elements to it:  
17 One is the maintenance of our older lighting stock, which is becoming increasingly more  
18 expensive. But the other part of it is our energy consumption. To bring down our energy  
19 consumption and we have a target to reduce our energy consumption by 33%. And our biggest  
20 energy user is public lighting. And I would say that's the same in most local authorities. So I  
21 think even from the point of view of procurement, if these are procured nationally, we might get  
22 better value. We have gone through our own procurement process. So, yeah, look at, we will be  
23 moving it around the county. But again at 150,000, it's not going to - it will be a contribution  
24 towards it, but it's not going to be a significant contribution. Probably if we spent all that and  
25 didn't have to replace any columns, we might reduce our energy consumption by 1.5% or  
26 something like that, something tiny.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Tommy Cullen there.

28 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr Quirke and the work he has  
29 done there, and the roads department of this Council is one of the most effective sections dealing  
30 with very limited resources but we are having very good outcomes and I think Mr Quirke is a  
31 very efficient manager of that.

32  
33 Chairman, the thing about public lighting, I think we need more public lighting, not new light  
34 bulbs. We need more public lighting out there, because public lighting is very important,

1 particularly in rural areas, it's a great means of deflecting crime in rural areas. I think the figure  
2 shows that where there is rural lighting, crime levels fall drastically.

3  
4 The other thing is Chairman is that the N81, the upgrade of the N81 from Hollywood into  
5 Dublin, really we need to see some action by the Government on that. I know we have proposed  
6 it there in Naas, but we really can't continue much longer to see West Wicklow being left the  
7 poor cousin. You have the N11 serving the whole spine of the east and North Wicklow down to  
8 Arklow, but we have West Wicklow with a very poor national road infrastructure for the N81  
9 and it's very unfair to all the commuters having to travel into Dublin now no matter what  
10 roadworks do, I think they do need an upgrade on to that carriageway that's planned from  
11 Hollywood into Tallaght. I think the road commuters in West Wicklow deserve that to be  
12 expedited by the Government as quickly as possible on that Chairman.

13  
14 And also about the hangman's corner there, I know that's a proposal of mine, do away with that  
15 bend there up in Naas at the Development Plan. I think at Manger and Stratford, that needs to be  
16 dealt with urgently because of all the injuries and deaths that have occurred on that. I would pay  
17 tribute to the outdoor staff and the engineering staff and the road staff of the county. They're  
18 very hard-working people and they deserve full credit. Thank you Chairman.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Miriam Murphy.

20 Cllr MURPHY: I would like to echo what Cllr Cullen said. I think the maintenance staff is one  
21 of another link of the vital staff of the County Council. Without these people on the ground a lot  
22 of the work just, there is no hope for improvements. And we need skilled staff for this. I want to  
23 ask what's the breakdown for the Municipal Districts in the new staffing level of the maintenance  
24 staff.

25  
26 Also two areas that I suppose is important to highlight is areas where there is bus stops and I  
27 know just specifically in Arklow, at this parade ground, that's where the buses pull in there, and  
28 the lighting is non-existent, and it has been brought up with us before, but I think we need to  
29 bring it back to the agenda again, both municipal and County Council. And also there has been  
30 new LCD lights put up on the Wexford road, but there has been a lot of complaints about not  
31 being bright enough and maybe that could be looked at again Sean if we could. It's all one side,  
32 no lighting on the opposite side and I don't know whether it's just the lights are not strong  
33 enough, the new system. So maybe that's an important thing to bring up as well.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

1 Cllr RUTTLE: Sorry Cathaoirleach, I am just referring to the public lighting and missed the  
2 earlier part of Mr Quirke, about the LED. That's an improvement to the system not just the  
3 actual provision of more public lighting? Because we all have receipts of application where  
4 lighting would be required, new lighting. We have had requests from say in Deer Park in  
5 Baltinglass and different places throughout our own electoral area, and it's not the fact that it  
6 needs to be improved, it's not there at all. So I am determined that some level of new  
7 improvement would come on that with extra lighting granted. Okay thank you.

8 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Just very briefly, recruitment will be throughout, I don't have the  
9 numbers in front of me but each Municipal District, we have had retirements in each Municipal  
10 District so the recruitments will be in each district. The interview process is happening at the  
11 moment. So they'll be ready to go for the New Year when the money is there hopefully. I know  
12 there is an issue, at least some issues have been raised on the Wexford road about the LED  
13 lights. It's probably one light in particular which is a little bit further back on the footpath. We  
14 are going to do a test on it to see what the actual level of light is on the far side of the road.

15 Cllr MURPHY: None.

16 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Ah no, I have been on it too. There is light on the other side of the road  
17 but we will test it and see whether it's adequate or not. And yeah, the LEDs, it is an  
18 improvement to the system and it gives you greater efficiency and they're cheaper to run of  
19 course, which is the important thing. You bring down your energy bill, so it's important that we  
20 get into that and get it done because our energy bill, despite procurement and so on continues to  
21 rise.

22 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: But you need a pole for that and there is no new lights provision. And  
23 the ESB don't want them on their poles anymore, they want separate lights.

24 MS CROMIE: Cllr Fox, our insurance is increasing from 2.2 million to 2.5 million. Our public  
25 liability is about 1.2 million, the increase is to do with prevailing claims, and environment.  
26 Some the increase in the insurance is going to be offset in an increase in dividend from IPB.  
27 60% of it is going to be offset.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Michael. Programmes three and five we will take them together.  
29 Michael.

30 MS CROMIE: The total draft expenditure for 2017 of 8,127,363 and a total draft income of  
31 7,651,102. And it's detailed on pages 77 to 78 in the draft budget book. And then division E,  
32 environmental services, the total draft expenditure estimate for 2017 of 11,783,307 and a total  
33 draft income of 1,877,041 detailed on pages 82 to 84 in the draft budget book.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Any questions?

1 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Could she answer my question as to why we are spending less on housing  
2 than we are taking in?

3 MS CROMIE: Sorry Cllr McLoughlin. As you know Wicklow County Council is underfunded,  
4 and there have been huge demands on our services now. We are under pressure - we have to -  
5 not under pressure, we have to provide a balanced revenue budget, expenditure has to equal  
6 income and housing are a net contributor to the budget, so yes, we are using some of the  
7 additional income in housing to fund other services in the Council.

8 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I would like to officially propose that we do not do that this year.  
9 Wherever we change estimates, we cannot in all morality take money out of housing to pay for  
10 something else, whatever else we do, I think that's a bad mistake for Wicklow.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

12 Cllr O'CONNOR: Unaccounted for water, 24%, where did that go and is that more - I assume  
13 that's water lost through dodgy pipes, is it? Has that situation improved or dis-improved since  
14 Irish Water's disastrous input?

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

16 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks Chair. This comes back to the question I had about where the LPT  
17 was being spent earlier on under environmental services. So there was money set aside using the  
18 LPT money for river management and monitoring. I am wondering is that additional and above  
19 and beyond our statutory obligations. If not why isn't that coming out of the environmental  
20 services budget rather than coming out of the extra LPT money that was brought in?

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Cllr Matthews.

22 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thanks Chairman. Just the question on "unaccounted for water", that's a  
23 24% unaccounted for, so 76% accounted for. I think the normal or accepted rate for leak  
24 detection is up around 80, 85%. So we are a little below that and I am just wondering what plans  
25 we have to improve our leak detection? Thanks Chairman.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

27 Cllr FORTUNE: Derelict sites, E1004, I see we have nothing in there at all. I am just  
28 wondering why that would be the case? Because in a number of our villages and towns there are  
29 a number of derelict locations and I would - maybe if there is no budget in there, I think can we -  
30 I think we need to turn the valve up on getting the owners of the sites to deal with them, because  
31 in some instances while they've dealt with them, they've only dealt with them in a very at best  
32 superficial way. So I would just like - if we are not putting a fund in to do something, I think we  
33 need to look very seriously at immediately following up the various sites and making sure that  
34 the owners are either going to develop them or they're going to make them less of an eyesore. I

1 just think it's an area that can get ignored through probably no-one's fault but there are a number  
2 of them around the place and there is one or two in my own area that I would like to see  
3 addressed, particularly in the village that I live in.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor Miriam Murphy.

5 Cllr MURPHY: I would like to echo what Cllr Fortune has said. I think it's an area that - it's a  
6 grey area, and again in the municipal groups, it comes up on the agenda probably once a year,  
7 talked about and then it's gone off the agenda until the following year. But it gives a whole, I  
8 suppose sad looking image of a town, when you are coming through, and there is seven, eight,  
9 12 derelict sites on the first image of the town that you meet. And I know that with great effort  
10 in Municipal Districts, that contact does be made with the owners, but there is no response made  
11 back. And I think somewhere down the line that the municipal groups have to take  
12 responsibility of that, and take the next step further. Because again, the image of our town,  
13 where we are working hard to try and improve, is being left behind because of these derelict  
14 sites. So I am glad to see it being brought up, and I think there should be a provision in for that.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Snell.

16 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I am just looking for maybe an explanation in  
17 regards to the maintenance of burial grounds. It's up 69,000. And service support costs is up  
18 8,000. I am just wondering if we could have some sort of a breakdown on that? Is it anything to  
19 do with the - we no longer have the burial board and I suppose there has been new  
20 subcommittees and that set up to look at burial grounds and policies and the like around it. But I  
21 am just wondering where that significant increase is coming from? And again, E1301, water  
22 quality management, the increase, I would love to have a breakdown on that please.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mary Kavanagh.

24 Cllr KAVANAGH: I just want to make a comment in relation to a statement. Part of the  
25 statement made by the Chief Executive in - at this beginning of the report here. It says,  
26 "Wicklow spends less per person than the national average across all services. We have already  
27 made submissions to address this under-resourcing with Central Government." I just think that's  
28 an absolutely appalling statistic. It's a desperate state of affairs that we are spending less per  
29 person than the national average across all services. So I just want to know why is this the case?  
30 And how is it going to be addressed? Because Wicklow is a very vibrant county. It's very close  
31 to Dublin, so we get a huge spill over of people who commute between Wicklow and Dublin.  
32 It's a growing county. It's a huge area when you look at the size of it on the map. So why are we  
33 getting less, spending less per person than the national average? I think that's just an appalling  
34 state of affairs. We are expected to do more and more with less than the average. So why? And

1 how are we going to solve that problem?

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke. Cathaoirleach, I would just like to ask the question there to  
3 the Director of Services in relation to burial grounds, as you know Cathaoirleach, you and I have  
4 a joint Notice of Motion in that hasn't been dealt with yet calling on the Council to extend  
5 insurance cover to voluntary groups who are actually maintaining graveyards for the County  
6 Council around the county. Are there any plans to act on that motion Director, seeing as these  
7 small committees, there wouldn't be that many of them, but there is a handful of them there, they  
8 run public liability insurance to carry out the works that they're doing and they're doing a great  
9 service to the community, but they are under ferocious pressure to keep going, as you know  
10 public liability insurance cover, that the Council have demanded of something like 6 and a half  
11 million minimum is costing around 800 euro per committee, and gobbling up any grants they've  
12 been able to get from the County Council and little bits of local fundraising they've done. And I  
13 was hoping that the Council would be able to extend insurance cover for public liability to those  
14 small groups, they're working in tandem with two projects, but their future is in jeopardy unless  
15 we do something to help them.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

17 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Thanks very much indeed Chairman. On the unaccounted for water, the  
18 measurement of unaccounted for water has changed in the last 12 months by -- including the  
19 (INAUDIBLE) going through the county. Before this any of the trunk means that went through  
20 the county, you had a 24 inch and 34 inch coming from Roundwood and all supplies off them.  
21 This was measured in the Dublin region rather than being measured in the Bray area. So any  
22 leakage in the large pipes were taken into account in Dublin's sphere rather than our own. That's  
23 where you get some difference in figures there in unaccounted for water previously and  
24 unaccounted for water today. Just to say this is something that's being done by Wicklow County  
25 Council for Irish Water, just that has - that rider has to be put on it.

26

27 And leak detection is ongoing in the county at all times. There is a staff of six people  
28 approximately working on it at any one time.

29

30 The derelict sites, that will be dealt with by Des O'Brien under planning. So he will come back  
31 there.

32

33 Just on, Councillor John Snell raised the question regarding burial grounds. Basically, this is  
34 staff changes and so on in that it is proposed that caretakers will be funded in future directly out

1 of the Municipal District staff, rather than being charged up directly to the Council. That is  
2 where - that was planned for last year, this year the staff are still in place in the burial grounds.

3  
4 You asked another question about 220,000, I didn't quite get that, someone was just talking to  
5 me at the time, I didn't pick it up properly.

6 Cllr SNELL: It's E1301, water quality management, last year was 166,891, and this year it's  
7 386,491. An increase of 220,000. Water quality management, page 83.

8 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Yeah, that's okay.

9 MS CROMIE: Can I jump in there, that's just to do with the laboratory, so we have budgeted for  
10 additional lab technicians. Also there are numerous directives out there that we have to comply  
11 with, so with our river basin monitoring, with our oil pollution and that's what that budget is for.

12 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Same thing in monitoring of rivers, that's that one.

13  
14 Just Cllr Bourke raised the question regarding are there any plans included for groups that  
15 maintain burial grounds. There is no funding in the budget for that at the moment. Now any one  
16 of these groups that's assimilated into the Tidy Towns would be, the insurance should be covered  
17 in that case, but not otherwise and we have no plans in our budget at this point and time for that.

18  
19 The Central Government, the cost per person across all services, maybe finance might be able to  
20 answer something on that if there is...

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just let Cllr Walsh in there for a second.

22 Cllr WALSH: Just one second there, on page 34 there under the objectives, there is reference to  
23 an additional funding sought for 2017 to assist Municipal Districts in waste clean-ups for 20,000.  
24 Where is it envisaged that money will come from or is it envisaged that it will be supplied? Page  
25 34 there on the front of the book there.

26 DIRECTOR GUINEY: That's a figure basically that assistance will be given to clean any areas  
27 that would have litter or any dumping that's carried out, assistance would be given to the districts  
28 in the sum of 20,000 overall for that.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Annesley?

30 Cllr ANNESLEY: Just to come in there, sorry Cathaoirleach, just come in on the Tidy Towns  
31 insurance policies, a lot of these graveyards are in small villages and they're not -- no Tidy  
32 Towns groups, say for example Kilcarra, they have a small group there that do the graveyard.  
33 They have to fund their own insurance, they wouldn't be covered under Arklow Tidy Towns  
34 insurance. Arklow Tidy Town insurance, like Wicklow County Council insurance has gone

1 through the roof as well. You expect the Tidy Towns to take on this extra expenditure insuring  
2 these voluntary groups that are doing this Council a service by doing our work, by maintaining  
3 the graveyards. You know, I don't think that answer is satisfactory really. And I know we have  
4 got a budget meeting here and we can't just pluck money out of the sky, but I don't think that  
5 answer is acceptable to the - Cllr Bourke, he asked the question, but just to come in and support  
6 him. Because I know in our area, there is about ten voluntary groups that look after the  
7 graveyards, so I can't speak for the rest of the county, but I am sure they're all the same. Thank  
8 you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

10 Cllr WHITMORE: I don't think Michael answered my question relating to the increase in the  
11 river on monitoring that's being paid for out of the additional LPT money. I would be interested  
12 to know as far as I am aware, there hasn't been any additional legislative requirements on us to  
13 monitor, so I am wondering why there has been such an increase in the past year? Is it the case  
14 that we haven't been monitoring properly prior to that or are we now increasing our monitoring  
15 beyond our legislative and statutory obligations?

16 DIRECTOR GUINEY: That was answered, I thought that question was answered by finance,  
17 but -- this is extra monitoring that's required on rivers, we also need consultants, or whatever, to  
18 do air and noise pollution monitoring and also we need to carry out an oil spill response  
19 emergency plan.

20 Cllr WHITMORE: Is there extra - in the past year, has there extra statutory requirements been  
21 placed on the Council to provide this monitoring, is my question?

22 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Well we had, up to now, we haven't been doing as much monitoring as  
23 we probably should have been doing, so we intend to up the ante and do it at this stage.

24 Cllr WHITMORE: We haven't been fulfilling our statutory obligations in monitoring to this  
25 point, is that the case?

26 DIRECTOR GUINEY: You could argue that, but under the Water Framework Directive, an  
27 awful lot of new legislation has come in since the beginning of 2016 and more is going to come  
28 in in 2017.

29 Cllr WHITMORE: But there is additional requirements? Okay.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: You want to say something?

31 MS CROMIE: Just to say Cllr Whitmore that even though there is these additional  
32 requirements, it doesn't come with a funding source.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Vincent Blake.

34 Cllr BLAKE: Just to go back to what Councillors Annesley and Bourke were asking about, the



1 small committees out there looking after a lot of the graveyards and a lot of Council owned  
2 property. Some of which are no longer in use by the local authorities, have been closed up, but  
3 nevertheless, a lot of families have relatives buried in them and there is a need to look after them.  
4 At the Baltinglass meeting back a number of months ago, we did discuss this particular issue,  
5 and we did ask that the Council officials would look at the possibility of asking the Irish Public  
6 Bodies would they consider covering their or extending their insurance to cover these particular  
7 organisations. If they're properly constituted and have a proper constitution and they're probably  
8 structured in that regards whether they're affiliated to the Tidy Towns or wherever else, but there  
9 is a number of them out there that are well structured well organised organisations, and I would  
10 ask that we ask Irish Public Bodies to consider covering the insurance in that aspect of it.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

12 Cllr Shay CULLEN: It's to do really with the whole area of illegal dumping and I am just  
13 referring to page 34 here in our book. But whilst the PURE Project is doing fantastic work in  
14 removing waste dumped on public areas and public lands, there is a growing problem with waste  
15 being dumped on private land. And unfortunately the landowners are responsible, it seems, to  
16 tidy up this waste, when it's been dumped. And I suppose further on from Cllr Walsh speaking  
17 about the funding sought for waste clean-ups, I think it's imperative that this issue doesn't - is not  
18 let get out of control, because there is undesirable people at the moment who are looking for  
19 opportunities to dump waste in privately owned areas, and I suppose to push it on a bit further as  
20 well, there seems to be huge delays in the whole area of prosecution in this area. Certainly if  
21 there is evidence of where this waste is coming from. So it's something I think we need to really  
22 push from the point of view of keeping funding in place for these clean-ups, because it's a  
23 consequence that landowners are being left with, which is unfortunately, it's nothing to do with  
24 them, so it's something I feel very passionate about, thank you.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mary McDonald.

26 Cllr McDONALD: It's just a quick question for further clarification on what Cllr Whitmore was  
27 talking about there. If you go back to the E1301, the water quality management. As Cllr Snell  
28 said there has been a sizeable increase, but Debbie you said there that the extra services that were  
29 providing the monitoring of the river basins and on the oil pollution and that, comes under that  
30 code. Is that -- 118,000 that's been allocated from the property tax budget, is that included in  
31 that 300,000 odd or is that extra that's coming from the property tax? It was on the hand-out you  
32 gave us, 118,000.

33 MS CROMIE: Sorry, Cllr Murphy, what line are you talking about there?

34 Cllr McDONALD: E1301, when Councillor Snell and Whitmore were talking about it, you said

1 the extra money would go to the monitoring of the river basins, the oil pollution and the likes.  
2 But I noticed in the hand-out you gave us, there is 118,000 allocated from the extra money from  
3 the property tax to that particular activity, is that included in that 300,000 odd or is that extra?

4 MS CROMIE: It would be and also I suppose in relation to how we allocate our income, we get  
5 income from many different sources, as like we get it from rates as well, so I am just saying part  
6 of the LPT, some of the LPT will go towards funding that, and some of it is going to come from  
7 other sources of income like our rates and all that.

8 Cllr McDONALD: That's grand, thank you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Tommy Cullen.

10 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, yeah, thank you. Yes Chairman with regards to water and  
11 sewage services and that, I have said this before and I'll say it again, I really think those services  
12 have to be withdrawn from Irish Water. Rush has become a disaster on a daily basis and I really  
13 think the running of sanitary services and water should be returned immediately to local  
14 authorities. Because we have an excellent staff here in the Council working very hard in  
15 providing the services, but I think at the moment they're being handicapped by the stringent - the  
16 way they're being - handicapped in getting sanctions for works by Irish Water. Just for ordinary  
17 leaks in someone's garden or wherever. We really do need that to be clarified as soon as  
18 possible. That the running of the sanitary services, water and sewage and all, should be returned  
19 to local authorities, who have a long history of dealing with it. I want to pay tribute to Mr  
20 Guiney and his staff and to Bryan Doyle when he was there as well in case he would feel  
21 offended, this Council always had a good record of providing sanitary services and I think it  
22 should be returned to them and we as a Council should be supporting that, I think we do. Thank  
23 you Chairman.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

25 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I just wanted to flag one issue in the environmental  
26 services area, and it's a matter of a lot of importance to my constituents. It's not going to be  
27 sorted today, but Bray needs a full-time Fire Service, I think that will have to be something that's  
28 addressed in the future.

29  
30 Secondly on the Tidy Towns matters there, I think in total it's about 10,000 odd goes to the Tidy  
31 Towns and then there is some - that's between a bunch of them. And then there is some  
32 Municipal District money that goes their way too. Is there any possible way that that could be  
33 increased today? Because I think it's mentioned somewhere in here that that's remarkable value  
34 for money, the amount of work that the Tidy Towns organisations do around the county. It's

1 very, very cheap for what they do, and I think that anything we can do for the Tidy Towns  
2 committees within the county should be done. Thanks.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

4 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Yeah, just I would like to pick up on a point here,  
5 that I believe that we should have a centralised water system, certainly the town of Greystones  
6 has a very much better water system now than it had when this Council and Dublin City Council  
7 were running it. We used to have every May, a water shortage which were due to some algae  
8 bloom, which there was a great mystery about. The only thing that we knew about it in  
9 Greystones was the water was cut off. At one time when there was a gourmet festival in  
10 Greystones, which wrecked it, and the Wicklow Water actually went into Dublin and there was  
11 no water cut off in Dublin. But anyway, since then, since the formation of Irish Water,  
12 significant investment has been made in upgrading pumping systems and other things, and the  
13 result is that the water doesn't get cut off in May.

14  
15 So the money has been investigated, which we tried for years to get both this Council and Dublin  
16 City Council who are running the system to do and they all claimed it was a great mystery as to  
17 why the water was cut off in Greystones. Anyway, this new body, Irish Water managed to find  
18 out why and dealt with it.

19  
20 Secondly, I noticed all around the area that in relation to drainage there used to be holes in the  
21 pavements, we could see down into the drains, and I more or less thought this was the normal  
22 way a Council would maintain a drainage system. But actually Irish Water has gone around and  
23 filled all those up, changed all the manholes at what looks like considerable expense and there is  
24 a much improved system there. This is separate to the issue of who or whatever pays for it, but I  
25 believe that what we have now is much better than what we had before, thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Michael do you want to come back in there?

27 DIRECTOR GUINEY: I'll yeah. Just on the illegal dumping and waste being dumped on  
28 private lands, well private lands really would need to be secured to make sure that waste isn't  
29 dumped on them. There is really - you can't expect the Council to go in and start cleaning  
30 private land, that ends up in another issue. If waste is dumped on privately owned land, the  
31 Council will serve a notice on the owner to clean it up and also to secure the place so that it will  
32 not happen again.

33  
34 The Council does follow up on any illegal dumping and if there is any evidence needed, we

1 gather it and then a case is brought. And we are very much successful in this I would say. There  
2 was I think 1,406 complaints last year, various environmental complaints that have been closed  
3 out.

4  
5 Just regarding the Tidy Towns - funding is also made available through CS, CCSD on that, that  
6 C and E. So the environmental services, we have the environmental awareness officer, she  
7 works very closely with the Tidy Towns in order that that success is brought by the Tidy Towns.

8  
9 Just I would like to thank Cllr Mitchell for his comments, but just to say water wasn't going off  
10 every May, I would just like to make that point. It wasn't going off every May.

11 Cllr MITCHELL: Three Mays in succession.

12 DIRECTOR GUINEY: That's okay, I am not going to debate on that, thank you anyway.

13 Cllr BLAKE: Could I just ask again there we ask (INAUDIBLE), about the possibility of  
14 covering the aspect of the insurance of some of the local organisations that Cllr Bourke and Cllr  
15 Annesley brought up. Can we follow up again on that?

16 MS GALLAGHER: That has been done already, you have a motion down and I don't think  
17 there is a response, but it has been done, there is a response from Irish Public Bodies.

18 Cllr BLAKE: There is a response from them?

19 MS GALLAGHER: Yeah, there is a response from Irish Public Bodies, because it was  
20 ascertained because the motion is down, which is regional, I don't have the answer, but we will  
21 have it for the next meeting.

22 Cllr BLAKE: All right.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we will go on to development management, number four.

24 MS CROMIE: Cllr Kavanagh, just in relation to the commentary, like why we spend less is  
25 because we have less to spend. And we have always argued that we are underfunded. Also with  
26 the Department saying that - tell us that our minimum requirement for funding is 8.5 million and  
27 we would always dispute that. We feel we are actually underfunded and we have made  
28 submissions to the Department to review this.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: All right? We will go on to development management?

30 MS CROMIE: Division D, development management, the total draft expenditure estimate for  
31 2017 of 11,333,332, and a total draft income of 4,859,091, and it's detailed on pages 79 to 81 in  
32 the draft budget book.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

34 Cllr BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, first of all, I see there is an increase in the amount expected in

1 planning fees next year. Of close enough 170,000 which may possibly be an underestimate, but  
2 anyway, it's obviously an increase. But that will also mean there will be an increase in levies  
3 applicable to planning permissions that are granted and this is the issue I want to raise now  
4 Cathaoirleach, you remember under the roads programme, I said I wanted to raise the issue about  
5 planning levies and you said I could raise it at this point in time. Now I contacted the finance  
6 officer, Finance Director last week just to get a few figures from her in terms of how much  
7 money we are actually holding in the bank at the moment attributable to development levies, in  
8 the capital account, and I know we are going to be told this is only a current expenditure, current  
9 income budget. But the fact is that we are holding substantial amounts of money at the moment  
10 in our bank accounts and probably in investments and so on. As a result of people who paid  
11 levies on developments.

12  
13 And while we do have some commitments, we also as far as I am concerned have money there  
14 that we could spend to augment the expenditure that's coming under the budget, there are other  
15 items that we could spend on capital works I think within the county that would give people at  
16 least some return for what they're paying in their property tax and so on.

17  
18 Now just to give a couple of figures, at the moment the current - this is from Debbie now, the  
19 current development levy for Wicklow County Council, not including former Town Councils, is  
20 31.6 million. We actually have in hand that amount of money. Now I know Debbie will rush in  
21 to say some of that is actually owed to us by a debtor, and then we are supposed to be carrying  
22 some of it as a debt on the Wicklow Port Access road, for which we are paying a loan.

23  
24 But in fact we do have that money. We certainly have a substantial amount of it. But she then  
25 goes on to explain that actually the Government, the Department, the Minister as usual, is more  
26 or less stopping us, if you like, from using any of that income on work that we might want to do.  
27 And that we have to specifically ask for permission if we want to spend any of this money.

28  
29 Now I wasn't here when the last capital levy scheme was passed, it was probably in the time of  
30 the last Council. But as I understand it passing a development levy scheme is a reserve function  
31 of the members of the Council and if we want to make alterations to the development levy  
32 scheme, I think we are authorised to do that. I want to propose, and it doesn't have to form part  
33 of the budget discussions today I accept that, but I want to propose we set up an infrastructure  
34 fund from which some the capital monies could be spent in each of the five Municipal Districts

1 based on the priorities given to those particular schemes by the Municipal Districts. I mean in  
2 Bray's case, for instance, at the moment, this Council is holding almost €7 million that came  
3 from Bray, attributable to planning and development levies. And I am sure there are other  
4 figures in the accounts coming from the other four districts.

5  
6 Now we ran into a very specific problem under roads and this is why I said to you, Chairman, I  
7 wanted to raise the roads at this point, where seriously substandard work was done on six private  
8 estates in Bray, where the roads were allegedly resurfaced, but in fact they were made a hell of a  
9 lot worse, and the Director described it as necessary preventative maintenance. My feeling is  
10 that actually what we need to do is a complete refurbishment of some of the road networks in our  
11 district, and I am sure in other districts as well. And as far as I am concerned, that's not  
12 maintenance, that's capital works. And what I am really saying is that we have control over the  
13 levies as members. We can change the levy scheme as members if we decide to do so. And I  
14 want to propose that as I say, not necessarily here and now Cathaoirleach, I know we are talking  
15 about current figures today, but I want to propose that this item become an item on the next  
16 meeting, next week, where we actually decide how we can dip into that fund and spend some of  
17 that money on much needed infrastructure to augment whatever is going to come out of this  
18 document here today. Because I think it's essential that we do that. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

20 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Just yeah, I asked the question there from Michael  
21 Guiney, and he said Mr O'Brien would deal with it under derelict sites. I just want to find out  
22 what kind of budget have we in place, and more importantly what plan have we got, because  
23 there are a number of derelict sites in the various towns and villages and I made reference to my  
24 own village, and if we don't have funding in to do some things ourselves, what are we going to  
25 do to make sure people are going to develop these sites or at least make them respectable and not  
26 an eyesore? That's the question I asked earlier.

27  
28 In addition to that, I presume, I am just looking at the development management section, I  
29 presume we are going to deal with everything in that, so I have a question under D0501 in  
30 regards to tourism promotion. I understand from the figure of 209,000 that there are -- there is  
31 80,000 in there for Wicklow Tourism. Which I understand is made up of 60,000 plus 20,000 for  
32 a particular project. And the question I would ask in addition to that is what about Bray  
33 Tourism? I would be curious to see what the figure is for Bray Tourism out of that amount.

1 And then moving on to the community and enterprise function, the social inclusion, I would see  
2 can we get a breakdown of the figures that are to be given there? And then on the next one  
3 under unfinished housing estates, we have 25,000 in, it just seems a very small figure. I am just  
4 wondering what we intend or what will our plans be to do with that? And the same would apply  
5 to building control, inspection costs of 88,000. It just seems like quite a small figure. Again I  
6 would be curious to see what our plans are to do with that. Thanks Chair.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan, we need a seconder for your proposal.

8 Cllr WHITMORE: I'll second that.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

10 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks I was just coming in to second Cllr Behan's proposal. I think it's  
11 really important actually at this stage that we take and revisit the development levies. Where the  
12 money is and how it's been allocated. Cllr Mitchell did an analysis recently on the spend of the  
13 development levies and the Greystones Municipal District gets minimal payback from the  
14 development levies, as opposed to the other districts. Now I do realise there has to be a  
15 socialisation across the county, but the - an enormous amount of the development that's  
16 happening at the moment is in the Greystones district and there does need to be recognition  
17 within the development levy spend of the additional pressure that that development is putting on  
18 the district. And I -- one of the things that I think we should look at is whether or not a certain  
19 amount, a percentage of development levies collected within a district should be ring-fenced for  
20 that district. I think we need to have a very significant and serious look at where the money is  
21 being spent. I mean in the Greystones area, we have I think maybe three or four developments  
22 going on a very, very narrow back road where a lot of children have to get in and out of school  
23 and it's highly dangerous and there is no money available for that. So I absolutely second Cllr  
24 Behan's motion on that.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Tommy Cullen.

26 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: Chairman, can we have an item, Chairman, on the next agenda of the  
27 Council to deal with planning of graveyards? Because we have an absurdity now where in the  
28 graveyards, where the Council are insisting that the head stone would go in an anti-christian way  
29 that the head stone would be put at the feet rather than the head. It's turning over 2,000 years of  
30 Christian practice on its head.

31  
32 Chairman, these are the planning regulations that have been brought in and they're causing great  
33 distress to many people. I see some people here laughing about it. It's no laughing matter and  
34 other Councillors here can note, there is people in tears. I had two people on to me over the

1 weekend about these regulations and these planning regulations where they're now insisting that  
2 they would do the complete opposite to the -- the Council's insisting on these regulations, the  
3 complete opposite than what is normal Christian burial practices. There is a report being - I am  
4 not asking Mr O'Brien to give me an answer to this today, but there is a report being done by a  
5 committee.

6 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: It's a previous...

7 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: It's a planning issue. Well they're saying this is a planning issue, this is  
8 what the people are being told. Chairman, I accept that, okay, but could we have this thing on  
9 the agenda about the graves at the next Council meeting and there is a report being - has been  
10 done by the Council, this committee. Could we have that?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: It should go to the SPC first.

12 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: It's already been there. I don't -- Chairman, this is causing a lot of  
13 distress for many families in County Wicklow, these new regulations that somebody has dreamt  
14 up that's overturning over 2,000 years of Christian practice of burial and it's causing huge  
15 offence and concern to people. And that their loved ones are not being buried, or the head stones  
16 can't be put where they normally should be. If it happened to anyone's family here they'd be  
17 concerned. I am dealing with very distressed people over this. I would ask you Chairman to  
18 consider having this on the next agenda. There is a report has been done by the Council, could  
19 you have it on the agenda for the next meeting?

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: I want to talk to the relevant people about that myself, because it's never  
21 come up to the SPC as far as I am aware.

22 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: There was a committee set up by the Council -- I understand the report  
23 has been done.

24 Cllr MITCHELL: As Chair of the SPC, the issue has been discussed at some length, not the  
25 issue about where the headstone is placed, that hasn't been discussed at all. But there is an issue  
26 which - about grass and graveyards and headstones and surrounds. But there are a number of  
27 maybe easier issues, which the SPC has got a recommendation of what should be done, which  
28 will have to come before the Council. But it doesn't include whether it's placed at somebody's  
29 head or their feet, the stone. As far as I know, there is no regulation on that. Maybe the staff  
30 officer would confirm that that's the case. But I would be - I have never heard in any of these  
31 discussions anything about the location of the stone.

32 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: You just haven't dealt with it, but I can give you the details and the  
33 names of the families, but I don't want to do that in a public forum.

34 Cllr MITCHELL: It's also not a budget matter.



1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Look...

2 Cllr Tommy CULLEN: We are overturning 2,000 years of Christian practice is not acceptable to  
3 me. It's an outrage that it even should come to this.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Murphy.

5 Cllr MURPHY: I would just like to talk on the tourism promotion there, and as you know, we  
6 got a presentation last week, I am sure we were here last week, from both the vice-Chairman and  
7 the manager of Wicklow Tourism. And as you can see there is a new structure and a lot of new  
8 plans on the table. Now there is one or two questions probably wasn't fully answered to  
9 members and that shouldn't be a problem if they want to send back in the questions, it will be  
10 returned back. But again we sit here in the Chamber or whatever, and people probably saying  
11 about Wicklow Tourism and the money and looking for extra funding. But we have to realise  
12 that these members are members of Wicklow Tourism, are people who are in our Municipal  
13 Districts, and are members of our tourism committee, and they pay membership. And we are  
14 there sitting on the board to represent these people who need that link and I think probably some  
15 - for a long time, Wicklow Tourism was probably just not known exactly, it came to a level of  
16 what we are doing or whatever, and over the years they have done a lot of good work and hard  
17 work and very dedicated work and we would like to continue to do that, but spread our wings a  
18 little bit more. And with that, that's where the extra funding is needed. And we know that  
19 money is tight. But I think it's an area that again we probably need to up our game. We need to  
20 up our engagement with other stakeholders in our county, nationally and outside our country.  
21 And I would like the members to support the increase.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

23 Cllr WALSH: I welcome the objective there in the document to continue with the development  
24 of Wicklow County Campus, the buildings and the growth of the student numbers in the lifelong  
25 learning centre there. Also to establish it as a hub for the audio-visual industry in Wicklow. I  
26 attended a symposium there two weeks ago and there was huge interest in that, that the room  
27 was packed with interested parties from all over the country. Again there is an objective to  
28 develop the second floor of the college into classrooms and further expand it into a lifelong  
29 learning centre, as well as more enterprise space. That's a valuable commodity for the Council  
30 and I think any investment there is very worthwhile. Just on to the topic of tourism on my way  
31 down here this morning, Tourism Ireland, there was an interview there with the chief of Tourism  
32 Ireland explaining that last year there were record numbers coming into the country, ten and a  
33 half million with a spend of 5.5 billion. Any investment we have in tourism at this stage is vital,  
34 and the objective of course is that we keep competitive. Dublin is seeing capacity numbers.

1 Hotels are - rooms are full, so full capacity. So we are in an ideal position to take advantage of  
2 that situation and remain competitive and invest. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

4 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I do welcome the document with regards to  
5 Clermont. However, I feel that we are forgetting one big institute in this county and that's the  
6 Bray Institute of Further Education. Now I know it is not - it's separate per se, but I think it's  
7 time that Wicklow County Council took on board the huge effect it actually has on education,  
8 third level education in Ireland, or in Wicklow really. Because you have got this year 750  
9 students alone were actually graduated out of Bray compared to 90 in Clermont. I think there  
10 could be some way there could be a correlation, particularly if there is the film sector who is  
11 going to be developed in Clermont, there should be a correlation between the two and I would  
12 like to see BIFE mentioned in this document next year in some manner or shape or form.

13  
14 With regards to tourism, I think one of the biggest mistakes we are making in this county is we  
15 have Wicklow Tourism basically as a separate entity. You have a situation where we are giving  
16 up to 80,000 to Wicklow Tourism basically to pay rent. Whereas in other counties like Wexford  
17 for example, which has an absolutely fantastic tourism identity, it isn't separate, it isn't Bray  
18 Tourism and Wicklow Tourism whatever, Baltinglass Tourism whatever, there is one Wexford  
19 tourism. That's based from Wexford County Council. And any monies that is contributed is  
20 used for the promotion of the county. I know, I have been on the board of Wicklow Tourism for  
21 years and I understand exactly how it would -- and I am not taking away from the great work  
22 that's done or they endeavour to do. But they can do very little when they have very little  
23 resources and I do think even if you read the article, with regards to Clermont, it says it's got  
24 spaces that it wants to give out. I think it would be a huge amount of I suppose an increase in  
25 tourism for County Wicklow if we would consider maybe that's where we should be putting  
26 Wicklow Tourism and not charging rent. We are literally giving money to take back money. It  
27 just doesn't make any sense to me at all. I think an awful lot of people within the tourism sector  
28 would agree with me. I know there is nothing we can do about it for this year but I do certainly  
29 think we should be putting that on the agenda, now that the LCDC is within the County Council,  
30 the LEO office is more closely connected, there is a much bigger correlation going in within the  
31 different departments, Wicklow Tourism should be part of that as well.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

33 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Just a few questions there, the economic development, this is under  
34 building control, economic development and promotion, 675,000, I would just like maybe a

1 breakdown of what value we're getting for this. The LEO office, 973,000. Is that the running of  
2 Clermont Campus or is that a separate? And really to follow on from that, how much is  
3 Clermont Campus costing this authority to run? And then moving on to tourism, promotion,  
4 development, look I think it's imperative that we, as an authority here support Wicklow Tourism  
5 to the maximum. It's under new leadership at the moment, I think there is a new vibrancy about  
6 it. It's certainly - tourism in Wicklow and I have been talking about tourism for a long time in  
7 Wicklow, we have such potential in this county with our landscape, having the mountains, the  
8 sea and so on. It's - and the - everything that goes around our county that's promoting tourism,  
9 and there is a massive value to jobs and currency and economy coming in here and I mean it's  
10 important that we endeavour to support to our maximum and I would be calling on the  
11 councillors here to support Wicklow Tourism for what they're looking for. Thank you.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

13 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach, film and television production certainly contributes in  
14 its own way to tourism in the county. Bearing that in mind, and I know it's not particularly an  
15 issue directly connected with today, but we do talk in the draft budget about working with  
16 incoming television and feature film productions. I would like to ask if there is any update about  
17 the Ardmore studio discussion that was discussed a few weeks ago?

18 Cllr KAVANAGH: I want to support the increase in tourism along with some of the other  
19 councillors. There was - there has been an 11% increase in 2016 over the previous year and  
20 that's a hell of an increase given that we are just coming out of recession. And the revenue  
21 generated by international visitors is going to be in the region of five billion. So that's - which is  
22 a 10% increase over the previous year. So I think that the more money that we can spend on  
23 tourism for this county, the better off we are going to be in terms of jobs and in terms of trying to  
24 capitalise on what we have to offer in this county. It's been a very - it's been a real Cinderella  
25 county compared to counties like Kerry and Galway and those counties that go all out to bring  
26 tourists into their area. We have so much to offer and Ireland's Ancient East is only the  
27 beginning of it. There is so many more things we could do, but we need the resources to do it.  
28 And we have to really just chop away at that. It's one of those resources that we don't utilise to  
29 its full capacity, sadly, but hopefully that's going to change in the future. Thank you.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Darragh Nolan.

31 Cllr NOLAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Again just to echo what other councillors have said  
32 regarding tourism. This county is known as the Garden of Ireland with good reason. We have  
33 staggeringly breath-takingly beautiful scenery here. We have so many amenities, great transport  
34 links and of course probably one of the most famous medieval sites in the country in

1 Glendalough. And it's a sad fact I believe in this county we don't and I hate using the word  
2 exploit, but we really don't exploit our potential to make this a tourism hotspot in Ireland. I think  
3 one of the main things is we don't keep the tourists here for long enough. They come on day  
4 trips, and they come for very, very limited periods of time. And we are seen as something of an  
5 annex, or an expansion of Dublin and I think that's very, very wrong. We should be definitely  
6 looking to increase the volumes of tourists that we attract and keep in this county. And we  
7 definitely are not using the full potential of the amenities and the natural beauty of our county in  
8 order to attract more tourism. There are endless numbers of jobs available and we definitely  
9 don't exploit it enough. And I would think we should support and fund the tourism board here in  
10 Wicklow far more than we already are. Because there is an awful lot of money to be gained  
11 from that, and there is an awful lot of potential for growth there. Thank you.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Miriam Murphy.

13 Cllr MURPHY: I just want to go back to Cllr McLoughlin's comments there and partly agree  
14 with some of the things she said. But that is one of the aims of 2017 for the working groups of  
15 the tourism board is to review exactly those issues of where the offices, review of offices and  
16 staffing and everything else. And I mean the staff there are so dedicated and whatever, but we  
17 do feel it's in the wrong place. And again it's going down to try and reduce costs in that area.  
18 And again going back to what Cllr Nolan said, there is only areas of the tourism that we can hit  
19 at on the board. So that's what another aim of the marketing committee is, is to bring other  
20 stakeholders in and to network. I think the most important word for us in the tourism board for  
21 the next two years is networking, because we are probably being on a little island on our own to  
22 an extent, but there is a wider, wider picture that hasn't been tapped into. But again it goes back  
23 to resources.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Cllr Annesley.

25 Cllr ANNESLEY: Yeah, thanks Cathaoirleach. This is not about tourism, but I support the  
26 extra few quid for the tourism board. This is about in-house, and I think it's appropriate to bring  
27 this up here, because we have extra funding coming in next year. I know somebody says  
28 170,000 that's proposed that will come in. I feel it will be a lot more. But I feel that  
29 unfortunately this should be spent in-house here for example, the audio, the links, the screen up  
30 there, you are having trouble with the monitor, and then I go out to the dreaded car parking  
31 situation outside, we have the best architects in the county upstairs working on the building, they  
32 can't design a car park to fit the cars in, we have to use the GAA park across the road. I only  
33 have to work on the -- soccer then, okay. I am partly visually impaired, so I do apologise. I am  
34 using that excuse now! (LAUGHTER). But I just feel this is the right time to bring this up. I

1 am not blaming anyone's disability, but we are the Council for 2014 to 2019 and God only  
2 knows what's going to be here from 2019 to 24. But it's our job to look after what's coming after  
3 us and I feel now is the time to bring this up. Okay, so I feel - and it was the late Pat Kavanagh  
4 said to me one day outside the hall, I am sorry Mary for bringing her name up, I always  
5 remember bloody parking is ridiculous here Tom, I am going to put a motion for parking. This  
6 is for Pat Kavanagh. The parking outside is ridiculous and I think it has to be looked at. I know  
7 it's not the most important thing in the world and we have serious problems within this budget  
8 ourselves, but if it's not said, it won't be said. So I am just saying it, I am putting it out there.

9 Thank you Cathaoirleach

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Did you want to come in Cllr Mitchell?

11 Cllr MITCHELL: I did yeah. Just to say that I just want to agree with the previous speakers  
12 about the development levies and that they should be more properly discussed. And as Cllr  
13 Whitmore said I did an analysis of the expenditure and development levies in the last two years  
14 and virtually none of it was spent in Greystones, whereas a substantial number of houses have  
15 and are being built there at the moment and I think there is a need for a proper balance and a  
16 proper accounting on a municipal basis, as to where they're raised and spent. Thank you.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is there any questions for you in that Des, is there?

18 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I suppose I'll just take in order they came,  
19 the development levies first of all, and I suppose first of all the spending of levies isn't actually  
20 done by planning. The protocol is the planning prepares the schemes, and collects the money.  
21 But each spending directorate decides in what order they're spent.

22  
23 Having said that, the levies can't be spent just generally on something you might define as  
24 capital. But actually when you pass the levy scheme, the list of schemes are put in at that stage.  
25 On top of that, you can only spend -- sorry when you raise the money for the levies, it has to be  
26 for works that the new development will actually benefit from.

27  
28 So for instance, if you were doing a road where there is no development planned for at all, you  
29 might not be able to put that on to the development scheme, or if only a small part of the road  
30 that was being upgraded would be used by new development, you might be able to allow for  
31 10%, but you would have to put in 90% from own resources. So the levies scheme is almost a  
32 contract with the developers, and developers could be a one-off house or a multi-house scheme  
33 or a factory, to say that when you are doing your development, you have to pay a fair share  
34 towards infrastructure that will facilitate your development. So it has to be new infrastructure, it

1 has to be new infrastructure that benefits development itself. And if you look at the development  
2 levy scheme, you will see a list of projects on it, and that's all you can actually do. So there is no  
3 discretion. Discretion is when you actually make the scheme, discretion actually isn't that you  
4 can decide to spend it on a list of things that you think are beneficial.

5  
6 I suppose one thing members could do is maybe decide the phasing of the schemes. That's  
7 certainly, they're already in there. But unfortunately that's how it works. That's the law. You  
8 declare the schemes, you then have to decide what percentage of the scheme is servicing new  
9 development, what percentage is servicing existing development, and you can only raise off the  
10 developers, the fraction that is actually supporting new development. So there is not a lot of  
11 discretion within that on how you would spend it.

12  
13 To deal with Greystones, development as well, infrastructure provision from the development  
14 levies isn't just what the Council spends. A lot of it is what the developers themselves spend. So  
15 for instance all those infrastructure, the Greystones, the Farrankelly Road as it is now, the road  
16 through Charlesland, developers got offsets for all of those, which is in fact coming from the  
17 development levy scheme itself. On that basis, Greystones probably has had the lion's share of  
18 any development from the development levy schemes. There is a road, the road in Blacklion  
19 there, there will be offsets given to developers for that. The other two roads I mentioned already.  
20 And you can actually think about what roads and development have been done throughout the  
21 county, but I think to say Greystones actually got a poor screw out of the development levy  
22 scheme I think would be misleading.

23  
24 Cllr Fortune brought up a budget for derelict sites. Derelict sites in fact, we took out the 1,000  
25 that was in there the last year and most of the expenditure is on the staff costs and staff costs are  
26 accounted for separately. So it's basically the enforcement staff up there are the ones who carry  
27 out the derelict sites legislation.

28  
29 You mentioned that there was a lot of dereliction in your area, but we only go after the ones that  
30 are brought to our attention. We are not going proactively scouring the county looking for  
31 derelict sites and for the most part, the ones we go after do actually go out and carry out works  
32 and bring their properties up to standard. We are carrying quite a few on the list. Well it's only a  
33 handful of properties on the list at the moment. A lot of those were tied in with banks and  
34 liquidations and it's been hard to get them to respond. But for the most part when we go after

1 people, we have to go through a process first of all of deciding whether it's derelict, serve  
2 notices, and it doesn't go on to the list then until the following January. And most people  
3 knuckle under and do the works beforehand. But that's why we don't actually have that much  
4 money, because it's mainly staff costs.

5 Cllr FORTUNE: I understand that, but I did report one particular site right in the centre of  
6 Kilcoole village and there was a little bit of work done on it, but it wasn't sorted out properly and  
7 it's now as bad as ever again and there is a full report on that. And it just needs to be...

8 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Well look, anyone you bring to our attention, we will certainly follow  
9 up on it and I accept that. The other problem in derelict sites is that unfortunately the Act, the  
10 definition of dereliction isn't actually dereliction, it's how it looks compared to a property on  
11 each side. Once you have a nice facade, it can be rotting away, causing dampness in neighbour's  
12 properties, but if it doesn't look bad from the outside, it's not a derelict site. Just to underline that  
13 again.

14  
15 There was also a small figure set for building control. Building control is again mainly salaries.  
16 And there is actually more money there that was spent this year because we have been sent up to  
17 the public appointments service last September, 12 months and it hasn't been advertised yet, and  
18 hopefully we get that staff member very, very shortly, because we are not going in any great  
19 depth in building control at the moment. But that answers that question. I think that's all there  
20 was on planning.

21 Cllr BEHAN: Chairman before Mr O'Brien leaves, can I just pursue a little bit for a second his  
22 replies. First of all it has been seconded that we put this as an item on our agenda for the next  
23 meeting, so I would ask that you put that to the meeting at some point and time, and I think it  
24 would also be a good idea if all of the members were circulated with the current development  
25 levy scheme. Could I ask the Director two questions?

26  
27 Is it possible for the development levy scheme to be reviewed during its life as we review other  
28 plans from time to time, because I certainly think it would be worth doing?

29  
30 And secondly in relation to the figure of 6.8 million which has been transferred to -- from Bray  
31 to Wicklow under the levy scheme that was adopted by the Bray Town Councillors, not this  
32 Council, is it fair then to assume that that money will be ring-fenced to be spent in Bray? And in  
33 that event, is it possible then for us as members of the Bray Municipal District to make a  
34 decision about that?

- 1 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Yes, and yes. It can be reviewed and the money is ring-fenced, but it's  
2 ring-fenced for the projects of when the money was raised.
- 3 Cllr BEHAN: But it can be reviewed though?
- 4 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: The overall project can be reviewed, but the money that has been raised  
5 has been raised on the basis of the scheme itself.
- 6 Cllr BEHAN: We can review it.
- 7 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Yeah, yeah.
- 8 Cllr WHITMORE: I have had my button...
- 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: I understand that. He wants to come in.
- 10 CE: Briefly, could I just ask for the indulgence of the members that this matter be listed on the  
11 January agenda. It would be very difficult for us to put -- we are up to our tonsils here at the  
12 moment with other bits and bobs.
- 13 Cllr BEHAN: Can we get a copy of it in the meantime?
- 14 CE: Absolutely.
- 15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.
- 16 Cllr WHITMORE: I am just looking for some clarification. Des said in his response that there  
17 is very little discretion with the spend of the development levies and it has to benefit the  
18 development that's been built is that correct? And I suppose if that is correct, I would wonder  
19 how development that's happening in the Greystones district could be benefited say, for example,  
20 by the levies going into the Wicklow Port? Because I really wouldn't see how that benefit could  
21 be coming back to the people in Greystones.
- 22 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: When you do the levy scheme, you have got to put down all the  
23 schemes that you are proposing and these have to benefit development that's in your  
24 Development Plan, and the likes. So obviously any work that's done in Greystones won't benefit  
25 Arklow and work done in Wicklow won't benefit Greystones. But in the overall scheme there is  
26 a county scheme and there is a list of all the works put in and that's the stage where members  
27 have their chance to influence what is or what isn't in it.
- 28 Cllr WHITMORE: So once Wicklow Port went into the development levy scheme, is that in the  
29 development levy scheme?
- 30 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Yeah. Actually no, no, Wicklow Port Access road has a special  
31 scheme. That's only levied on the houses in Wicklow.
- 32 Cllr MITCHELL: That's not the way the Council...
- 33 Cllr WHITMORE: So the development levies raised in the Greystones district are not, none of  
34 that money is going into the Wicklow Port scheme, is that correct?



1 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: My understanding of the Wicklow Town relief and Port Access Route  
2 was a special scheme and that was actually, that net was only cast across Wicklow Town. That's  
3 on top of the general levy scheme as well.

4 Cllr WHITMORE: Okay, I think the meeting in January will cover all of this.

5 Cllr MITCHELL: Could I just say about these levies, if actually what was spent in 2016 and  
6 levies that was planned was €3 per person in Greystones, 70 in Wicklow Town, 20 in Bray and  
7 29 in Arklow. So there is quite a disparity. And I can see of course schemes are quite big, so  
8 sometimes schemes will come and go. But my - the last year in the levies, two and a half million  
9 has been spent on the Wicklow Port Access route in the last year. And I think in each of the  
10 previous two years. In addition to that, there was a -- money spent on - loans or something, to  
11 come out of development levies were in the plan for Wicklow and Arklow ports of about  
12 100,000, maybe it's a million each, I am not sure how much it was. But certainly quite a large  
13 sum. And the issue of the Wicklow Port and the Arklow port, they are not part of the  
14 development levy scheme. They are not listed, there has -- it has to be listed specifically in the  
15 scheme and approved by the Council as the Director of Planning said. But those two items are  
16 not listed in it. But they were listed in the levies, in the capital budget plan of the Council which  
17 was passed approximately in September, so they are being listed in that. Now I was told that  
18 although they were listed there, they weren't really there. which I found a funny concept. But  
19 anyway that's the case. Certainly a substantial amount of money has been spent on Wicklow  
20 Port and the Director of Planning is correct, the Farrankelly Road was paid for out of the  
21 development levies on Charlesland. But we have to remember that Charlesland has the same  
22 population as Blessington. It's a very big place.

23  
24 So it needs substantial access. A substantial road structure is needed in the town to cope with the  
25 people of Charlesland when they're going to school. And they want to go other places other than  
26 just go to the overcrowded N11. I would welcome -- fine this discussion will be in January, but  
27 certainly the capital budget was I thought most peculiarly written this year when Wicklow Port  
28 and Arklow port were put down as part of the development levy scheme, but actually are not  
29 listed in the statutory scheme passed by the Council. Thank you.

30 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: All I can say Councillor is that the capital scheme isn't the same as the  
31 development levy scheme. The capital scheme, they could well put in things if they thought they  
32 might get funding for and they have it on a three-year plan. Not in the capital scheme, it's not a  
33 development levy spending...

34 Cllr MITCHELL: It was in a column saying development levies.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

2 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Just on something else all together, if somebody else wants to carry on, if  
3 Derek wants to finish his last comment. I just want to make a note of the fact that there is a  
4 crazy situation that happens in Wicklow County Council that we give community grants to  
5 groups for road closures, and then Wicklow County Council charges back for road closures. I  
6 would just like something, a commitment from finance that this year local community groups in  
7 Wicklow, that need to apply for road closures are not charged for them. Because it's a daft  
8 situation that we are charging for closures and then we are giving them back in community  
9 grants. Doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just Debbie wants to come in here.

11 MS CROMIE: To clarify about the Wicklow Port or Arklow, the heading was development  
12 levy/borrowings. That money was borrowings.

13 Cllr MITCHELL: It did say, the heading had a "one" in it, or "three" actually I think it was.  
14 And if you looked at three, which was a sub note, it said the borrowings would be repaid out of  
15 development levies, so...

16 MS CROMIE: It should only have been borrowing.

17 Cllr MITCHELL: Yeah, it did say that.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's 1 o'clock, we will resume in the afternoon. 2 o'clock.

19

20 Luncheon adjournment

21

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just we -- when we finished we were on development management and I  
23 think there is some questions there for Tom Murphy. Tom is going to respond to them.

24 DIRECTOR MURPHY: Thank you Cathaoirleach. One of the first questions I think it was  
25 Councillor Shay Cullen raised was the issue about the spend on economic development. And I  
26 suppose just to briefly say that the Local Government Act 2014, strengthened the role of Local  
27 Government in economic development, and I think Wicklow County Council has risen to that  
28 challenge. There has been considerable progress made in the area of economic development and  
29 enterprise support. This has been driven both by the economic development and enterprise  
30 support SPC, and the community culture and social development SPC. Through the work of  
31 both these SPCs, through the work of the LECP advisory group, and the Enterprise Unit as well  
32 as the Local Enterprise Office, we have been rolling out many different actions and initiatives  
33 and the members will be aware that these various actions and initiatives are set out in the three  
34 high level strategic documents - and action plans, i.e. the regional action plan for jobs, the LECP,

1 and the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank action plan. The budget for 2017 for economic  
2 development is €309,000, which includes a portion for salaries. And the Manager's Report or  
3 the Chief Executive's report sets out actions that have been delivered in 2016, and just to give the  
4 members a sample of those actions, we are talking about the development and soft launch of a  
5 new brand with the tag line "endless opportunities." The completion of a baseline study, an  
6 action plan for Wicklow Harbours; the engagement with the local business and development  
7 agencies in the county via the first in a series of breakfast briefings. During the year we made  
8 contact with the telecom providers and the Department of Communications, with regard to the  
9 roll out of broadband. There has been considerable engagement between the maritime business  
10 group and various industry experts on various aspects of maritime business from transport and  
11 harbours to aqua culture. We have progressed development in the area of the Wicklow film hub.  
12 We have established or are in the process of establishing town themes or fora in Bray,  
13 Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow and I think Rathdrum has also been mentioned. We have  
14 been engaging with Fáilte Ireland and Wicklow County Tourism with regard to maximising the  
15 benefits of Ireland's Ancient East and the development of tourism infrastructure. We have rolled  
16 out a number of procurement documents for the development of the Wicklow web portal. We  
17 have prepared a suite of documents promoting business in County Wicklow. And the members  
18 will also be aware of the very successful launch of the Arklow "making a difference" video,  
19 which was successfully launched there a few weeks ago. We have a considerable ambitious  
20 programme of work for 2017 which I won't go into now.

21  
22 The reference was also made to the creative corridor, Cllr Walsh mentioned that. The south  
23 eastern creative corridor was launched three weeks ago or thereabouts at a very successful event  
24 and workshop held in Wicklow County Campus. The aim of that is to create a vibrant viable and  
25 growing creative audio visual industry cluster in the region, connecting through the five counties  
26 of Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford and Tipperary. So there is a considerable programme  
27 of work proposed under this initiative in the coming 12 months.

28  
29 In relation to BIFE, Cllr McLoughlin referred to the work of BIFE earlier this morning and I  
30 think we have to acknowledge the excellent work carried out by this further education provider.  
31 And it's just worth noting that a memorandum of understanding was developed between BIFE  
32 and Wicklow county -- or IT Carlow I should say, which will lead to greater co-operation in the  
33 area of transition of students from BIFE to IT Carlow, etcetera.

1 How much is Clermont costing? We have provision - there is an operational budget for 2017 for  
2 €205,000. And there is also a loan repayment of 300,000, which was to tourism promotion and  
3 development, well again there has been -- alluded to it briefly, there has been a lot of work in  
4 this area over the last few months, and Michael Nicholson will deal with some of it. But just an  
5 example was Fáilte Ireland, the capital grant scheme for small projects, two applications were  
6 lodged for the Shillelagh bronze sculpture in the park of a Shillelagh stick and also the county  
7 wide QR system which was all about information points along the various - along the Wicklow  
8 Way, where you would use - download an App on to your smartphone and you would scan it and  
9 you would be provided with information in relation to local attractions, which would link you  
10 into the various towns and villages.

11  
12 We have also made application, Wicklow County Council that is, for funding for the Blessington  
13 greenway, for the South Wicklow greenway, and for the Avondale Forest Park and again  
14 Michael will be able to fill in the detail in relation to some of those.

15  
16 The - on film, Councillor O'Connor queried where we were with regard to the sale of Ardmore  
17 Studios. The members will recall that at a meeting two weeks ago in fact today, the members  
18 passed a motion calling on the Council to write to Minister Mary Mitchell O'Connor, Minister  
19 for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. And also to Enterprise Ireland, with a view to ensuring that  
20 the State retains its interest in Ardmore Studios. The members also requested that a letter issued  
21 to Minister Humphries, who is the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional and Rural and Gaeltacht  
22 Affairs, and also to Minister O'Connor to - requesting a delegation from Wicklow County  
23 Council to discuss the importance of Ardmore Studios to the film industry. And we were also  
24 requested to write to the five Oireachtas members for the County Wicklow asking for their  
25 support in arranging these meetings, and the members also requested that a copy of the  
26 prospectus for the sale of Ardmore studios be provided. All the correspondence in relation to  
27 that motion has issued and we would be hopeful to hear something back on that quite soon.  
28 Thank you Cathaoirleach.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: No questions for Tom? Cllr Fox.

30 Cllr FOX: Thanks Chairman. I am not sure this comes under Tom's remit, but it's just on the  
31 rates incentive scheme. I notice we have a 100,000 decrease. How successful was the scheme?  
32 What sort of roll out did we have? How did we engage with the rate payers in relation to  
33 explaining how the scheme worked? And obviously if we are showing 100,000 decrease in it, it  
34 in itself shows it's not been that successful. Could I get some information on that please?

1 MS CROMIE: Okay, so we sent out the rate demands in 2016, included in the rate demand, we  
2 also included all details of the rates incentive scheme. So all rate customers who got a demand  
3 in 2016 also got details of the incentive scheme. It's also included on our website.

4  
5 There has been a good take up on it. The restriction, or the incentive scheme is rate demands,  
6 where the property - the demand is €10,000 or less. And they get a 5% discount up to a  
7 maximum of €250. But they can't have had any arrears. So it's just in relation to the demand for  
8 2016.

9  
10 I suppose we sent out our rate demands early this year. We sent them out early February. And I  
11 can tell you that by the end of March, we had already received 4.6 million more cash for our  
12 rates in March compared to March the previous year. So like anybody who meets the terms of  
13 the scheme gets the rates incentive scheme. I think that we provided a budget of 250,000 last  
14 year. I just don't think for 2017 that all that budget will be required. But anybody who fulfills  
15 the terms of the scheme and we have no intention of changing the terms of the scheme in 2017,  
16 will be entitled to the 5% discount up to a maximum of 250,000, based on a rate demand of  
17 €10,000 or less.

18 Cllr FOX: Sorry Chairman for holding you up, so therefore it has led to an increased collection  
19 rate, of rates, and therefore an additional income. What sort of additional income have we  
20 raised? The collection rate has obviously been improved if you are happy with how it has ran?

21 MS CROMIE: Yeah, but I mean in terms of the budget, so the income is realised for rates when  
22 we issue the rate demand. So the income of 28 million for rates is realised in the accounts once  
23 those rate demands go out. The collection rate in terms of the cash we receive all right, or our  
24 collection rate has improved. Our target for 2015, we were given a target because debt  
25 management and rates become - it's a national issue, we were given a target of 73%, our  
26 collection rate at that stage had been 69. Not only did we achieve the 73% target, our target  
27 actually we got 76%. And based on that, our national target now, we have been given a 78%.  
28 And at the moment I suppose we are on course to meet that 78%. But really it's just the  
29 additional cash that we receive. The income for rates is realised as soon as the rate demand goes  
30 out, so regardless, I suppose - like regardless of the cash, it's when the rate demand goes out and  
31 when the income is realised.

32 Cllr FOX: Finally Chairman, if then the collection rates have improved to that level, and the fact  
33 that we are being told economic activity is on the rise, which will in itself lead to extra  
34 commercial rates, ballpark figure next year over this year, what will there be in additional

1 commercial rates? Have you estimated that?

2 MS CROMIE: No, Cllr Fox, what we actually have done is -- businesses if they meet certain  
3 criteria are entitled to vacancy relief and that's another decision that has to be made later on as to  
4 whether we still give the 100% vacancy relief. Because of the buoyancy, we reckon we won't be  
5 giving as much vacancy relief to businesses in 2017. So I have reduced the rates, or rates  
6 write-off if you want to by 134,000, because I think because of the buoyancy, there will be less  
7 properties actually vacant. However that doesn't take into account the fact that Schering Plough  
8 is closing, and even though we will issue a rate demand to Schering Plough, they won't probably  
9 be paying us in 2017 because that property will probably be entitled to vacancy relief. Therefore  
10 we will be writing off monies that we would have expected to get from Schering Plough if they  
11 fulfill the criteria of vacancy relief, they'll be entitled to vacancy relief.

12 Cllr FOX: You are not expecting any increase in commercial rates because of Schering Plough,  
13 it will - the loss of Schering Plough will negate any gain?

14 MS CROMIE: In relation to giving vacancy relief to our rates customers, yeah. And I suppose I  
15 have also raised during the LPT discussions that we have valuations in the Valuation Office of  
16 approximately I suppose 700,000 that have yet to be valued due to I suppose under-resources  
17 and the Valuation Office, but also because resources are being directed towards the revaluation  
18 of other County Councils. And also another aspect that we have to think about, because of the  
19 recession, there have been very few maybe commercial builds, new builds in the county that we  
20 are looking to get valued - get a rateable valuation on as well.

21  
22 And sorry, while I am at it, the fact is we can't increase our rates until such time as we are  
23 harmonised and that's probably another two years down the road. So our hands are literally tied  
24 behind our back in relation to increase in our income. As I said already, yeah, the - we have  
25 valuations in the Valuation Office and their resources are geared towards the revaluation of  
26 counties as opposed to the likes of Wicklow who have yet to be listed on their list for  
27 revaluation.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

29 Cllr BOURKE: Just a couple of points there Cathaoirleach. I might have missed the reply there  
30 on one of the questions, what was the percentage of businesses that availed of the rates incentive  
31 scheme?

32  
33 And secondly, you mentioned there Debbie that you are excluding people who may have fallen  
34 into arrears. I would have to take issue with you on that one. I would feel for some businesses

1 who might have unintentionally slipped into arrears, that can't avail of the scheme because we  
2 hear quite a lot from small businesses complaining about being unviable because their rates bills  
3 are so large, and some of them may unintentionally be in arrears. If they were to come looking  
4 for the rates incentive scheme, could some of them say who might only be three or six months in  
5 arrears, be included in the scheme. I am thinking of some businesses in my own area who may  
6 be in that category because for example they're already paying more anyway under the  
7 harmonisation scheme, people in the Arklow area would be paying a higher rate on average than  
8 people in the county area. So I was just hoping - you might be a bit more lenient on the people  
9 who may be short-term in arrears rather than long-term arrears cases.

10 MS CROMIE: I suppose customers need to - unfortunately they have to clear their arrears and  
11 then come pay the 2016 rate demand before we are going to give the 5% discount. In some of  
12 those, in the former Town Councils, the percentage increase has been about 2%. In the - and the  
13 rates incentive scheme is a 5% discount on the actual rate demand up to a maximum of 250 on  
14 10,000 euro per rate demand.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

16 Cllr RYAN: You haven't answered the question, what percentage of rate payers availed of the  
17 rate incentive scheme?

18 MS CROMIE: Councillor Ryan, I don't actually have the answer to that now at the moment  
19 because - I could get you the figure as it is at the moment. But the rates incentive scheme, I  
20 probably won't have a final figure until the end of the year when all rate demands are paid.

21 Cllr RYAN: It would be good to get it.

22 MS CROMIE: I'll give you an interim figure.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

24 Cllr MATTHEWS: As I understand it we give 100% rates rebate on vacant premises. Does the  
25 premises have to be vacant for the full 12 months of the year in order to qualify for that or if it's  
26 in partial use for the year, is there a percentage of rate applied?

27  
28 The second question would be if we could get a rough estimate, if we were to have a 95%  
29 vacancy, or 95% rates rebate on vacant premises, how much would that come to in terms of  
30 income? Thank you Chairman.

31 MS CROMIE: If a rates customer, if they fulfill the criteria of vacancy relief, i.e. the premises is  
32 vacant, we give the vacancy relief of 100% over the period during the year, when the premises  
33 was vacant. So if it's three months, six months, so long as we fill the criteria for vacancy relief,  
34 they'll get vacancy relief for that three months, six months, it would be worked out over the

1 number of days when they're vacant. The 95% vacancy, sorry, what was the question again  
2 about the 95%, sorry?

3 Cllr MATTHEWS: The question is if you were to change it from 100% rebate to 95% rebate,  
4 how much extra would that generate in rates income? It was talked about in 2014, I think  
5 members at the time said we may look at it again, so if we could goat a rough figure on that.

6 MS CROMIE: It would be approximately 200,000. I suppose in relation to vacancy relief,  
7 because of their criteria laid down right, people are actually - it's hard to believe that there are  
8 actually customers out there, even though they would be entitled - may be entitled to the vacancy  
9 relief, that they are slow enough to complete the forms for us to give them. And also it would be  
10 very difficult to try and collect 5% then off them. It would be very difficult okay. And we are  
11 saying 200K, but the cost of trying to collect that 200K, I am just not sure it would be actually  
12 worthwhile.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: All right. Now Mr Nicholson. We are on to recreation and amenity.

14 MS CROMIE: Recreation and amenity. Do you want me to call out the figures?

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry.

16 MS CROMIE: The total draft expenditure estimate for 2017 is 7,522,982 and a total draft  
17 income of 594,849 which is detailed in pages 85 and 86 in the draft budget book.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

19 Cllr BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, this is a programme that obviously we are all very anxious to  
20 ensure that it's successful because it's one of the best programmes for interaction with ordinary  
21 people throughout the county. And I welcome all of the different, obviously the other items that  
22 are mentioned. I want to mention one item in particular, yet again because we didn't get a proper  
23 consultation about it, we didn't get a proper opportunity to discuss it and it is a policy matter.  
24 And yet again, I reiterate policy is a matter for members. And carrying out the policy is a matter  
25 for officials. And I am talking about the policy of introducing, behind our backs, the concept of  
26 staffless libraries into this county; specifically the concept of establishing a staffless library  
27 service for some of the time in the Arklow library. Many of us were present at the official  
28 opening of the Arklow library. It's an excellent facility. Staffed by excellent people. And the  
29 library service throughout this county, in its entire history has been staffed by excellent people.  
30 Now I don't fault officials of this Council for applying for grant aid when a department  
31 advertises for grants. I can understand the attractiveness of that. But I actually see this as being  
32 an effort by Central Government to replace library staff with technology in the long-term. And  
33 superficially, they make it attractive by saying well we can open the libraries at the weekend, we  
34 can open them at night. Sure what's the harm in that? More people can access, what's the



1 problem? The problem is that it's the thin end of the wedge. And we have never, in my  
2 experience, ever had a library in this county that opened without a staff member to staff it. And I  
3 personally think a policy to change that is a policy matter for this body here.

4  
5 Now that's one point. The second point is that the entire operation of a staffless library from a  
6 security point of view is highly questionable, and I know other members might have views about  
7 this, but my certain view is that it is completely unsafe to be inviting members of the public  
8 whether they're young or old, into a building owned by the Local Authority, perhaps there is  
9 going to be a security man appointed or employed, but in that regard, I don't understand how  
10 there is any saving there, we could have had a staff member there in the first place. But I think  
11 it's a very retrograde step.

12  
13 And loathe though I am to say it, I want to propose here today that we actually don't proceed  
14 with that initiative. It doesn't have a material impact on the budget. My understanding is this is  
15 a standalone grant. We didn't have an opportunity to discuss it, maybe the SPC, maybe Cllr  
16 Ruttle knows something about it or it was discussed at an SPC, I know you Cathaoirleach didn't  
17 know anything about it. But I think, I honestly think that the Cathaoirleach of the Council, and  
18 the Cathaoirleach of the SPC most definitely should know something about it. But we as  
19 members should also have been consulted and should have made a decision whether we wanted  
20 to apply for this money or not. As I say, I don't fault any officials for applying for grant aid and  
21 I want to compliment Mr Nicholson and all of the staff for the magnificent work done on this  
22 section, but that's not what this is about. It's about agreeing to the concept of introducing a  
23 service which for 100 years or more has been an excellent service in this county by replacing  
24 people with technology, and that's a road down which I certainly don't want to travel. Thank you  
25 Cathaoirleach.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

27 Cllr MURPHY: Yeah, I would echo everything that Cllr Behan has said. And a lot more if I  
28 had my way. But I'll try to be calm, cool and collected and professional. But I am not happy. It  
29 actually shocked me to see it so detailed in the Times here, which I have in front of me. My  
30 short version is Arklow waited long and hard for a new library service, which we got this time  
31 last year, we were very excited. And due to Director of service Michael Nicholson and Brendan  
32 Martin, made a huge, huge demand in getting it open for the 1st of April, which was a fantastic  
33 achievement. And credit has to go to them.

1 Credit has to go to the whole team that got and fought hard for Arklow library, and within the  
2 first week of it opening, 4,500 people went through the doors of the Arklow library. That has  
3 increased ten fold week by week.

4  
5 We held our meeting two weeks ago, a district meeting, there wasn't a word of it. Not a word,  
6 not a mention. Not even an email about it or nothing else. I called for a meeting when I got the  
7 email last week, I asked could we have a meeting this week. And Michael Nicholson replied and  
8 said that it would be explained today. But I can just feel the open of abuse to such service would  
9 be detrimental on a beautiful, beautiful building, that has brought credit to the town, and  
10 everyone owned it. The staff are the most fantastic staff of librarians I am sure in the county.  
11 And I have to say, I haven't had a chance to speak to any of the staff yet, I don't know what their  
12 views are again. But again it's another way of saying the Municipal District don't have any say  
13 in this, even though it is in our area.

14  
15 I know it said in the Wicklow Times it's a pilot scheme for three months. I would like to see that  
16 result, to see what the reaction would be. I would like to see what the reaction is of other  
17 members here, if it was in their town, and villages, what would - I am looking for the support of  
18 the members here in exactly saying no, this is not going to happen.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Councillor. Councillor O'Connor?

20 Cllr O'CONNOR: I would certainly like to be associated with Cllr Behan's remarks on the  
21 staffless libraries. I think that's another example of yet another withdrawal by the State from a  
22 vital public service.

23  
24 Secondly if I could ask a question about the skate parks. I was of the opinion that funding was  
25 already in place for the Bray skate park. I know that the engineers in Bray are currently busy  
26 working on that issue. And if there could be some reason why that isn't listed in the budget this  
27 year

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Thornhill.

29 Cllr THORNHILL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Cathaoirleach, I would just like to speak on this  
30 subject but before I start off, well I would just like to say there are so many things that we are  
31 discussing today, homelessness, health, roads, everything is important to everyone, and I am sure  
32 we all think we have a strong case. But I would like to speak about a health issue, and I mean  
33 obviously as we know there is two - there is mental health and physical health and I'll be  
34 speaking in relation to mental health. I am speaking about the subject about Jigsaw. Now

1 Jigsaw is a youth mental service which will interact with young people in adopting early  
2 intervention and prevention approach to mental health. And the impact of this will resonate  
3 across many services including that of Wicklow County Council. In essence, this Jigsaw is an  
4 early intervention service, and it would mean like that they would - especially nowadays, I am  
5 sure with suicide and mental health and everything like that, it is very important that we should  
6 get across to people the importance of advice and help before these things happen.

7  
8 Now as of the 15th of December 2000, County Wicklow has one of the highest suicide rates in  
9 Ireland - 22 per 100,000 people. And at the time Liz McManus, who was a TD at the time,  
10 advised her concerns and said she would be in contact with the Minister for Health. But I mean  
11 that's 16 years ago. And since then now we have had resources like task forces and resource  
12 centres and I am sure they're very good resources. But now this is a great opportunity for us to  
13 have a place centred in Bray, and that would be a Jigsaw. Like at the moment here in Wicklow,  
14 we have the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, who has been working very closely with a  
15 subcommittee youth mental health group and the Bray area partnership. And I would propose  
16 that this Council should write to the Minister to keep up with this good work. I think it can't be  
17 over-emphasised because it's a subject that's in vogue every day and it's important because after  
18 all our youth are the future of this country and I mean they are the people that we should be  
19 looking to.

20  
21 Now research has been done by example Comhairle na n'Og and we have had them here in - here  
22 in Wicklow County Council making presentations. They also had made presentations in the  
23 Bray Council, and for example they've produced this booklet here, and they've done surveys.  
24 This will tell you how interested they are in the subject. And about 1,000 people across the five  
25 municipals were interviewed re mental health. And about 90% mental health was mentioned as  
26 a factor that they were interested in. So like it's something that these people should be  
27 supported.

28  
29 So all I am saying is that now this subcommittee in Bray in conjunction with the Bray area  
30 partnership have identified a building in Bray, the Bray Courthouse, and I know that there is a  
31 figure mentioned here, but they're looking for a figure of 60,000 to renovate and get the building  
32 up to standard. But I can't over-emphasise the fact that this is something that should really be  
33 looked into, and I think that - I really would be pushing for a figure of nearer 60,000, because I  
34 mean whether we like it or not, I am sure we all know someone that has committed maybe these

1 tragic - suffered from these tragic events. So I think mental health, any help at all whatsoever  
2 that's given to these young people, I can't over-emphasise it. So I mean I think that this Council  
3 should seriously think about upping the figure from 20,000 to maybe nearer 60,000. So thank  
4 you very much Cathaoirleach

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

6 Cllr BOURKE: Cathaoirleach, just in relation to the proposal to introduce more technology  
7 there for the libraries, I believe that we might be rushing our fences a little bit. I haven't talked  
8 to any of the staff in the Arklow library yet. I think that matter should really be left to a Special  
9 Meeting of the Municipal District to discuss it, having had time to liaise with the staff who might  
10 potentially be affected by this policy change and I think we should shelve any discussion or  
11 decisions on it until we have had time to do that as a local Municipal District.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Let's wait and see what the Director has to say first. Cllr Snell.

13 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I just want to clarification in regards to the  
14 community grants are down 27,000. I just note that 27,000 seems to arise in several other  
15 columns in regards to the service report costs for leisure facilities, it's up 27,000. It's also up  
16 27,000 in the administration of the arts programme and while I am not for a minute suggesting  
17 taking money away from any programme, I am asking why would the administration of the arts  
18 programme, if we are running out the same programme as we did last year, why would it be an  
19 extra 27,000. I think all the members will appreciate that the community grants is a vital part of  
20 rewarding voluntary groups out there for the hard work that they're doing that we as a Local  
21 Authority can't seem to do.

22  
23 I would also have concerns in regards to the discussion that's taken place and I certainly won't be  
24 going over what's said, but the operation of the library service. And it seems that the library  
25 service operations, were looking to put in an extra 106,000 and then the service support costs is  
26 up 67,000 on top of that. And yet we have all this talk about actually withdrawing personnel  
27 away from the service.

28  
29 Also in regards to community sport and recreation development service support costs is up an  
30 extra 7,000, and the overall operation of arts programmes service supports costs is up 16,000.  
31 Bringing in particular to the operation of the arts programme total, it's an increase of 67,000. I  
32 was just looking for some sort of clarification around that, in regards to the outdoor leisure areas  
33 operations. The overall service support costs is up 82,000, quite significant, all the increases,  
34 and yet on the down side, the things that actually have an impact on the community, such as

1 community grants, it's down in funding. And I think that's a bit hard to swallow to be honest.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

3 Cllr WALSH: Just on the library issue, it was first mooted at a training session in the Arklow  
4 Bay in May and at the time I would have voiced my concern at the departmental policy. As Cllr  
5 Behan said this is a retrograde step. It would have security issues. If there were allowed to  
6 creep in during off peak hours or evenings or whatever, that would only be a start. We have a  
7 wonderful library system here, new libraries in Arklow, upgrades in Bray, staffing hours have  
8 been put - restored in Greystones and Ballywaltrim, so this would be a retrograde step, so I think  
9 it should be seriously considered before anything like that is introduced in areas like Arklow.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Pat Kennedy.

11 Cllr KENNEDY: Just in relation to the library in Arklow, I think everybody needs to be  
12 commended, the Director and staff for putting that library in place. With that something said, I  
13 am just wondering what are the views of the staff who work in the library in Arklow? I haven't  
14 had a chance to discuss this with the staff at all. This is a pilot scheme, but with that in mind  
15 how long will this pilot scheme last for? And are these hours extra hours, in other words will the  
16 library be open when it would otherwise be closed? And will there be any loss of jobs to the  
17 staff? And has there been any pilot scheme in any other counties and if so what were the results  
18 of those pilot schemes? Thank you.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

20 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Thank you Chair. I still think that one place we really have omitted from  
21 this is to have a specified parks department in Wicklow County Council. We are supposedly the  
22 Garden of Ireland and we don't have a parks department. If you look at our neighbours in Dun  
23 Laoghaire/Rathdown, their parks and playgrounds are an absolute credit to them. I just think if  
24 we have the biggest parkland, or the largest parkland in the country, we should have a parks  
25 department and we shouldn't be calling it outdoor leisure areas operations. And I think it is  
26 something - and I would like to see all my fellow Councillors support in the coming year, that  
27 we insist there is a parks department for Wicklow. I think it's just imperative that we do. And it  
28 is a core discussion nearly at every meeting whether it's something to do with the Wicklow  
29 Uplands or parks or whatever, we are building parks all over the place and we have no facilities  
30 or no infrastructure or no money to maintain them and it's just not good enough and I think we  
31 should be taking it more seriously, particularly if we want to bring further tourism into this  
32 county of ours

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kavanagh.

34 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thank you. Just on the face of it, this is in connection with the staffless

1 libraries, I have two reports here on my laptop. The first one is extolling the virtues of the  
2 staffless library, how it allows people who wouldn't be able to visit libraries during normal  
3 opening times, time to go there to study or do research or whatever. It says it works throughout  
4 Europe, and has been very successful and all the rest of it. But there are problems associated  
5 with it which aren't apparent in the first report. Just in the first report for example, it's quite  
6 complex. If this is going to be a pilot scheme that's rolled out in Arklow, there is all kinds of  
7 things that have to be put in place like lock releases, alarm sensors, staff come on duty, go off  
8 duty, they may have to make sure private areas are locked up, loud speakers have to alert users  
9 that the place will be closing down, printers, equipment will all have to be powered off, doors  
10 and locks all have to be powered off and a security system activated. There is an awful lot of  
11 investment that seems to have to be set up before you can even begin to go there. But then when  
12 you go to the other report which is the report that has measured the outcome of three libraries  
13 that were staffed in pilot projects, they had problems like anti-social behaviour was one. They  
14 said it wasn't significant, but it was still there. There was the problem with - while at the outset,  
15 they said that there would be no loss of jobs, in Banaher, just in March of this year, staffless  
16 hours were being used to cover previously staffed hours. So that's straight away is a loss of a job  
17 to somebody. And then there was this quite legal situation: Children under the age of 18 with  
18 their parents' consent, 16-year-old with their parents' consent can use these staffless libraries, but  
19 under the national convention of rights, human rights, a child is defined as a child up until the  
20 age of 18. Therefore you can have 16-year-olds unaccompanied in a place at night, and the  
21 monitoring isn't live monitoring, it's CCTV. So incidents could occur without anybody being  
22 held responsible for somebody under the age of 18. So I just think before we go off in all  
23 directions, that there is an awful lot of background work that has to be done before we even  
24 begin to consider having staffless libraries. There is a huge amount of research has to be done  
25 into the whole subject. That's all I want to say.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

27 Cllr BLAKE: I don't want to go back over all the questions asked about the staffless libraries,  
28 but certainly from a county point of view, Wicklow has 13 libraries, you compare that with  
29 Wexford which have just five library services. We are indeed providing great service for the  
30 people in the county. But certainly don't have the same opening hours in the small ones and in  
31 my own one in Tinahely, because of a difficulty with a family problem, the library had been  
32 open very, very little hours. Certainly the question has been asked with regards to the - all the  
33 problems with opening, staff that library, unless there is something new out there that can work  
34 in a big library like Arklow or Bray that can give us extra hours, then for the smaller areas, the

1 13 that we have throughout the county, I am open to considering anything that can lead to a  
2 better service out there. And maybe where the Director is talking up there, maybe he might give  
3 us a run down on the Pride of Place results at the weekend. I think Rathdangan in Wicklow got a  
4 second prize, so maybe the Director might just give us an account of the activities and prizes that  
5 were given out over the weekend. Thanks Chairman

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

7 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks very much. Just in relation to the staffless libraries, I agree with Cllr  
8 Behan and Cllr Kavanagh. I think this is - it's a matter of policy for this Council. Whilst it's  
9 happening initially or the proposals for it to happen initially in Arklow, I think it's something we  
10 should discuss here because it will set the direction for the operation of libraries within the  
11 county. I don't think we have enough information at the moment on it, I would like to see it as  
12 an agenda item on an upcoming meeting that we can actually have a discussion, have perhaps a  
13 presentation on how the implementation of it is to happen, maybe hear at that stage from the  
14 librarians on it. But I do think that it's something that we can't allow to happen I suppose by  
15 increment or for it slowly to become a fact. I think we need to make a decision at this Council as  
16 to whether or not this is the way we want our libraries to operate into the future. I think it's  
17 something once it's introduced, it's going to be very, very difficult to roll back on.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Director, do you want to come in there.

19 Director NICHOLSON: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I might leave the libraries question until the  
20 end and deal with the other issues that came up first. Skate parks, skate park in Bray is on the  
21 plans for next year. It's not in the estimates because it's a capital code, not a revenue code and  
22 the money is in situ for that, from the development left that would have been collected in the  
23 form of Bray Town Council, the Bray Municipal Council now.

24  
25 Fully supportive of the Jigsaw proposal. That's a mental health initiative and the first site to be  
26 identified is in Bray. I only heard about this very late, so there is no mention of it in the  
27 Manager's statement because that had been printed before I got word that a location had been  
28 found in Bray. But fully supportive of it. At the last minute we did manage to put 20,000 in the  
29 budget. I suppose we had no idea at that stage what prices were being talked about for this  
30 building, but at least it would give a start. It's some figure.

31  
32 Community grants, there is no real drop in community grants for next year. What I have done is  
33 I have simply separated a couple of items that - a couple of groups that had been funded from  
34 community grants, they're now funded separately. For example the Bray jazz festival has its

1 own budget line now. As has the County Wicklow volunteer centre. So the amount of money  
2 overall is still the same. It's just I broke it down a little different. The arts budget has increased  
3 because of a return from maternity leave of the arts officer who was out for most of last year.  
4 Outdoor leisure facilities, we have an allocation per district. As we build more facilities, we  
5 have to allocate more money to each district to maintain the facilities. That explains why that  
6 budget has gone up. It's roughly 5,000 per playground or per skate park, roughly.

7  
8 Was there anything else? Pride of Place took place this weekend, we nominated three particular  
9 projects, the Five Loaves project in Bray was nominated. The town or village of Rathdangan,  
10 and also the town of Arklow under three different categories. And we were successful with  
11 Rathdangan who got a runners-up spot in the Pride of Place. Congratulations to a very, very  
12 small community who have done Trojan work with such a small - less than 300 population. And  
13 work they've done down there is phenomenal. I think they were well deserved of their Pride of  
14 Place runners-up spot. And we will look at applying again next year for a few others.

15  
16 That then leaves me - also there was a question asked previously from my colleague about Tidy  
17 Towns. Most Tidy Towns who apply for community grants will get a grant and we try and give  
18 all the Tidy Towns the same figure. And that would be available again next year. There is also a  
19 question asked about SICAP, that's a Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme, it's  
20 1.3 million. It's implemented by Bray area partnership and County Wicklow partnership, and it's  
21 roughly 600 for County Wicklow and 700 for Bray, so it's 1.3 million. That money comes from  
22 the Department. We pay it out and get it back. There is no cost to the Council.

23  
24 And that's being managed now by the LCDC and we have a sub group looking after SICAP.

25  
26 Now in relation to - first of all we have no intentions of introducing staffless libraries. That  
27 word has been thrown around. But in fact it's open libraries. It's opening libraries for longer  
28 hours than are currently opened. This has only really been made possible by technology.  
29 Libraries are not just rooms full of books as you all know, they're dedicated qualified  
30 professional staff. And part of the whole library experience is the interaction with the staff, we  
31 fully acknowledge that and that's what people like. To suggest that we would ever have staffless  
32 libraries is simply unconscionable. What we will have though is longer opening hours. This all  
33 started back in 2013 when, after a long period of public consultation, during the national library  
34 plan, the biggest question that was asked from people is how come the libraries are closed every



1 evening at 5 o'clock? And not open again until 10 o'clock the following morning. Could people  
2 not use the library service for studying for exams, research books if they're doing exams, and  
3 studying doing thesis. For meetings, etcetera, etcetera, use of IT and internet. And following on  
4 from that, there was several pilots carried out in several libraries throughout the country with  
5 good success. So during the extended hours, this will not affect the current library service at all,  
6 it will not affect the staff, it will not affect the numbers of people employed, it won't affect the  
7 rate of pay. So things continue as normal. What we are talking about is when the libraries  
8 normally is closed to allow people to access the library without any staff there present. During  
9 the extended hours, library services will be on a self-service basis. The only library we have in  
10 the county that could accommodate this at the moment is Arklow because it is hi-tech at the  
11 moment and at the moment a lot of people using the library, even as it is now, go in, pick their  
12 book, scan it out, come back two weeks later, scan it back in and they've no interaction at all  
13 with the staff. So that is possible. This is just an extension of that. If people register, and you  
14 must register for the service, you can't just walk in the door, if you register you will be issued  
15 with a swipe card to allow you to gain access in the main door. So when the building is locked  
16 up at the normal closing time of 5 o'clock, if you have registered and you have this specialist  
17 swipe card, you can access the library, and browse your books and do your study, probably until  
18 10 o'clock at night and possibly all day Sunday as well. We will have CCTV all over the library.  
19 As an additional measure in Arklow, we are going to have passive security. We will have a  
20 person present at all times, just monitoring, just keeping an eye, not invasive.

21  
22 And the feedback from other libraries where this has been brought in is that people really  
23 welcomed it, particularly kids doing Junior or Leaving Certificate where they can't get peace and  
24 quiet at home, they go down to the library for a few hours and study. People doing dissertations,  
25 etcetera, find it great. There has been very, very little instances of anti-social behaviour, all of  
26 which was captured on CCTV. As I said, we have the additional precaution of having somebody  
27 actually in the library.

28  
29 And so far from it being a retrograde step as someone used, it's actually an improved public  
30 service. I would have thought that's what we are all here to do - offer more service to the public  
31 at no cost to the public. Libraries have been and remain free of charge. Probably one of the few  
32 services we have that are completely free. We do have to carry out work, as I mentioned the  
33 only library that could do this is Arklow. There is a grant of 25,000 available from the  
34 Department for each library. We will avail of that. We will have to change the front door,

1 improve CCTV and then pay for the passive security. Other than that, we are good to go.

2  
3 To introduce this to any other libraries would cost at least 50,000 per library, but Arklow already  
4 has a lot of this in place because we already have the swipe book system that you can take books  
5 in and out. So what we plan to do is introduce this in Arklow in January, try it for the first three  
6 months and then report back to the SPC on success. It may very well be that nobody uses it. It  
7 may very well be it's very popular. We will know at the end of March and then we will make a  
8 decision to continue it or to consider rolling it out. But just again to reiterate, it doesn't affect the  
9 existing service, doesn't affect the staff. It's an additionality at no cost to the public and success  
10 from other countries across Europe have been very, very positive, and people have been saying  
11 it's been a fantastic service. It also means when you walk down the street of Arklow at night,  
12 instead of seeing a completely blanked out building, it will be all lit up. It has - in other  
13 countries, it's brought some vibrancy back to the town. With people going in and out. You can  
14 only access it if you have already pre-registered. It's not a case of people just walking in. It will  
15 be locked and locked behind you when you go in. So that's what we intend do. I think it's an  
16 excellent service. It's an additional service to the public. And I think it's a very, very well  
17 worthwhile - and it's certainly not, to reiterate, staffless libraries. To suggest that I think  
18 wouldn't be fair. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

20 Cllr BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, Mr Nicholson, I have to say obviously didn't listen to what I said  
21 at the outset, which is that this is a policy matter. Mr Nicholson has completely ignored the fact  
22 that he has taken on himself the power to introduce a library with no staff, which is a staffless  
23 library I think in anybody's book, I think you are playing with semantics to say it's not a staffless  
24 library. It most certainly is apart from the fact that you are going to pay for a security person to  
25 be in there and new technology and everything else, that could actually be used to employ  
26 additional library staff if that was the case. It is completely unacceptable that any member of the  
27 staff of this Council, any Director, no matter how ranking or how much experience he or she has  
28 to just take on themselves the role of this Council in deciding whether we are introducing such a  
29 new way of operation in our libraries.

30  
31 Now Cathaoirleach I am going to ask you to intervene on this, you are the Cathaoirleach of the  
32 Council. You are a representative of that town, a very fine representative and a very  
33 hard-working full-time Cathaoirleach. And I am asking you now to protect the rights of the  
34 elected members here. We have heard many Councillors talking about this, and talking about

1 the possible difficulties with such a scheme. And at the very least Cathaoirleach, I am asking for  
2 a proper and full debate on this issue before any more work is done on this particular project.  
3 And I have to also ask the Chief Executive what is his definition of the policy of the Council  
4 when it comes to a matter such as this and the role of Councillors? Are we not the policy  
5 makers? If we are, are we not entitled to make policy when it comes to an initiative such as this,  
6 which is a completely new departure, a retrograde departure in my book. Mr Nicholson is  
7 entitled to his opinion, but we certainly should not have a Director of this Council telling us what  
8 he is going to do without reference to our rights to decide whether this policy is going to be  
9 changed or not. So Cathaoirleach, please can we have your intervention on this.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am just going to continue for a few minutes there, you don't mind do  
11 you please. Cllr Murphy.

12 Cllr MURPHY: Yeah, I mean I can see one side of it, yeah. There is a need for people doing  
13 thesis and study and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But I do have a big fear of it. And one fear is  
14 where Arklow library is situated, it's right beside a public house right. Right beside a pub. So  
15 it's not in the right locality for it, but again I question will the security person be trained to the  
16 standard of assisting people in the building? Again I just feel I don't know who took on the  
17 responsibility of it, but I mean I feel the 25,000 grant could be used definitely more productively.  
18 Also Cllr Blake had said that in the last few months they've had no staff. I mean surely to God  
19 that 25, part of that 25,000 should be - a similar grant should be put for a person to be manning a  
20 Tinahely library service. You know, I mean it doesn't - it annoys me actually so much. But I do  
21 feel someone has to intervene here and as far as I am aware some of the equipment has already  
22 been delivered to Arklow. So I mean the choice is not even there to discuss it. I think it's going  
23 to happen anyway. It doesn't matter who steps in or who steps out. But again we don't have any  
24 choice as Councillors.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

26 Cllr O'CONNOR: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Councillors have been sidelined yet again on this  
27 issue. We have no say on it, it's just a fait accompli, like most of the budget it should be  
28 pointed out. According to my information, one pilot study carried out on this particular issue in  
29 Tubbercurry showed a reduction in library usage. So I don't know where we are going with all  
30 this.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

32 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Yes, thanks Cathaoirleach, I suppose I disagree with what's been said  
33 around this room. I think we should try this out. I know some people are worried about security  
34 or whatever. I am certainly not worried about staffing levels because there is no way will I

1 tolerate staffing levels being reduced, but as somebody who did do their thesis in a public library  
2 and having to leave at 5.30, which was just absolutely awful or in the evenings when I could  
3 have gone there, I couldn't, if somebody had offered me that facility, I would have been  
4 absolutely delighted. So Director, I would say yes, do try it, and certainly if it works, I would  
5 love to see it in Greystones and Bray and all the other libraries. I think it's innovative, I think it's  
6 the way we are going. The thing of having full-time people standing there all the time when  
7 there is modern technology is not saying that we are going to get rid of librarians. You can't get  
8 rid of people. But there are times when people are not available that if you have a fantastic  
9 service, let's use it anyway. I would be totally supportive of you trying to bring this in and  
10 welcome the initiative. Thank you.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Ryan.

12 Cllr RYAN: Yeah, thank you very much. I mean one of the things I hate about banks now is the  
13 fact that they've obviously tried to push people away from the counter and push away from  
14 dealing with people and I think they're lesser for it. so I absolutely am in favour of libraries  
15 having the staff, but I completely understand what the Director has said. Very clearly he has  
16 said that it would be unconscionable that we would have libraries in the main operating without  
17 staff. I don't think anybody should twist those words that the Director just said.

18  
19 But I think we have to be open to new ways of operating in the new world. And if we have got a  
20 resource that we have, libraries aren't just about books anymore. They're about so much more  
21 and they're an opportunity for people to maybe step out of the world they're in, maybe they're not  
22 particularly happy in the job they're in, they can finish their job by day and maybe study by night  
23 in those wonderful areas that are there and one of the things that I think the Council does  
24 absolutely fantastically well, and I think the idea that the Director making an operational, an  
25 operational decision to extend the hours and try a little bit of innovation in terms of how we can  
26 deliver more to the people of this county is something that should be absolutely welcomed  
27 wholeheartedly and I say well done and I hope we get good feedback from the actual pilot that is  
28 actually been tested out. And if there was a decision to be made in Bray to see if it's been  
29 successful and extended to there, I would actually be supportive of that. But I think what's really  
30 important is that we get the feedback as to how the pilot has actually done and make decisions  
31 based on information and not just jump with this in the newspaper staffless libraries. I think it's  
32 just a dumbing down and I think it's just ridiculous. Thank you.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

34 Cllr BOURKE: Cathaoirleach, I would like to add my support there to the Director, I think we

1 should give it a chance and review it in two or three months time and decide then whether we  
2 want it or not.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Whitmore.

4 Cllr WHITMORE: Thank you Chair, I suppose I just want to reiterate I am not saying that I am  
5 for them or against them. At this moment and time I am nervous of them, I think in Greystones  
6 recently we had - it was the library was closed over a certain period of time because of  
7 redundancies -- sorry retirements. And I think if this service was available, I do wonder whether  
8 or not we would have ever refilled those positions, or whether we would have just gotten used to  
9 having a library that was not staffed for that - I think it was every Friday it was closed. With  
10 this, my point is not whether or not I am for it or against it, but actually we need to have a  
11 discussion on it. And that's really - we need to have the pros and cons, we need to have the  
12 information, and we all need to be able to listen to it and voice our opinions on it and I don't  
13 think we've had that opportunity in full. We have had a little bit of it today, but we haven't had it  
14 in full yet and I do think we should be afforded that opportunity.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters.

16 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I would just like to actually congratulate the Director. I  
17 think it is an innovative move. I think it's to be welcomed. I think we have to start looking at  
18 ourselves as a service provider that provides services that people want at times that they want  
19 them. It's not possible or financially possible, or even suitable to have them fully staffed and  
20 open at complete shifts, but I think if people can go in there and study at night for regular library  
21 users who pose no problem; all they're looking for is a space to sit down, do their study,  
22 research, do their reading, whatever it is. I think it's a great idea and I welcome it and I wish it  
23 was rolled out right across the libraries, thank you.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Annesley.

25 Cllr ANNESLEY: My fear is technology. Not the staffing issue. Not the Director's issue. But  
26 as we know Arklow municipal members, we have a state of the art library, but the technology  
27 didn't let the windows close when we got flooded in a heavy rainfall. Technology at its best,  
28 unless a young lad or young one in, knows somebody coming behind him, I know you said there  
29 is going to be a security guard on duty, who is going to protect this young one when you have  
30 one member of staff in this library. Arklow is a very big library. You also have access to the  
31 municipal offices in the library. A budget of 25,000 through a grant, you have a lot of work to  
32 do changing the door and installing cameras. You will have to change two doors, the lifts into  
33 the municipal offices as well and the fire exits as well. The best of luck doing that on 25,000. I  
34 would have concerns for the public and I don't know if I was snoozing, I blacked out a bit I

1 think, but the security guard, are we going to open it seven days a week, is there going to be a  
2 time limit on it? At the moment it's open to 8.30 on a Tuesday and Thursday, open all day  
3 Saturday. It's definitely a fantastic facility to have, and definitely one up on Bray and  
4 Greystones and the rest of the county to have that in Arklow, but in the pilot scheme, as you call  
5 it yourself, I am reserving judgment whether to say it's a good thing or bad thing, but definitely, I  
6 feel having a discussion on it now at a budget meeting when we only got two emails about it is  
7 not the right place to be discussing this. And I think it was proposed, it should be discussed at  
8 municipal first, but it's out here on the table now.

9  
10 Director, you are well capable of implementing this, but he should have given some  
11 consideration to the municipal members, or the County Council members here. At the table.  
12 But I am fearful of technology. And I just want to know about this security guard, like what  
13 hours would he be there for, thank you?

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kennedy.

15 Cllr KENNEDY: Thank you Cathaoirleach, sorry for coming back in again on this particular  
16 issue but the idea has been trialed in Denmark and Finland and it has not resulted in any  
17 reduction in staff hours. Instead it has led to a huge increase in use of libraries, up 23% and  
18 59%. So maybe we should give it a go. I'll support this. If it's only for three months. And I  
19 think the Director is taking an initiative here, we can't be afraid of everything looking forward. I  
20 am going to support this. If this means students can go in until 10 o'clock at night with a security  
21 guard on the door, fine. That gives them a chance. We cannot stand in the way of progress so,  
22 I'll be supporting this, thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

24 Cllr RUTTLE: Like some of the previous speakers here, I think we should go ahead and give  
25 this a chance, give it a government we have an excellent facility there, it should not be a situation  
26 that closes down at a certain time and no-one has access after that. It's a parallel situation to  
27 what happened years ago in bodies that I have been involved with, the VEC and KWETB where  
28 schools closed up at a certain time and no-one could come in, yet it was a publicly funded  
29 facility. Now all our second level schools and institutions are open at later hours where people  
30 can have access to them. This is an opportunity for a pilot scheme to go forward to see how it  
31 works. I think like previous speakers, the Director was right to have go and see how it would  
32 work out. Surely if it's about making the availability of the library service and what's in the  
33 library to people, do you want that or don't you want that? Do you want to close at 5 o'clock and  
34 the doors are locked and no-one in Arklow can get in? Or do you want somebody under the

1 situation outlined by the Director with a pass and a card to get in and avail of the opportunity? I  
2 believe public facilities should be available to the public for the maximum time possible. The  
3 members of the public -- and getting away from any ideological issues, the public should have  
4 availability to services that are funded by the public purse, the maximum possible extent. And  
5 it's a pilot scheme. We will see how it works out, people can come back here and make more  
6 contributions or discussions on it. At the moment I say we should go ahead and give it a go,  
7 because it's about making availability. If we have nights in January, February and March where  
8 the library in Arklow is available to people, that's surely better than having nights in January,  
9 February and March where it's closed down and dark and no-one can get in and yet there are  
10 people who want to use it. We can't be afraid of moving forward. We can't be afraid of  
11 technology. We can't be afraid of progressing in that direction. I would certainly support the  
12 pilot scheme to do that and congratulate the Director on doing that. Thank you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

14 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Thanks Chairman. I too like previous speakers would first of all like to  
15 commend the Director on this initiative. I think it's innovative, it's new, it's something that we  
16 should take forward. Obviously the library in Arklow is a fantastic new facility. It's certainly  
17 the envy of other districts within the county. And the reality is it's a pilot scheme as has been  
18 said earlier. Let's have a look at it at the end of the three or four months trial period and address  
19 it then further. But certainly with the initiative that it is, I think it's worth pursuing and I  
20 certainly would like to commend the Director on that.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would just like to come in myself there. I am not a frequent user of the  
22 library service, but people close to me are, and I visited the library there a few times recently,  
23 and I got the views of young and not so young. The young people were totally for it. Totally for  
24 it opening. People who were commuting and coming back at 7 or 8 o'clock at night can go in  
25 and get a book, right. And while I believe 98 hours is a little bit over the top, 98 hours to be  
26 open, 8 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night, seven days a week, is quite - is it quite  
27 right to say Director that there is still issues with the union which might delay the project or  
28 whatever, I am not clear on that?

29  
30 The views I am getting from the public is mostly that they're delighted with it. Now I know  
31 what you are - you are looking at me there, but that's the views of the public, that they would get  
32 books from whatever to whatever. The Arklow library is opened a couple of nights a week. We  
33 do have a security man at times there present. But there are many people using the library there  
34 for studying and I think someone alluded to it that they can't do the study at home, they're

1 coming out to do it. I counted 28 young people in the library at night time who think it's a  
2 fantastic facility and they want to use it and so on that basis, I have an open mind on the matter.  
3 After 13 weeks, will that come back to the members, that's an operational matter, is it Director?

4 DIRECTOR NICHOLSON: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Just in relation to operational versus  
5 policy, I reduce opening hours, extend opening hours on a regular basis during the year. I regard  
6 it aspirational. This is an extension of a service. I certainly wouldn't see it as any change in  
7 policy. If that be the case, I would have to come back to the Council meeting every meeting to  
8 open a branch by a couple of hours or close it by a couple of hours. So that's certainly  
9 operational.

10  
11 It wouldn't have been raised today at all only one of the members raised it, because it's not a  
12 budgetary matter at all. It's not even a matter for the Christmas meeting. Particularly as we had  
13 a meeting next Monday, I would have thought that would be a more appropriate time to raise it.  
14 In any event with regard to nervous, I am as nervous as anybody to be honest. I hope this works.  
15 But I am prepared to give it a try. I think we have put enough steps in place to make sure it  
16 works. And I think we should at least try it for three months and then bring a report back as to  
17 how successful - it may very well be nobody wants to use it, but I suspect it will be well used  
18 and we will bring back a positive report and we will also report on the many incidents that may  
19 happen and hopefully there won't be many. And I think we have covered that by having a soft  
20 security as well.

21  
22 As regards staff, we have actually increased the opening hours of all our libraries and we are  
23 almost back to full staff complement, so at the same time we are doing this, we are still creating -  
24 filling all the vacancies, there is no question of us not filling all the vacancies. We have no  
25 access to the Arklow Municipal District offices, that will be completely out of bounds. We are  
26 talking about 5pm to 10pm Mondays, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and 8.30 on Thursday  
27 and 8am to 10pm on Sunday. As regards the union, there is a national ballot taking place which  
28 hasn't taken place yet. It's about to take place. Locally the staff of the library have voted against  
29 this. Just to keep the members up-to-date, by a fairly overwhelming majority. And that's  
30 completely up-to-date now where we are at the moment on that, so that's it.

31 Cllr BEHAN: So here we have it at the very end of the report, we find out that the staff by the  
32 vast majority, are not in favour of this proposal. And we couldn't be told that at the beginning.  
33 We got it in at the end just before Mr Nicholson slips off the podium here. I reject absolutely Mr  
34 Nicholson's attempt to tell me what I can and can't raise at an estimates meeting. It's not your



1 function Mr Nicholson to tell Councillors what they can raise. It's a budgetary item in this  
2 particular coming year. It's something where money is going to be spent on security and locks  
3 and doors and everything else, and as far as I am concerned that's a budgetary matter. We  
4 wouldn't have had to bring it up at the estimates if we had had a proper and decent opportunity to  
5 discuss it and notice before it was actually implemented or even discussed or even considered by  
6 the management of the Council.

7  
8 But we now have a situation where the valued people that Mr Nicholson talked about at the start  
9 of the meeting, the people who run the library service in this county have overwhelmingly  
10 rejected this plan in County Wicklow. That's as far as I am concerned a lot to be considered by  
11 this - by the members of this Council before agreeing willy-nilly to say let it go, what are we  
12 afraid of? I am concerned about the staff and I am concerned about the future quality of a library  
13 service and to suggest that just opening it up to let people get books and it doesn't really matter  
14 that there is no staff there is actually devaluing the work that the staff are doing at the moment.  
15 That's the whole point. I want to encourage the staff. I want to see more staff. I want to see  
16 longer hours where the staff are working. I certainly don't want them replaced by pass cards and  
17 technology and so on. Because you can see already we get the most important piece of  
18 information at the very end.

19  
20 And I have no doubt that a higher level than directors of services, but at ministerial level and a  
21 County Manager level this is a plan to eventually replace library staff in this country with  
22 technology. The very same as what's happening with banks, as someone else mentioned earlier.  
23 And this is something we should stand against Cathaoirleach. As far as I am concerned, it is a  
24 policy matter. I am not going to take a lecture from Mr Nicholson telling me it's not a policy  
25 matter. Okay adding or subtracting hours of opening might be a functional matter of a Director.  
26 But deciding to open a library without qualified library staff is policy. And Cathaoirleach, it  
27 should not be, that policy cannot be made by an official of this Council. That's why I asked you  
28 to intervene.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: You made a proposal there, didn't you?

30 Cllr BEHAN: I did, I propose that it doesn't continue, that we do not proceed with this, at the  
31 very least until we ascertain what the views of the staff are and we should invite the staff of the  
32 library service to address this issue.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: It has been seconded by Councillor O'Connor.

34 CE: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Cllr Behan asked me a question, I would concur it's more an

1 operational matter, but I do accede to the fact that it is a new venture. And I would say it is the  
2 fact that it's a new venture and that it moved it would appear from the pilot schemes in the  
3 various libraries to be rolled out in a seeking of funding by the Department, and that didn't find  
4 favour with Impact, it would appear, and I think it's in the right place now at the moment. It's in  
5 an industrial relations window, and both parties will be discussing this particular matter into the  
6 future.

7  
8 I think we have to wait, as Michael Nicholson has mentioned, that the results are not in. It's a  
9 national ballot. And I think today is the due date for that. We haven't got that information to  
10 hand. I think that's the space where that discussion should be. And it's a matter between the  
11 management side and the union side through their officer grades to thrash out where we are.  
12 And that will determine certainly the future of open libraries as far as I am concerned.

13 DIRECTOR NICHOLSON: Just as a matter of additional information in relation to the unions,  
14 there were five issues raised by the staff. One was guaranteed staffing levels at each grade  
15 including an adequate promotional structure in each Local Authority. We have that in situ. Job  
16 security for all library staff. Not affected. The maintenance of existing terms and conditions.  
17 Not affected. At health and safety in each Local Authority, we have that in place. And  
18 (INAUDIBLE) we are increasing the services.

19 Cllr BEHAN: Why did they reject it then?

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

21 Cllr MITCHELL: I think this is an excellent increase in the service which is provided by the  
22 Council, the libraries, we should be making more use of this and if we can do so in this  
23 economical way, we should provide the extra services and see if people want them. I think  
24 certainly the extra hours in the evening for commuters and people who wish to study there would  
25 seem to be a very positive and probably maybe a different age group or whatever of some of the  
26 people who traditionally use libraries and I think we should encourage it to go ahead. And I  
27 think that industrial relations should be dealt with, but with the concept that we will increase the  
28 service. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan, proposed a motion and it's been seconded by Councillor  
30 Michael O'Connor, we should take a vote on that. That is not to go ahead, that's what you are  
31 saying.

32 MS GALLAGHER: Not to proceed with the initiative until there is proper and full debate and  
33 that we will hear from the library staff.

34 Cllr FORTUNE: Can you actually take a vote today while that decision has not been taken. We

1 have a meeting again on Monday where we could...

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: I mean you are probably quite right that we can...

3 Cllr BEHAN: I don't mind if you put it on the agenda for Monday.

4 Cllr FORTUNE: Based on the fact there is a ballot due, I think that would be a bit silly, just a  
5 personal view.

6 Cllr WALSH: I am going to come in with the same point as Cllr Fortune, it should be put back  
7 until the results of the talks are concluded.

8 Cllr VANCE: I could agree with Cllr Fortune's suggestion there as well, I think it's reasonable  
9 and sensible for something like that to do before anyone makes any decisions. If it's gone  
10 through a process and it's right there at the moment, let's hear that...

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: When is the result of that ballot known?

12 DIRECTOR NICHOLSON: I know they're taking place in all libraries across the country. It  
13 takes time to get them all in. They only have a few in at the moment. I'll keep the members  
14 informed.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

16 Cllr RYAN: Cathaoirleach, I would also like to agree with the idea of putting it off until  
17 Monday, but I do think it's important that if people want more staff, longer opening hours, that  
18 they should actually put the money in the budget and vote for the budget.

19 Cllr WHITMORE: Can I just come in on what Councillor Ryan just said. I voted for the -- to  
20 maintain the LPT and I'll also be voting with the budget. And yet I want there to be a discussion  
21 on this matter before a decision is made.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: All right, so we will - you will feedback Director Nicholson. We are on  
23 to culture, education - agriculture, education, health and welfare.

24 MS CROMIE: The total draft expenditure estimate for 2017 of 1,572,640 and a total draft  
25 income of 739,502, which is detailed on pages 87 to 89 in the draft budget book and then for  
26 division H miscellaneous services, totaled draft expenditure estimate for 2017 of 12,874,503 and  
27 a total draft income of 7,004,943 detailed on pages 90 to 92 in the draft budget book.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

29 Cllr LAWLESS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. It's more just a point of information for myself. Just  
30 under the agriculture and education health and welfare, payment of agricultural pensions, if you  
31 refer back to page 47, this provision is for pension payments related to the former county  
32 committee of agriculture. Just for my own information, I would like to know who the county  
33 committee of agriculture are, or were, who was on it, what they actually done? I don't think I  
34 have ever seen any reports. I don't have an issue with the money, it's quite a small amount, but I

1 don't think I have ever seen this before, it's just a point of information for myself, I would like  
2 some - of who they actually are and if they're Wicklow County Council staff who have retired  
3 for pensions, I mean that's reasonable, but yeah, I am just questioning that because I don't know  
4 who they are. Thank you.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McDonald.

6 Cllr McDONALD: Yeah, I just have a couple of questions under the veterinarian services on  
7 this particular grade in relation to the dog pounds. I understand that the current contract with the  
8 ISPCA ended on the 20th of February and I would just like to know if the tender has gone out  
9 for the new contract or if it's been e-tendered yet? I understand the Control of the Dogs Act  
10 1986 does allow for the Council to negotiate with the ISPCA to run the dog warden services but  
11 I understand that the tender for the pounds needs to go out to tender. I think it's been 1987 that  
12 the ISPCA have had this tender in County Wicklow and could I just get clarification has it been  
13 tendered every year and if so have the ISPCA been the best tender in or have there been other  
14 interested groups?

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

16 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thanks Chairman. Just in relation to section G02 there, operation and  
17 maintenance of harbours, I see Arklow and Wicklow listed. What section does the maintenance  
18 of Bray Harbour come under or what department deals with the maintenance of Bray Harbour?  
19 Thank you Chairman.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

21 Cllr VANCE: Sorry Chairman, could you tell me where the municipal allocation is in this  
22 Debbie? Like there is a general municipal allocation there but there is no money in it.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will go back.

24 Cllr VANCE: Could I just make the point in that that I think most people certainly around this  
25 chambers or I have been talking to over the last - certainly since property tax came in, that  
26 they've been absolutely disgusted with the amount of allocation that the municipal authorities  
27 have got and have received from Wicklow County Council in this regard. So much so, like, you  
28 get a derisory amount that you feel you can do very, very little with it, and there is definitely a  
29 disillusionment among members in regard to what they can spend in their own particular areas  
30 and the fact is that people are paying property tax, and they don't see enough of the work on the  
31 ground, and certainly there is hardly a day goes by without somebody saying to me that we are  
32 paying property tax, actually where do I see the benefit of this. I know the general funding from  
33 the Council, it's a Government problem, because the Government funding was replaced by the  
34 property tax and there was no - effectively no increase in funding whatsoever. But can I just say

1 this, I certainly will not be voting for this budget unless there is a substantial increase in the  
2 municipal allocations and I am talking about all the municipal authorities in the county, and I  
3 feel that is necessarily to allow members to show it to the public that there is money coming into  
4 their particular areas, and to put it on to particular projects that can't be funded otherwise than  
5 that. Thank you Chairman.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

7 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Just with regards to the operation and  
8 maintenance of piers and harbours. The operation of harbours is 585,000. But Wicklow, if I am  
9 not mistaken, is supposed to be cost neutral. I am just trying to figure out just looking at the  
10 income that you have of 430,791, how much is pertaining to Wicklow and how much is it  
11 costing us for Arklow and any other harbours you are talking about there? If we could get a net  
12 figure if possible please, for each one.

13 Cllr McDONALD: Just on that issue as well, when we discussed and we took Wicklow Harbour  
14 on board here in the chambers a few months ago, we were led to believe that they would not cost  
15 us anything, cost the County Council anything, but I just notice in the support services for the  
16 operation of harbours, there has been an increase of almost 42,000 for support services. Could  
17 we get a breakdown of what those services are and where that extra 42,000 is going?

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

19 Cllr MURPHY: I forget now what I was going to say. Sorry, come back Miriam! Yeah, the  
20 municipal budgets there, I mean you know Cllr Vance is right. I mean I suppose for the last two  
21 years, because of the Local Government change, I mean it just seems we go to meetings and  
22 whatever, and there is just no money. There is just no - and you are robbing Paul to pay Peter  
23 back or vice versa. And I mean again it's the small jobs that keep going down the line, down the  
24 line. Keep push back, keep push back. It's not a priority. But they are building up to be a  
25 priority in years to come. I mean it's the small jobs that need the maintaining straight away, not  
26 until it gets in disrepair and then there is a major grant has to be applied for these jobs. Do you  
27 know but the Municipal Districts are not functioning. They are just not functioning. And I don't  
28 know who is going to have to wake up to realise this. I mean another three or four years, there is  
29 no point of us being there, we are being ignored as it is anyway. In another three years, we just  
30 might as well say goodbye Jack, close up the doors. It's a joke. It's just a joke and it's harder and  
31 harder and harder to find the interest, to keep the interest going in the chamber when there is no  
32 money to function.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Irene Winters.

34 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I would like to agree with Cllr Vance and just say that I

1 do feel that the amount of money in the discretionary fund for each of the Municipal Districts  
2 does need to be increased. And I suggest that maybe - obviously we have to find the money, it's  
3 not going to fall off the magic money tree. But if we take a recess and go out and make some  
4 adjustments and come back with proposals.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have a few more speakers.

6 Cllr WINTERS: Absolutely.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mary Kavanagh. I would like to know if the Council adheres  
8 to the requirement to use the tendering process for the Wicklow pound. There is over 200,000  
9 spent on the operation of the pound, which as far as I am aware means that it has to be tendered  
10 for under the legislation. And I think to date it hasn't been. So if it hasn't been, I would like to  
11 know why. And under what exemptions there are. Because a lot of people have been asking  
12 questions about it and I think we need to answer thoroughly. And the other thing, I just want to  
13 reiterate is that the Municipal Districts should be given more money under the discretionary  
14 spend. But I really want to know the answer to the pound tendering process. Thank you.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

16 Cllr WALSH: Just to query in relation to the plant and machinery reserve account there, Debbie.  
17 Just what amount is it proposed to transfer to the Annual Financial Statement this year in this  
18 year's process in relation to that? The plant and machinery reserve.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

20 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Yes Chairman, just the animal welfare services, including horse control, I  
21 notice it's down 100,000 from 2016. There was 190,000 allocated in 2016. It looks like 90,000  
22 for 2017. I am just wondering is there an explanation, have we improved...

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: I just can't hear you.

24 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Have we improved our horse control that we have reduced it by 100,000 or  
25 what's the reasons for that, thank you?

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

27 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Just to come back on to the discretionary fund. I  
28 would agree with previous speakers. I just think that it's an insult to our constituents that we  
29 come down here all day today and have a meeting and kick everything around and we go back to  
30 our respective districts basically with nothing for them, relatively speaking.

31  
32 Also, I would say that my own personal view is that the structure that was put in place from  
33 Local Government, I personally think was a good one. I have said that in the Chamber many,  
34 many, many times. But the reason why it's struggling is because it hasn't been resourced, it

1 doesn't get respect; I would think there is a serious call to be made by for example the County  
2 Managers Association. I think it's a recognition that needs to take place of the importance of  
3 what we do. We have meetings and all the districts obviously have good managers, and certainly  
4 speaking for our district, we have an excellent engineer. But it's like pulling teeth to try and get  
5 other senior personnel from the Local Authority to come to meetings. And really that's the  
6 reason why there is a perception they're not working in my view, because they're not getting the  
7 respect, they're not getting resourced properly. So I really think there needs to be a little bit of  
8 managerial executive kind of wakening up for want of better description and start addressing this  
9 thing properly, because the potential of - I mean I personally am delighted that the likes of  
10 Kilcoole and Newcastle and Delgany and Killadreenan are part of what's now the Greystones  
11 district. I think that's good for all those villages, but we need to just get our finger out of our ears  
12 and start treating the thing with the way it needs to be treated.

13  
14 What's happening right now is that the way they're being treated is worse than the way the Town  
15 Councils was being treated. Certainly the Town Council I was part of. So really, you know, I  
16 think the discretionary fund, like Cllr Winters said, does need to be seriously looked at, it needs  
17 to be seriously upped in resource. But I also think there needs to be a real and I don't mind  
18 repeating it, there is a serious, serious, serious need at executive level to kind of get in behind  
19 this system and make it work. Because it can be very, very good if it's made work properly.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Councillor. Cllr Vance.

21 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, just could I agree with Cllr Fortune on that. I think there is nobody  
22 around this Chamber, we all have different political opinions, and certainly I have talked to most  
23 people in the Chamber over the last number of months, and I have like understood that  
24 practically every Councillor around this Chamber feels exactly the same about the Local  
25 Government system and how it has evolved in the last number of years and how it definitely  
26 needs to be changed and certainly the municipal authorities need to be resourced much greater  
27 than what they are at the present. Could I just ask Debbie as well in the NPPR, last year adopted  
28 by the Council was 200,000 and the outturn was 707,000. How did you come about the figure  
29 for this year, 400,000 and the outturn last year was 700,000?

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you finished Councillor, are you?

31 Cllr VANCE: I am finished yeah, thank you.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Oliver O'Brien.

33 Cllr O'BRIEN: Just a question in relation to the dog warden service, how many dog wardens do  
34 we have and I would also like to ask if there is any funding being put aside for the development

1 of dog parks within the county? Dog fouling is a very, very serious problem in Bray and as I  
2 say, it's just because people have nowhere to bring their dogs where they'd be fenced in and  
3 where they'd be safe. I am just wondering is there any funding put aside for that?

4 MS CROMIE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. The agricultural committee, the 14,000, that's a pensioner  
5 for the former CEO of ACOT.

6  
7 The municipal budget is to be found in H0905 an 8.6% increase from last year. In relation to the  
8 piers and harbours, so Wicklow Harbour, 346, both costs and income. Arklow Harbour, 234  
9 costs, 75K income, so a net cost of 160,000.

10  
11 In relation to the transfer for the machinery yard, we have put pressure on the machinery yard to  
12 reduce the rates over the years, and in AFS2015, there was only a transfer of 6,000. That was it.

13  
14 Horse control, I suppose there is less horses being collected.

15  
16 NPPR, the reason for the income of 750,000 was in relation to back in August 2014 when we did  
17 the all mailshot in relation to LPT and NPPR, and all that created, and at that stage, we actually  
18 entered into a payment agreements with people to actually pay the NPPR over a longer period of  
19 time. And that is where that actual income came from.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kavanagh.

21 Cllr KAVANAGH: Sorry, I just - does anybody have an answer in relation to the tendering  
22 process for the Wicklow pound?

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Michael is here.

24 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Just under the Control of Dogs Act, it doesn't have to be tendered. The  
25 ISPCA, the current contract is up at the end of February 2017. And the Council will again go  
26 into negotiations in order to get a successful outcome for that.

27  
28 Now the contract will include the sourcing of the premises for the dog pound. Dog wardens,  
29 there is two wardens and there is one assistant in the dog pound. And it also will include  
30 enforcement.

31  
32 And just one other item there, you can refer to the Manager's Report under G02 for works that  
33 were carried out in Arklow Harbour, and what's proposed in Arklow and Wicklow Port for 2017.  
34 That's all Chairman.



1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

2 Cllr WALSH: Just in relation to the upkeep and maintenance of the CCTV installed by the  
3 Council around the districts, there is no provision for, as I say for the upkeep and maintenance of  
4 those systems on any of the sections here I can see. Where does the Director envisage, or how  
5 was it to be funded?

6 DIRECTOR GUINEY: That's not mine, but I would say as a Municipal District manager if we  
7 had any, we would have to maintain it in the Municipal District, it would have to be maintained  
8 there, using funding available to the Municipal District.

9 Cllr WALSH: Is there specific funding?

10 DIRECTOR GUINEY: No, not specific funding, but you have a pot of money basically to  
11 divide out.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

13 Cllr MATTHEWS: Chairman, I just had asked a question that the two ports of Wicklow and  
14 Arklow were referred to in G02. Greystones has its own management plan now, where is Bray  
15 funded from for the management of its harbour? We need funding for that? And it needs  
16 management, so where is that covered?

17 DIRECTOR GUINEY: The only figure that's in the budget for Bray Harbour is a figure of  
18 €5,000.

19 Cllr MATTHEWS: Where is that under?

20 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Oh, I have to...

21 MS CROMIE: Same area.

22 Cllr MATTHEWS: 5,000 for Bray and how much for Arklow, Arklow is running at a deficit of  
23 how much?

24 DIRECTOR GUINEY: There is expenditure of 264, and an income of 75. And Wicklow is  
25 income and expenditure, there is a contract there of 346,000.

26 Cllr MATTHEWS: 5,000 is not enough for the management of Bray Harbour at the moment.

27 DIRECTOR GUINEY: The whole pier of Bray Harbour was built less than 20 years ago, but  
28 that's another matter.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mary Kavanagh.

30 Cllr KAVANAGH: I just want to know how the Control of Dogs Act can circumvent the  
31 tendering process? I mean we either have a tendering process or we don't. So how can the  
32 Control of Dogs Act have that - exercise that kind of power over the tendering process?

33 DIRECTOR GUINEY: That's - under the Control of Dogs Act, the ISPCA have basically that  
34 control and it has to be negotiated with the Council. There is no...

1 Cllr KAVANAGH: Where would I find that information?

2 DIRECTOR GUINEY: I'll get you that information Cathaoirleach.

3 Cllr KAVANAGH: Because as far as I am aware, it's to do with the amount of being spent, it's  
4 over a certain level, therefore it has to go to a tendering process, but it's currently not.

5 DIRECTOR GUINEY: I'll come back on that Chair.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

7 Cllr FORTUNE: Sorry to come back to you again on this, when you look at page 2 of the book  
8 we got, and under Municipal Districts, it's as obvious as the microphone in front of me what our  
9 problem is. I mean the way we are being funded now and the way the funding is being treated,  
10 it's been - what funding we get is being used to replace Central Government funding that we  
11 used to get. So that's why we don't have money for Municipal Districts and I said this at a  
12 previous budget meeting when this was all brought in. The public were promised we were going  
13 to have all this money, we were going to be able to do great things in the area, it was the greatest  
14 thing since sliced bread and it's a con job. It really is a con job. If you read there, it's very  
15 simply put, but it puts, it captures in context, it started off with the general purposes grants for  
16 2014, that was the biggest mistake. And I would call on the executive that they didn't fight that  
17 properly. I mean does anybody in this authority talk to the powers that be or the heads in the  
18 Department? It seems to me, obviously the Minister, while he is the boss in theory, there is  
19 obviously a civil servant in the Department of the Environment responsible to the authorities,  
20 and I presume he works through the County Manager's association. But the end result is we are  
21 ending up as public representatives coming into a meeting at 10 o'clock this morning, we are  
22 here all day, we are only now getting to the bottom line and we have no money to go back to our  
23 areas with we are talking about. It's absolutely a joke.

24  
25 Seriously something has to be done and we as members and the executive need to work together  
26 on this and it's about time that the executive stopped giving us - you are in the same position we  
27 are, I recognise that, because you have to deal with what you are given. But collectively we  
28 have to stand up and say hang on, this is not on. We are not getting enough funding and there is  
29 the answer on page 2. That's the reason. So I make no apology for saying this, I have said it  
30 before, and we have got to stop coming in here like nodding donkeys and just agreeing with  
31 everything. This is absolutely crazy the way our constituents are being treated. We are all made  
32 false promises, false promises, false promises and we have five TDs in this county and I have  
33 said it before and what are they doing? They're not doing very much for us. Not one of them  
34 will talk up about this. They're like super County Councillors, because they have three or four

1 staff working for them. It's a joke, and it's got to stop.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: I agree with you Councillor. I do. Seriously.

3 Cllr FORTUNE: I hope everyone agrees with me because I don't think I am wrong.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McDonald.

5 Cllr McDONALD: The answer to the question for the support services, the extra 42,000 for the  
6 harbours, it's quite a lot of money.

7 MS CROMIE: That's just in relation, that's just I suppose CMC in that there are more staff now  
8 actually dealing with harbours and then - that's a support cost to the harbours. G 0299.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

10 Cllr BEHAN: I want to remind you we agreed to discuss my motion at 4.30 and I don't want to  
11 be told at 25 past four we have to keep going with the estimates.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: I told you it would be at half four. Have no fears. I think Cllr Winters  
13 proposed that we take a short break here. And to be back at a quarter past four. Twenty past  
14 four.

15 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, could I suggest that we take a break until 4.30. We deal with the  
16 suspension of standing orders then and then we go after that, that shouldn't take that long, after  
17 that we finish off.

18 Cllr RYAN: The suspension of standing orders could take an hour.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would prefer to go the way I have said it to you.

20 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Why don't we just go ahead.

21 Cllr RYAN: Ten minutes break now.

22 Cllr VANCE: I have no problem coming back if we can get agreement in ten or 15 minutes.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Neill.

24 Cllr O'NEILL: Just - I am sorry I was in a bit late today, but I would like to say - on behalf of  
25 the Sinn Féin party I think and on behalf of everyone in the Chamber here, I know I missed the  
26 vote of sympathies this only the death of Fidel Castro, I would hope that we all would, that we  
27 would all agree that a vote of sympathy for the people of Cuba is correct. I would say we  
28 (INAUDIBLE) we couldn't...

29 Cllr WINTERS: Even the stenographer can't hear, it's not just me.

30 Cllr RYAN: Ten minutes break?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: I propose ten minutes. And definitely at 4.30, Joe.

32

33 Short break

34

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, Cllr Behan asked for a discussion there at 4.30. I am being to  
2 take that discussion now and Cllr Behan?

3 Cllr BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, thank you and this may or may not take a long time, a lot depends  
4 on the replies that the Chief Executive gives to the motion. But again for the record, I want to  
5 propose that this Council withholds its consent to the alteration of planning conditions at  
6 Ballynagran landfill as proposed by the Chief Executive.

7  
8 Calls on the EPA to rescind its amendments to the waste licence for Ballynagran landfill.  
9 Requests an immediate explanation from the Chief Executive for his refusal to consult with the  
10 democratically elected members of this Council or local residents on this matter. And condemns  
11 the incompetence of a system of monitoring of landfill capacity in this country, which allowed  
12 this emergency to develop so suddenly.

13  
14 Now Cathaoirleach, I said some things there this morning, so I don't propose to repeat them.  
15 The motion itself speaks for itself, except that I would say they think it was shocking in the  
16 extreme to discover that not only does the Chief Executive, but the EPA, have the power to alter  
17 unilaterally planning conditions and waste licenses without any public consultation process, or  
18 without reference to elected members of the Council in which the decision is made. That's  
19 shocking.

20  
21 Secondly what's also shocking is that a lot of other agencies were involved, including the County  
22 Managers Association, the Department of the Environment, and others that are mentioned there,  
23 the various county managers in the Greater Dublin Area. Yet not even the Cathaoirleach of this  
24 Council, yourself Cathaoirleach, a full-time excellent Cathaoirleach in my opinion were not  
25 consulted. And we as members and you as Cathaoirleach received notification at five minutes to  
26 five on Friday evening, a week ago, giving us no opportunity to respond.

27  
28 I regret the fact that we have to actually do this, bring it up today like this, but there is no other  
29 option. I am one of the few, Cllr Vance is another one, Cllr Doran, Cllr Ruttle, who were  
30 actually members of the Council when Ballynagran originally was agreed as a landfill site. At  
31 that stage it was going to be a publicly owned landfill site. Times have changed and the  
32 ownership has moved on. But I voted for that at the time and one of the reasons I voted for it  
33 was the very sincere assurances given by senior officials sitting up there, none of whom are here  
34 today, that this landfill would only be used for Wicklow waste; that it most definitely would not

1 be used for Dublin waste and residents were given the same assurances. It seems to me these  
2 assurances are given very sincerely on one day, but taken away by somebody else a short while  
3 later. And I think it's very unacceptable to residents, it's unacceptable to Councillors. And I  
4 understand that we may not be able to change the Chief Executive's decision from a legal  
5 standpoint, but we can certainly withhold our consent to him doing it. I propose that we don't  
6 consent to him doing it. he can give his explanation, obviously he will. But that doesn't mean to  
7 say we have to consent or agree to it. I certainly don't agree that the EPA can just automatically  
8 rescind elements or amend the waste licence, and put in a kind of a pathetic sentence in the local  
9 media that they'll monitor it in case there is noise or emissions in the next few weeks. You  
10 know, we are all familiar with complaints that have been made about that landfill site in the past.

11  
12 The only other issue that I would like to tie in for the Chief Executive to answer, if he possibly  
13 can, if you could confirm who actually owns the landfill site now, and if you could give an  
14 estimate as to the amount of extra income that will be generated for the owner of that landfill by  
15 virtue of the decision that he and the EPA and the County Managers Association have decided to  
16 inflict on the people of Wicklow.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

18 Cllr LAWLESS: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I actually I support Cllr Behan in his motion that he  
19 has set down here before us today. Like most of the other Councillors, I was very annoyed that  
20 we only got notification of this about a Friday evening at a quarter to five. You know yourself I  
21 did speak to you on the Monday, Cathaoirleach, about this. I would have concerns in around the  
22 extra - I would have concerns that - is this a case of testing the water for future extra dumping  
23 coming down the road? I know we have been told it's an extra 40,000 just for the year end and  
24 that Droichead will be open up again in January and if I am right in saying Minister Naughton  
25 gave reassurance it would be open in January as well. But I have this fear that this is just going  
26 to be a precedent of let's test the waters and see how much of a fuss is kicked up down here in  
27 Wicklow and if they don't kick up a fuss, sure we will do it again next year and increase it again.  
28 I also have concerns as well that if any of the toxic ash from the Poolbeg as well is going to be  
29 coming down to Wicklow because the environmental effect of that as well in the dump, in the  
30 atmosphere, would be - could be quite dangerous for the residents and the community here in  
31 Wicklow as well, and that would be a major concern that I would have.

32  
33 Also there was a committee set up in regards to the Ballynagran landfill and as part of the  
34 planning application, and this was with local residents and I am just wondering were they even

1 consulted about this happening as well as they have to actually live with this? So I'll definitely  
2 be supporting Cllr Behan's motion here this morning, or this afternoon, thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

4 Cllr Shay CULLEN: Thanks Chairman. I suppose first of all I would like to say as well I would  
5 be supportive, fully supportive of Cllr Behan's motion. I suppose the first thing I would say is  
6 the decision that's been taken in my mind shows a total lack of respect to the public  
7 representatives in this Chamber, and not to be properly informed, and also the residents, you  
8 know as has been mentioned earlier, they've endured a lot over the years in that area from noise  
9 pollution and from odours and so on in the area, it's constant. We have brought it up at  
10 Municipal District level on several occasions. But I think it's - the way they've been treated is  
11 disgraceful. There is no other way of saying it. There is one resident said to me last week, there  
12 is a total lack of trust between the community and the Council and I think that's - I can't disagree  
13 with that person, because certainly the residents haven't been taken into consideration in this at  
14 all.

15  
16 Obviously discussions have been happening over a period of time. You don't just arrive at a  
17 point of having to dispose of 120,000 tonnes of waste, and not know where you are going to put  
18 it. So we should have been made aware of this situation in my opinion, a while ago, and not on  
19 the last minute. I suppose to invoke Section 56 of the Waste Management Act 1996, obviously  
20 that's a huge decision to have to take. I suppose what I would like to know is there a benefit  
21 financially to this Council? Are the Ballynagran community projects fund benefitting from the  
22 extra 40,000 tonnes of waste? Obviously there is an agreement in place on the existing tonnage.  
23 And I suppose planning conditions as we know show a maximum of 150,000 tonnes by the end  
24 of December will exceed 190,000 tonnes. 150,000 tonnes per year with an extra 40,000 tonnes  
25 on top of that. I suppose I want a guarantee from the Chief Executive that at the end of this year,  
26 at the end of December, the Ballynagran will revert back to its allowed tonnage and that this isn't  
27 going to continue into 2017. I would have a concern that this is maybe the tip of the iceberg.  
28 This is the starting point to try and take more tonnage into Ballynagran. It's something that I  
29 want an absolute categorical guarantee that whatever happens between this and the end of the year,  
30 that that's the end of it, and the current planning guidelines are adhered to from there on. That's  
31 all I have to say, thank you.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Pat Doran.

33 Cllr DORAN: Thank you. I was one of the ones that was here when this was first proposed, and  
34 I voted against it then. I totally agree with Cllr Behan. That area, or dump as I call it, was put in

1 on top of people, their farmland and everything else. And one farmer in particular, that's not  
2 with us now, but it was nearly at the back of his house. So I will support Cllr Behan in any way  
3 I can. It was wrong then and it's wrong now.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Tommy Fortune.

5 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I support fully what Cllr Behan has outlined. I think  
6 this is in any shape or fashion absolutely disrespectful to us as members, and indeed to the  
7 residents in that area, and in the catchment area because it goes beyond the immediate area, and  
8 really and truly, this has got to stop. The disrespect that we get as members has just got to  
9 finally stop. We have got to be - we are public representatives. We are told and we have been  
10 told in the past, I have sat here in the Chamber and been told from the top table that oh you are  
11 the Board of Directors members, it's your decision, you know when it suits. I am saying to you  
12 now as a Director, you can't do this. If this was a commercial organisation, you would have to  
13 stop it now. You can't do this. This is wrong. It's wrong. In every facet it's wrong. And as Cllr  
14 Behan said in what he had to say both this morning and again repeat it now, to be given this  
15 communication at five minutes - sent out at five minutes to five on Friday, a bit like getting the  
16 legal opinion we got on the 14th of November at two minutes before our meeting started. You  
17 have got to stop doing that. You can't do that. You might think you have all this power. But we  
18 are elected representatives. And we have got to work as a unit. And not be allowing the  
19 executive to behave this way. It's just gone ridiculous. And we have to be fair to the people in  
20 that area. If any one of us were living within this catchment area, we wouldn't want this at all.  
21 That's the way we have to look at this. And it's wrong what you are doing, maybe as an  
22 executive you are being told by the Minister for all kinds of reasons, who knows what the  
23 reasons are, that you have to do this. But this is wrong and I certainly will not be supporting it.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mary Kavanagh.

25 Cllr KAVANAGH: Thanks Cathaoirleach. First and foremost, my sympathies really lie with  
26 the people that live in the area of Ballynagran, around that dump. I remember at the time that the  
27 landfill site was first opened there, the controversy that surrounded it, and those people are living  
28 with the reality which is that they can't even open their windows in the summertime to breathe  
29 the air that the rest of us take for granted. And it wasn't until we had our own problems here in  
30 Wicklow with two very, very, very smelly treatment plants, and you have to walk by them and  
31 realise that for some people this is a reality every day. And the other point I want to make is that  
32 what is going on in Dublin that they can't manage their own waste requirements? I mean there  
33 are people in high positions there being paid an awful lot of money to do the kind of background  
34 research that they need to do in order to plan long-term. That's what happens in any walk of life.

1 In any business. You plan for future needs. You don't just turn around and try and find some  
2 fall guy county beside them that you can just dump all this kind of refuse into. I think it's just  
3 beyond the beyonds. And then to think that they can invoke emergency legislation just to get  
4 their own way. It's just incomprehensible that they would be allowed to get away with that. And  
5 I think we should take a stand and say no, back, take your problem back, deal with it yourselves.  
6 We are not going to just be here to be dumped on. I think it's just crazy.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Nolan.

8 Cllr NOLAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I can appreciate that this was an emergency situation,  
9 a highly unusual situation, and something that I don't think has happened before. But there was,  
10 as other Councillors have alluded to, a lack of consultation with the elected members here.  
11 Perhaps there wasn't time, or whatever, but at the same time we are here, we are the public face  
12 of this Council, we are the ones dealing with the people of the county. We should be kept  
13 informed. I firmly believe that.

14  
15 More as well, the residents in that area of Ballynagran are - they are prisoners in their own  
16 homes as Cllr Kavanagh alluded to. They can't open their windows in the summer. And I mean  
17 even driving past the area on the N11, you have to roll your windows up and that's only for a  
18 couple of minutes when you are driving past it. But if you are living in the middle of that for the  
19 whole life, I mean I can only imagine what it must be like.

20  
21 And again as Cllr Cullen alluded to, will this continue into 2017 or will this be a one-off end of  
22 discussion? Because I would hope this is a one-off. I would disagree with it, but if it is just a  
23 one-off, I might be prepared to just accept that it will be a one-off but I certainly would not want  
24 this to be an ongoing thing.

25  
26 The Environmental Protection Agency does not seem to be doing a whole lot to help the  
27 residents down there. They really don't. And I would ask that they either have a proper  
28 inspection of the site or increase the threshold of what is acceptable in their minds. And just to  
29 finish, as I said earlier, we are the Garden of Ireland. I hope we don't become the garden that has  
30 the rusty car in it, because this seems like what could happen. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor...

32 Cllr FORTUNE: I just had a message from a resident who (INAUDIBLE) is saying the stream  
33 is not going out in public.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.



1 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I would certainly have concerns about the rather  
2 sudden decision here and the fact that even the Chairman wasn't consulted. And it seems to me  
3 that this is another example of Dublin dumping on Wicklow and it's certainly a concern that that  
4 slide there says the only capacity in the country is in these two places. So I would have a  
5 concern for the future of an ability to get rid of waste. Dublin already takes 90% of its water  
6 from this county, so it now seems it has to dump a vast quantity of its waste here. So we seem to  
7 be being put on. This would be of particular concern as to where our future waste is going to go.  
8 Is there capacity in Ballynagran to cope with it? Now there is an incinerator being built in  
9 Dublin and I suppose the future fate of waste is tied up in that. When is that going to start  
10 working and will there be unlimited access for waste from Wicklow for that to replace the  
11 capacity they've taken in Ballynagran. Thank you.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Snell.

13 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Again as the nearest residential public representative to  
14 Ballynagran, just to reiterate what's being said in regards to the lack of notification I suppose,  
15 and the members feel that we should have been consulted and I concur with that wholeheartedly.  
16 As a member of the Ballynagran Liaison Committee as well, it's disappointing that we weren't  
17 given any time really to digest what was happening and even discuss it. But if any members  
18 were under any illusions in regards to the powers that public representatives have, I think its  
19 issues like this that brings it home to you that you have very, very little powers. And the one  
20 thing we are all looking for is a little bit of, I suppose common respect, and decency.

21  
22 And while I understand that the - you know it was classed as an emergency situation, it's ironic  
23 that the EPA will have such a hold in this whole progress, because the EPA were the ones who  
24 were very slow in the past to get out when residents made numerous, numerous complaints.  
25 Indeed it's the most complained dump in the whole of Ireland, Ballynagran is. And the EPA  
26 were very, very slow in getting out to assess what was going on there.

27  
28 So while I accept that the Manager and the EPA and - they have a process that doesn't need to  
29 collide us as public representatives, I think they really should have at least discussed it here in  
30 the chambers with us and let us know what's happening, because we are the ones who are really  
31 just representative of the public and we are bringing in what the public are saying here, and  
32 while it may come across as members are angry and giving out, I can assure you they're not  
33 giving out for their own benefit, they're giving out on behalf of the public because they really  
34 were - this was dropped on them at the last minute.

1  
2 I believe that it has harmed the situation in regards to the community again. There was a long  
3 drawn out legal battle all them years as Cllr Doran and Cllr Behan have discussed. And it  
4 doesn't help for, I suppose democracy, when they feel that the only security they had was the  
5 planning conditions that was granted at that time.

6  
7 I did inquire in regards to the community grant side of it, where funding from every tonne of  
8 waste that's brought in would be safeguarded for the community projects, and I have been  
9 assured that that will continue on the 40,000 tonnes that's going in up to the 31st of December.  
10 But again I would share the frustration of members, but the realisation is that you know, we don't  
11 hold very much power, and I suppose this has brought it home to us. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

13 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Thanks very much indeed Cathaoirleach. Now there is no plan to show  
14 disrespect to the members at all in this. Just to say that before I start at all.

15  
16 Now the landfill in Droichead closed on Thursday 10th of November. Just to give an idea what  
17 was happening then, the Department basically were on to the Council on the 11th, which was on  
18 the Friday and they said look at, there is a very serious situation here, and as you can see from  
19 the slide, we have been producing 6,000 tonnes of residuous waste in Wicklow over the period  
20 to the end of the year and they said look at there is going to be no place to take that refuse if  
21 something is not done in the region to try to solve the issue. Now none of us wanted to -- we  
22 didn't want to see refuse being left uncollected on the streets and so on, we lived through that  
23 long enough as well, I certainly didn't want to see that happening. So it was necessary to do  
24 something about it.

25  
26 Now you can see there that on the second last bullet point, the EPA granted a technical  
27 amendment for 40,000 tonnes to be allowed into Ballynagran to the end of the year, to the end of  
28 2016. Now that was in Wicklow County Council's eyes, that was the most important thing, that  
29 once they give a go ahead for that to happen, like we are dealing with the EPA on a daily basis in  
30 regarding landfills and prior to this and now Irish Water are dealing with them in relation to  
31 water, and to waste water. And they take their duties and their responsibilities very seriously  
32 and when that technical amendment was given to the Council, that was given on the 7th,  
33 Thursday the 17th of November that we were aware at that stage. So after that, the Manager,  
34 sorry the Chief Executive signed the order on the 18th. And that information, it also had to be -

1 the same order had to be signed in the case of Dublin and in the case of Meath. And it was  
2 basically late in the afternoon of the -- on the Friday when the information came, that we were  
3 able to release this information out to the members. And that information was released as soon  
4 as we could. Now just to say there is no benefit to Wicklow County Council in this at all. And  
5 the community grant, the community will benefit to the sum of - the figure I have been given is  
6 €76,000. Just regarding as to how much more the landfill can take and so on, if my information  
7 is right, it's 15 years after the 1st of January 2006. So that would mean at the end of 2020.  
8 That's when the current planning for Ballynagran will run out.

9  
10 The current owners are Ballynagran Landfill Limited. I think I have covered - maybe the Chief  
11 Executive wants to come in, that's about what I have to say at the moment anyway.

12 CE: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I suppose it certainly was not an easy decision or indeed  
13 direction that we got. The first intimation we got was when Droichead closed. It meant Kildare  
14 had no facility to take in refuse and they take in a lot of refuse from around the Leinster region.  
15 And as Michael has outlined they were looking for 120,000 tonnes of capacity. And so I was  
16 concerned on that because that would mean if it was being divided evenly between the two  
17 remaining landfills in the region that could take refuse, that it would have been a 60,000 tonne to  
18 each landfill. So there were a number of other issues to class it to be an emergency situation, it  
19 had to be short-term, and there was no indication given at that stage as to what had happened in  
20 Droichead that caused it to be closed. It had only re-opened during the summer months, and so  
21 that was unclear and it was certainly unclear as to when it would open. We had no information  
22 to that in that regard.

23  
24 We also had no information with regard to the Poolbeg, which is the solution. And as everyone  
25 here in this room knows, Poolbeg is delayed because of the opposition to that incinerator. And  
26 that's what has happened. There has been a roll-on on the timeline for providing that, but also  
27 then there is a finite timeline in the caps in the country as a whole of landfill facilities. Because  
28 the idea is to move away from landfill. So it was a perfect storm. And could I just say this time  
29 last year, prior to the new owners taking in charge, there was every likelihood that the  
30 Ballynagran facility was going to close. It needed to open up a new cell, if that was the case.  
31 And if they were to continue.

32  
33 The previous owners weren't interested in that and I am glad to say that the new owners did,  
34 because notwithstanding Poolbeg being available, there will be a residual landfill needed for a

1 number of years yet. So we would have been in the same situation that the rest of Leinster finds  
2 themselves in today, that other people would have to take the waste. I also queried about regard  
3 to the planning conditions that we had applying to the permission. And I also queried what was  
4 the view of the EPA. So I had no news to bring to the members except preliminary that there  
5 was a scarcity of landfill capacity. So really in the Tuesday, the Wednesday and the Thursday,  
6 the pieces of this jigsaw were put together. We had the very real situation, it's not an imaginary  
7 situation, we had two landfills to take all the refuse for the 12 counties that are in the region.  
8 Simple as. No benefit to the people in Ballynagran who do suffer from odours in the landfill,  
9 from the landfill and indeed at times you can get them here in the town.

10  
11 So all those things had to be played. And I talked to my colleague in Meath. They were taking  
12 80,000 tonnes, they were supposed to take 80,000 tonnes. Unlike Ballynagran which is easy  
13 access off a motorway, she had the added complication that it was a county road network that  
14 Knockharley is serviced by. She had a lot of trouble with regard to local impact on traffic as  
15 well as odours and possible problems. We also inquired from the EPA if they were satisfied  
16 with increasing this, what were they going to do about monitoring the situation of the landfill?  
17 They gave an undertaking that they would be on site in the landfill from the period, from when  
18 this commenced to the end of the year. I understand that's the situation that pertains presently.

19  
20 The waste is going in presently. And I should have mentioned it to the Cathaoirleach and indeed  
21 I was with him that afternoon, it completely slipped my mind. Not because it's not material. It  
22 was, as Michael said, we were in liaison with the Department. The regional waste, the three  
23 regional waste authorities. The EPA and the other councils. So it was a lot of tick-tacking to try  
24 and get this thing to close out. The EPA made their decision on the Thursday. We were  
25 informed that Droichead from the EPA would be opening on the 1st of January, which gave us  
26 the limited timeframe that we needed to act under. And with the confirmation that Droichead  
27 will open on the 1st of January, we will have a clean bill of capacity from the 1st of January, as  
28 will Knockharley in Meath. There should be ample space to accommodate waste in 2017. My  
29 understanding Michael is that the incinerator will fire up initially in April, hopefully in turn that  
30 will be fully operational by the Autumn of next year.

31  
32 All I can say is that there wasn't a lot of time to consult. It is an emergency situation. It does fall  
33 on the Chief Executive to act in those situations. Really it would have been the problem of  
34 120,000 tonnes of waste being on the streets if the two landfills didn't act in concert, two chief

1 executives did not act in partnership with the EPA and the Department to resolve the situation.

2  
3 The system is problematic, I think the last point if I might just comment on the last point of Cllr  
4 Behan's, is that I mentioned it briefly earlier; the situation developed to the scenario we are at  
5 because of the failure to provide infrastructure. Everywhere has seen increased recycling, but we  
6 can't recycle the amount of waste. We also have the situation where the economy is booming in  
7 certain aspects of it. And business is improving. And obviously then we create more waste.  
8 And we have to get rid of it and we had a facility that had to be sweated in the scenario that  
9 presented itself to us. I believe it was an emergency situation. And we just had to deal with it.  
10 And I dealt with it by signing the section 56 notice.

11  
12 I have already talked to the Cathaoirleach about not mentioning it to him, and I regret that, but  
13 time was of the essence and I dealt with it in accordance with the information I had in front of  
14 me. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

16 Cllr BEHAN: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I mean I'll be putting the motion to the meeting now in a  
17 few minutes, or I'll be asking you to put it to the meeting. There is just a couple of points arising  
18 from the answers to the questions that I would just like to explore for a minute or two if I can.  
19 Based on the fact that six weeks capacity left in Ballynagran equals 6,000 tonnes, that means that  
20 in an entire year of 2016, there would have been around 48,000 tonnes from Wicklow going into  
21 Ballynagran. There will be a total of 190,000 tonnes put in Ballynagran by the end of December,  
22 which means that 48,000 of Wicklow waste, but 140,000 tonnes of Dublin waste is being  
23 dumped in Ballynagran by the end of this year. That obviously has a huge effect on local  
24 residents, it has been said. It also has an effect on the capacity of that landfill in the future for  
25 future Wicklow refuse.

26  
27 So it's an enormous impact. Now that's the first point. The second point is that Mr Geaney said  
28 that he actually was aware of it a week before the letter was sent out and presumably Mr Doyle  
29 was aware of it as well. So there was a week when certainly the issue had been raised. So there  
30 was an opportunity to allow us to discuss this matter on the Monday, because at that point and  
31 time officials in this Council were aware of the problem. But I really find it hard to believe that  
32 nobody in this building had the slightest idea that a landfill the size of Droichead was closing on  
33 a particular day, and that nobody had in any way given information through the County  
34 Managers Network or whatever to say this problem was coming down the tracks.

1  
2 Now if then didn't and I know Michael Geaney a very long time and I have no reason to doubt  
3 him, and his integrity, or Mr Doyle's for that matter. But if it is the case that this - the people in  
4 this building only heard on the 10th of November there was a problem, what does it say about  
5 the three regional waste management co-ordinating bodies in this country that they were  
6 mismanaging a situation so badly that a landfill was closing on one day and they were running  
7 around the country looking for an alternative place the next day? That just is incredible if that  
8 happened. And that's put in the fourth point of my motion. Which is that we condemn the  
9 incompetence of the system. I am not going to say it's incompetence of people because I can't  
10 say that, but the incompetence of a system of monitoring of landfill which allowed an emergency  
11 to develop like this so suddenly.

12  
13 Now Mr Doyle made a statement there in his reply that said he was directed to give this  
14 permission. Now my understanding is the only person who can give the Chief Executive a  
15 direction are the Councillors. So I would like him to come back and tell us who directed him  
16 and what authority they had to direct him to give this permission.

17  
18 I am coming to the end Cathaoirleach. Just the Ballynagran Landfill Limited are the people who  
19 now own the landfill. But that doesn't really tell us anything. What I really want to know is who  
20 were the owners of Ballynagran Landfill Limited? There is obviously some either private  
21 individual or a private company who own the landfill? Now they're paying rates obviously to  
22 this Council. So could we please find out who are the owners, who are the beneficial owners of  
23 that company? And I didn't get an answer to the question what estimated income is coming to  
24 the landfill, not to the Council? What extra income is going to come to the owners of that  
25 landfill by the virtue of this decision being made?

26  
27 Finally Cathaoirleach, when we have time, I would like you to put it to the meeting, the motion.  
28 Thank you.

29 CE: Just to answer the one question that was posed to me, it's easy to put our heads in the sand  
30 and say that we shouldn't assist the citizens of Leinster in providing capacity where we have  
31 capacity. I would be disappointed if the shoe was on the other foot, what would the members  
32 expect other chief executives to do?

33  
34 It was expected of me might be a better word rather than directed. It was expected because the

1 idea was that activate available capacity and that capacity was activated on the basis of the EPA  
2 decision to allow extra capacity. So we had all the information that required me to make that  
3 decision. But we were expected as the two chief executives that were fortunate to have landfills  
4 within their jurisdiction that had capacity, we were asked to find a solution. So that's maybe  
5 better worded.

6 Cllr BEHAN: I think also the people who live in the area had a right to expect your  
7 consideration for them as well. That's the point I think they would make if they were here. They  
8 have a right. They have a right to expect from you that you would actually implement  
9 permissions this Council gave. Sorry Cathaoirleach.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen please?

11 Cllr Shay CULLEN: I did ask a question earlier of the Chief Executive. In the event of the  
12 present situation being continued to the end of the year, in other words the extra 40,000 tonnes  
13 being put into Ballynagran, do we have a guarantee that the first week of January this will revert  
14 back to its 150,000 tonnes, or planning conditions that were originally agreed? I would like a  
15 very clear answer on that please.

16 CE: Yes.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry Michael, just let -- I just want -- go ahead Cllr Bourke.

18 Cllr BOURKE: It's suggested in the Manager's Report to us last week that the incinerator  
19 facility won't be opened until next May. Is that correct? In Poolbeg? And if that's the case,  
20 could you not direct that Ballynagran, okay takes this 40,000 tonnes now but it's subtracted from  
21 next year's allocation from Ballynagran and have that sent to the incinerator instead so it will  
22 balance out?

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell?

24 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Yeah, it certainly seems to be a major degree of  
25 incompetence somewhere in the system that it seems at about a day's notice, the biggest landfill  
26 probably in the country decided it was full or stopped or something like that. I can't understand  
27 it. I thought there was a system of planning these things and it's disturbing that there isn't. I  
28 think probably Wicklow didn't have much choice but to take this considering I would suppose  
29 that we are going to send most of our waste to the incinerator in Dublin in a year's time or  
30 whenever it actually gets to work. I don't know where this waste is going to go, but I suspect a  
31 lot of it will go to Dublin. But I would be interested certainly maybe in the early New Year in a  
32 presentation by somebody who - Michael who or somebody, about where is the waste going to  
33 go from Wicklow once the incinerator works? Is it going to go to Dublin and what is going to  
34 happen, what is the capacity of Ballynagran, how long will it last or what are the issues?

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

2 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, sorry I missed the early part of that debate, I was outside there. Just I  
3 am sure other members, there were members at the time would remember what I believe that the  
4 biggest scandal in 30 years that I am a Councillor was Ballynagran and the decision that  
5 Councillors around this table took in regard to that? They allowed to do all the investigations on  
6 that particular site, spent almost a million on it investigating, and then walked away from it.  
7 And then a private developer came in, bought it, got planning permission for it and then sold it  
8 on for multi million pound profit. And the members of this Council at that time, they voted for  
9 that, were told that was going to be the case at that particular time. And with that, we had a  
10 situation where we had waste collection in all the local authorities, and we had nowhere to put  
11 the waste, because we didn't have a landfill. So we lost the Local Authority picking up the  
12 rubbish and then we lost the - that as well and we lost millions. I would reckon from analysis at  
13 the time and I reckon over the lifetime at the prices at that particular time, the Local Authority  
14 lost about 60 million euro from the decision that was taken at that time.

15

16 Now in this particular instance, I mean my attitude to this is that waste, whether people like it or  
17 not is a regional function now, and with Poolbeg, the economies of scale would indicate that  
18 they're going to have to have a massive amount of waste to make it economically viable. And  
19 we don't have a problem 60% of our people go up to Dublin to work, we don't have a problem  
20 with that. Now we want, we think because we have water in Wicklow, that we should be  
21 charging everyone for it, and we don't - Dublin doesn't put up gates for to stop our people going  
22 in there and working and earning a living in. I think in a situation where there is an emergency  
23 situation and we do have capacity, I think it's no harm for any Council to come in and give a  
24 helping hand to another Council who has difficulties in that particular area. Because whereas we  
25 might help them out this time, it might be our particular turn, the next time. And I think that's  
26 only good neighbours that do that, if you have the capacity to do it and particularly it's over a  
27 six-week period and it's going to end at Christmas as well, thank you.

28 DIRECTOR GUINEY: Just on Droichead. An EPA audit found that Droichead had gone over  
29 its tonnage, and this resulted in the closure with immediate effect. So that's what happened in  
30 that case.

31 Cllr BEHAN: Why could they not have extended -- why could the EPA not have extended their  
32 licence? Why did they come to Wicklow and they're going to re-open it in January? Why is  
33 that? Did anyone ask that question?

34 DIRECTOR GUINEY: I am sure - no, I don't have the answer to that one right.



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I have a name, it's AGB Ltd is the beneficial owner of - and I have a name as well but I don't just want to give the name publicly at the moment. AGB.

Cllr BEHAN: A public limited company?

DIRECTOR GUINEY: I have AGB Ltd is what I have been told. How much money, now I am -- I am once more just going on what's out there really at 50 euro a tonne, that would be two million. But you must remember like once you fill the hole in the ground, the hole is filled, so that's, that would be less in the future. So in other words you are getting money up front for it.

Cllr BEHAN: But it's two million of Dublin waste going into that landfill that possibly should have been going into another landfill? It's two million extra more than they'd have been expecting.

DIRECTOR GUINEY: In 2016? Yeah. The other thing is that Droichead, a lot of Wicklow waste went to Droichead, just to say that to you, our collectors in Wicklow bring their waste, were bringing their waste to Droichead. That was another point just to say.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

Cllr VANCE: Could I just ask does this increase the life, by this going in, it doesn't increase the life of it, it effectively means that the capacity of that would be reached much quicker, would that not be right.

DIRECTOR GUINEY: That's correct yeah.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

Cllr O'NEILL: I don't know whether finger pointing in here is going to solve the problem. My biggest concern is the powers of the Department and the EPA and just to remind people here, the first time I spoke in this Chamber, it wasn't down here as an elected Councillor, it was up there in the public gallery where I ran amuck ten years ago when it was decided by only two people of Wicklow County Council, two people off South Dublin County Council were informed that there was six cylinders of cyanide to be blown up, and this was the Fianna Fáil Green Government. They decided to blow up the six cylinders of cyanide from Walkinstown, which was found in a rent owe kill disused factory, and they were going ahead with this without any consultation with anyone. It was the power of the people that stopped it in the long run. But my real concern is here is that the powers that be, I mean the EPA seem to have these powers that they can - these solutions have to be solved. Or these problems rather have to be solved.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

Cllr BOURKE: Could you clarify Cathaoirleach there for a second, Director Guiney said there would be two million accruing in gate fees to the County Council. Will that be accounted for...

1 Cllr BEHAN: No, the owners.

2 Cllr BOURKE: To the owners, so there is nothing accruing to the County Council in levies? Oh  
3 right.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have a proposal here from Cllr Behan. Do you have a seconder for  
5 that?

6 MS GALLAGHER: Second...

7 Cllr BEHAN: Cllr Doran will second it there. We all have it there, do we need to read it out?

8 Cllr VANCE: Read it out please.

9 MS GALLAGHER: Proposed by Councillor Joe Behan, seconded by Cllr Doran.

10 "Notwithstanding any other provision of these standing orders, a motion may be proposed  
11 without notice for the purpose of dealing with urgent business reality to go the functions of the  
12 Local Authority subject to the requirement that not less of the majority of ...(Reading)... vote in  
13 favour. As per standing order number 16, I propose this Council, 1, withholds its consent to the  
14 alterations ...(Reading)... 4 condemns the incompetence of the system of monitoring of landfill  
15 capacity in this country which allowed for this emergency to develop so suddenly."

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: All right.

17 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, just within, could I just ask a question, is it within our power to  
18 withhold consent, I just want to know that?

19 Cllr BEHAN: It just means we don't agree to it.

20 Cllr VANCE: Sorry, I just want to know.

21 Cllr BEHAN: I proposed it Cllr Vance.

22 Cllr VANCE: Sorry Cllr Behan, I just want an answer.

23 Cllr BEHAN: It's not up to the Chief Executive to decide what I meant by the motion. I am  
24 explaining Cllr Vance, it means we don't agree with this decision.

25 Cllr WINTERS: Don't agree and withholding consent are two different things.

26 Cllr BEHAN: We can withhold our consent as members of the Council to his decision. He says  
27 he has the authority to do it.

28 Cllr VANCE: I can't see the point in this. There is no point.

29

30 (A vote was taken)

31

32 MS GALLAGHER: That's 18 for, ten against, and four not present.

33 Cllr FORTUNE: Before you continue, just a housekeeping matter. Can someone tell us why the  
34 stream system hasn't been working and is not being relayed to the public?

1 MS GALLAGHER: If I may Cathaoirleach, you got a text message Councillor that it wasn't  
2 working. PCR has advised that it was working, he couldn't see any reason for your constituent  
3 not getting the streamlining, so he turned off and rebooted the system because of the information  
4 you have given. So it takes a while to catch up and that's what's happened now.

5 Cllr FORTUNE: With respect now at our last meeting, it didn't work at the back end of the  
6 meeting either. And excuse me, sorry, and I wrote to you on the matter, remember?

7 MS GALLAGHER: And again I raised it with PCR and according to the operator there, there  
8 was no warning or indication that the streamlining, that the stream captioning wasn't going out.

9 Cllr FORTUNE: I would like to know why that's happening.

10 MS GALLAGHER: I can only tell you what's been relayed to me.

11 Cllr FORTUNE: Maybe we would find out what's happening. I am asking that question, I do  
12 want an answer as to why it's happening.

13 CE: We are not magicians.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters you wanted to say something there.

15 Cllr WINTERS: I sit here and this is how I usually watch the meeting, is by on the  
16 SeeWriteNow and on the occasions -- I wasn't at the meeting during the daytime of the last  
17 meeting, so I wasn't there for that, but the previous meeting, it worked the whole time for me,  
18 and I am on it on Wi-Fi. So maybe there is a problem with your friend's Wi-Fi or your  
19 constituent's Wi-Fi. But I am watching - genuinely I am watching it on the screen, that's how I  
20 am looking at it, that's how I follow the meeting.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Nolan.

22 Cllr NOLAN: Maybe there is a slight glitch because I did actually, I didn't bring it up because I  
23 assumed it was a one-off, but someone did text me and they do live I think in Charlesland, so it's  
24 in your area and they did say that the site had crashed. This was on the 8th of November. And  
25 so perhaps there is -- I didn't report it because I thought maybe it was a one-off and they did say  
26 to me about 20 minutes later it came back. But maybe there is a glitch in the system or  
27 something maybe that could be looked into.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

29 Cllr SNELL: Cathaoirleach, I just have to record me frustration in this situation. I find it  
30 desperately sad I suppose that people are insinuating that a company that has nothing to do with  
31 Wicklow County Council would be in some way jeopardising the public getting information.  
32 This is ridiculous. We have a Protocol Committee. If there was issues, it should have been  
33 brought up there, not in a public chamber like this. If constituents are not getting the  
34 information, there is a way of addressing it and I think that the way it's been addressed here is

1 insinuating that the information is deliberately being held away from members of the public, and  
2 I think that's just total and utter nonsense. I am sick of it.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, I just want to get back -- Cllr O'Brien?

4 Cllr O'BRIEN: (SPEAKS IN IRISH) I am basically speaking, I have spoken Irish on a number  
5 of occasions and when you look up there, anybody that wants Irish cannot see it up there, if  
6 they're outside constituents. (SPEAKS IN IRISH)

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune?

8 Cllr FORTUNE: Just to respond to Cllr Snell, I didn't make any accusation against anybody. I  
9 purely asked of the top table why it wasn't working. I didn't make any remark at all, any  
10 innuendo about the company in any shape or fashion. I don't know what Cllr Snell's agenda is,  
11 but he is wrong in this case.

12 Cllr SNELL: You are wrong.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Lads, lads please. Please. Please let's get back to the budget.

14 Cllr NOLAN: I was just reporting a text that I got. I was not accusing...

15 Cllr FORTUNE: It's not just me.

16 Cllr NOLAN: I wasn't accusing anyone of anything, I just brought this up as it was on the table.  
17 That's all.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will just go back to the budget. We have gone through the  
19 programme, and obviously Cllr Vance, you want to...

20 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, I want to make a proposal if you will, I think it's just a couple of words  
21 before I make a proposal. When we discuss the Local Property Tax in September I think when it  
22 was adopted and there was an extra 2.6 million in, I like an awful lot of other people thought the  
23 budget was going to be fairly handy this year, the extra money there. And the funding there. So  
24 it would be handy enough budget. And it didn't prove to be the case given that there is over  
25 three million of extra spend in the budget this year, as there was an awful lot of other items in it  
26 that we weren't -- didn't know in regard to pensions and salaries and various things like that.  
27 And it was very noticeable that the people who voted for the property tax at that particular time  
28 wanted to improve the services in the county and that was the key issue in regard to that. And  
29 with that in mind then, we had the budget here. There isn't a budget which contains certainly an  
30 extra 500,000, a once-off for footpaths in the five municipal areas, but there is also increase in  
31 general operatives in areas and various things like that. So there is going to be a major  
32 improvement on the ground in the county in the next year. But I felt like an awful lot of other  
33 members felt that the funding for the municipal authority certainly wasn't anything like what it  
34 should be, and that we should make a start this year in improving significantly the amount of

1 funding that the municipal authorities got. The officials had put in an extra 50,000 to bring it up  
2 to 630,000 in the budget this year. And I think the majority of members felt that that was too  
3 little and that there certainly had to be a fairly substantial increase this year and certainly we can  
4 look at it in the next couple of years in the lifetime of this Council. With that in mind Chairman,  
5 I want to propose the budget as it is with the full budget that's there, but with the caveat that an  
6 extra 270,000 be found within that budget, to bring it up to 900,000 that would be distributed pro  
7 rata with the five municipal authorities and to achieve that 270,000 that's necessary to go along  
8 with the funds that already exist of 630,000, I want to propose that the NPPR, the income from  
9 that would be increased by 50,000, the planning fees would be increased by 25,000, the rates  
10 incentive scheme would be reduced by 50,000, the burial grounds would be reduced by 25,000,  
11 the pension lump sum by 25,000, Wicklow Port by 25,000, the library fund, that's the deficit in  
12 the library fund, not the book fund now, of 45,000. And enforcement would go up by 25,000.  
13 That would bring a total of 270,000 to add to the 630,000 that exists there. And it would mean  
14 that 900,000 then would be distributed pro rata among the five municipal authorities and this  
15 also means that there will be not one cut in any of the other programmes there that we have there  
16 before us. And there was certainly pressure on to go down and cut different programmes, and  
17 the majority of members decided that they could go along with this and this was the way to go,  
18 rather than in cutting any other programmes. So it was a tough job to even get this done, and I  
19 would like to pay compliment to our staff Debbie and Breda and all the staff in the -- Derek as  
20 well, in the, obviously in the finance department as well. Because an awful lot of work went into  
21 this as well. I want to formally propose Chairman that we adopt this budget and I am looking for  
22 a seconder, thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters.

24 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I would like to second that. I would like to compliment  
25 the finance staff for all of the work that they've done. Let's say as well, like it's shocking to think  
26 that of our budget, 42% of it is payroll. We have so little room to manoeuvre. But people do  
27 pay their property tax and they do want to see something for it, so I think that this is as good I  
28 suppose compromise as we can come up with. I have 900,000 within the discretionary fund,  
29 which will be used for public realm things within each of the Municipal Districts and you couple  
30 that with the 550,000 that's the once-off payment for the footpaths. And that's just short of one  
31 and a half million, which will be spent within each of the Municipal Districts, or between the  
32 Municipal Districts, although we would like to spend it in each of them. It will be spent between  
33 the Municipal Districts on things that will actually make a difference to the people who are  
34 living and using the county. I do know that we are getting extra staff this year and that there are

1 other things that will make a difference within those, and you would like to see people seeing  
2 something back for the property tax they're paying. So I would like to second this.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr McLoughlin.

4 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Just very briefly, I should have come in before Pat. I represent Wicklow  
5 County Council at the IPB board meetings that are held every year and last year the dividend  
6 went up by 50%, so Wicklow County Council got 180,000 last year. I think it was 180. No  
7 matter how much I look at this, I can't see where that 180,000, and I keep looking at it and I can't  
8 find it in the list. That 180,000, no more than every other Council that's represented at the IPB,  
9 every single one of them believe that that dividend should go back to the Municipal Districts. It  
10 is the dividend that us, and we, and the people deserve, and I am - I would like to propose that  
11 that dividend, because it belongs to Wicklow people, should go back to each of the Municipal  
12 Districts. Sorry Pat if I have just, maybe could add to yours, I think it's something that's very  
13 important.

14 MS CROMIE: Just in relation to the dividend though, as I said earlier, our insurance claim,  
15 insurance payment has gone up from 2.2 million to 2.5 million. So IPB are actually increasing  
16 the insurance cost to Wicklow County Council. By over 300,000.

17 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: They've increased it by 300.

18 MS CROMIE: Our insurance has gone up with IPB.

19 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: By 300,000.

20 MS McCARTHY: 200 and something, thousand in public liability. It's gone up by 19%.

21 MS CROMIE: Some of that cost...

22 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: How much?

23 MS CROMIE: They've increased the dividend, the dividend to us. And the dividend to us,  
24 sorry...

25 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Have you queried that increase, has that increase been queried?

26 MS CROMIE: The dividend increase is 183,000.

27 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Where is that...

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's in the book.

29 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: I know it's in the book, that's a little bit disingenuous now Chair.

30 MS CROMIE: Page 92, Cllr McLoughlin, and in fact when we met IPB and they talked about  
31 the actual insurance increase for us, they said well you know you will be compensated by 60 to  
32 70% by the increase in your dividend.

33 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: Can I propose then that any increase this year will go back - there will be  
34 an increase again this year, I have no doubt about it and will that go back. We can't keep getting

1 increases in dividends and it's swallowed by Wicklow County Council.

2 MS CROMIE: We have already included the increase in the dividend of 183, that's already  
3 included in our budget figures here.

4 Cllr McLOUGHLIN: It's not very transparent to be honest with you Debbie. Anyway, I have  
5 said what I have said.

6 Cllr O'BRIEN: I'll be voting against the budget, I see it as a status quo budget. Earlier on we  
7 were talking to Director Lane and asking how much money would we need to sort out the  
8 housing crisis, he said 600 million, maybe add on a nought. I think the fact that we only get 24%  
9 of our budget from the Central Government, it means we are getting pittance, we are being asked  
10 to deal with a crisis here that won't be dealt with for 20 years if we keep going the way we are. I  
11 would love to see a letter sent to the Government, start doing the job right, send us in this 600  
12 million that Director Lane is talking about and let's not be sitting down at meetings talking and  
13 talking, I would be looking forward to getting a more budget. I am talking to constituents every  
14 day and children have been on housing lists for years, that's totally wrong. I am not happy with  
15 the allocation of the Local Property Tax which is supposed to be a property tax. It should have  
16 all gone into housing, everything looks to me looks the same over the past three years when you  
17 look at the budget. It's just keeping the status quo going and I certainly would not be voting for  
18 this budget.

19 Cllr MITCHELL: I would like to support the proposal as I have heard, I think it's a way forward  
20 and we should finish this and get out of here.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes or no.

22  
23 (A vote was taken)

24  
25 MS GALLAGHER: 20 for, seven against, four not present and one abstaining.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Debbie wants to come in again here please.

27 MS CROMIE: Sorry, just remember earlier when we started this morning, I said we had three  
28 tasks today. So the second task is just the determination of the base year adjustment, so the  
29 harmonisation rate for Wicklow is 72.04 and it was proposed to harmonise the rate over a  
30 five-year period with 2015 being year one. So 2017 is year three. For 2017, this will mean an  
31 increase of 3% for the former Town Council areas of Arklow and Wicklow, a 2% increase for  
32 the former Bray Town Council area, and a decrease of 2% for the former Wicklow County  
33 Council area. I just need somebody to...

34 Cllr WINTERS: Proposed.

1 MS CROMIE: And the last task today is just the rates relief on vacant premises, and it's  
2 recommended the rate for eligible vacant properties remain at 100% for all Municipal District  
3 areas for 2017.

4 MS GALLAGHER: Can we have a proposer?

5 Cllr RUTTLE: I'll...

6 MS GALLAGHER: And seconded? The next meeting is next Monday at 2 o'clock.

7 Cllr BEHAN: Is there a meeting on the Monday morning about the data protection?

8 MS GALLAGHER: Yeah, there is a workshop. We will notify the members of that.

9

10 Meeting concluded

11





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