

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN SHORELINE  
LEISURE CENTRE, GREYSTONES, CO. WICKLOW ON MONDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2020,  
COMMENCING 2PM**

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCILLOR P. KENNEDY, CATHAOIRLEACH, T. ANNESLEY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, M. CORRIGAN, M. CREAN, A. CRONIN, S. CULLEN, G. DUNNE, E. DOYLE, A. FERRIS, P. FITZGERALD, A. FLYNN KENNEDY, T. FORTUNE, P. GLENNON, M. KAVANAGH, P. LEONARD, G. MCMANUS, D. MITCHELL, J. MULLEN, J. NEARY, D. O'BRIEN, P. O'BRIEN, R. O'CONNOR, G. O'NEILL, L. SCOTT, J. SNELL, E. TIMMINS, G. WALSH AND I. WINTERS.**

**APOLOGIES: COUNCILLOR M. MURPHY.**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**MR. F. CURRAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
MR. B. GLEESON, HEAD OF FINANCE  
MS. L. GALLAGHER, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES/ MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR  
MR. J. LANE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MR. M. NICHOLSON, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MS. B. KILKENNY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MR. C. LAVERY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES  
MS. B. MCCARTHY, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT  
MS. D. KINSELLA, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT  
MS. T. O'BRIEN, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MS. H. DENNEHY, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MS. J. CARROLL, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MR. D. FORDE, MUNICIPAL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR  
MS. G. LANG, ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER**

**Votes of Sympathy**

Elected Members passed a vote of sympathy to the families of the late Mrs. Mary O'Riordan and Professor Ernst Burgschmidt. A minutes silence was observed for the deceased.

**ITEM NO. 1**

**To consider the disposal of 0.43 acres of land in the townland of Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, by way of an 18 month lease for the period 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 to 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 and the right to pass and repass thereto, to Mr. Noel Jacob and Ms. Helen Jacob, Jacob's Well, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. G. Dunne, seconded by Cllr. S. Bourke and agreed to dispose of 0.43 acres of land in the townland of Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, by way of an 18 month lease for the period 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 to 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 and the right to pass and repass thereto, to Mr. Noel Jacob and Ms. Helen Jacob, Jacob's Well, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

**ITEM NO. 2**

**To consider the disposal of 7m by 13m and 2.3m and 19.5 meters, approximately 0.0149 hectares in total of land situated at Oak Drive, Blessington, Co. Wicklow to Gas Networks Ireland, T/A Aurora Telecom, Gasworks, Cork, T12 RX96.**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Glennon, seconded by Cllr. E. Timmins and agreed to dispose of 7m by 13m and 2.3m by 19.5 meters, approximately 0.0149 hectares in total of land situated at Oak

Drive, Blessington, Co. Wicklow to Gas Networks Ireland, T/A Aurora Telecom, Gasworks, Cork, T12 RX96 as set out in notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO.3**

**To consider the disposal of 0.0078 hectares comprised in Folio WW3873 Co. Wicklow, being a strip of land to the rear of Springfield Heights, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow to Oisin Development Co. Ltd., c/o Philip Flood, Los Arcos, Rocky Road, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. O'Brien, seconded by Cllr. S. Cullen and agreed to dispose of 0.0078 hectares comprised in Folio WW3873 Co. Wicklow being a strip of land to the rear of Springfield Heights, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow to Oisin Development Co. Ltd., c/o Philip Flood, Los Arcos, Rocky Road, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 4**

**To consider the disposal of 0.0265 hectares comprised in Folio WW4484 Co. Wicklow being land situated in the townland of Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Lorcan Kelly and Ms. Una Kelly, of The Grove, Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Glennon, seconded by Cllr. G. O'Neill and agreed to dispose of 0.0265 hectares comprised in Folio WW4484 Co. Wicklow being land situated in the townland of Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Lorcan Kelly and Ms. Una Kelly, of The Grove, Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 5**

**To consider the disposal of 0.0580 hectares comprised in Folio WW4484 Co. Wicklow being land situated in the townland of Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Thomas Tutty and Ms. Marie Tutty of Watery Lane Cottage, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Glennon, seconded by Cllr. G. O'Neill and agreed to dispose of 0.0280 hectares comprised in Folio WW4484 Co. Wicklow being land situated in the townland of Hollywood Lower, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Thomas Tutty and Ms. Marie Tutty of Watery Lane Cottage, Hollywood, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 6**

**To consider the disposal of the property comprised in Folio WW3074L being the property known as 29 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow to Mr. John Whiston and Ms. Bridget Whiston, 29 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. G. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. T. Fortune and agreed to dispose of the property comprised in Folio WW3074L being the property known as 29 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow to Mr. John Whiston and Ms. Bridget Whiston, 29 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

### **ITEM NO. 7**

**To consider the disposal of 176 sq meters or thereabouts known as the Science Laboratory, Clermont House, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow, by way of a 5 year lease commencing 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2020 to Ms. Caoimhe Doyle, 128 Kindlestown Park, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.**

It was agreed that this item be withdrawn for further discussion on the lease term.

### **ITEM NO. 8**

**To consider the disposal of 0.226 hectares (0.559 acres) or thereabouts of land known as the Courtyard and Farmyard at Clermont House, Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow by way of a 99 year lease commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2020 to Clermont Enterprise Hub Company, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. J. Snell, seconded by Cllr. S. Cullen and agreed to dispose of 0.226 hectares (0.559 acres) or thereabouts of land known as the Courtyard and Farmyard at Clermont House, Wicklow County Campus, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow by way of a 99 year lease commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2020 to Clermont Enterprise Hub Company, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

#### **ITEM NO. 9**

**To consider the disposal of 0.0590 hectares (0.1457 acres) or thereabouts of land situated in the townland of Glencap Commons North, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Kevin Cahill and Ms. Mary Cahill, Riverside, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow.**

It was proposed by Cllr. A. Ferris, seconded by Cllr. M. Corrigan and agreed to dispose of 0.0590 hectares (0.1457 acres) or thereabouts of land situated in the townland of Glencap Commons North, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow to Mr. Kevin Cahill and Ms. Mary Cahill, Riverside, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow as set out in notice circulated.

#### **ITEM NO. 10**

**To consider and adopt the Wicklow County Council Draft Annual Budget for the Financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.**

Elected Members were circulated with Wicklow County Council Local Authority Budget 2021 with report of the Chief Executive dated 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

**13 November 2020**

**TO: CATHAOIRLEACH AND MEMBERS OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL: Report of Chief Executive on the Draft Budget for Wicklow County Council for the local financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021**

Dear Councillors,

The Draft Annual Budget and Chief Executive's Report for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 has been prepared in the statutory format, in accordance with S102 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended). The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage has determined that the prescribed period for the holding of the Annual Budget Meeting for 2021 is 1st November to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Accordingly the statutory Annual Budget Meeting is scheduled for 2pm Monday November 23rd. The Budget must be adopted within a 14 day period commencing on that date.

As you are aware, there are four main stages to the Local Authority budgetary process.

1. Agree the Budget Strategy and Local Property Tax variation.
2. Develop Draft Budgetary plans for the Municipal Districts.
3. Draft and Adopt the Statutory Annual Budget.
4. Prepare the Schedule of Municipal District Works and Service Delivery Plan.
- 5.

Furthermore, the attached Draft Budget has been prepared in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) taking account of all known financial parameters.

The 2021 Budget presented to you provides for expenditure of **€118.7m**. This represents an increase of €2.3m (or 2%) on last year's budget. This increase is mainly as a result of additional pay and pension costs and a significant increase in our housing pre-letting expenditure provision for 2021.

The 2021 Budget has been produced with the assumption of continued Government support to address the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic has had on Local Authority finances. To date, Wicklow Council has received circa €13m in Government funding for the commercial rates waiver scheme this year, which has resulted in over 90% of Wicklow ratepayers receiving a waiver in respect of the 9 month period from end March to end December. Moreover, it is also expected that additional Government funding will be provided shortly to compensate all Local Authorities for losses of income this year in areas such as parking charges, planning fees and road opening licences, as well as the additional covid expenditure costs incurred in relation to PPE, signage, remote working etc.

In response to the Covid crisis, Wicklow County Council has also provided significant support to local businesses and the community in general. Through the administration of the Restart Grant Scheme a total of €11m has been paid out so far by the Council to local businesses in Wicklow. Moreover, Re-opening Committees were established in each Municipal District, in conjunction with the local Chambers of Commerce and Town Teams, which resulted in a number of initiatives being implemented to promote the concept of shopping local. Wicklow County Council also established a Community Call Centre in response to the need to provide support to vulnerable people living in the community where their usual sources of support became unavailable.

Notwithstanding the significant financial challenges we are facing next year, I believe this Budget represents a positive outcome for Wicklow County Council in that it avoids any cuts to front line services, through the maximisation of existing resources, strong budgetary management, and securing higher levels of Government grant funding.

### **Local Property Tax**

At the Local Property Tax meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> September, the Members of Wicklow County Council voted to revert back to the LPT basic rate for 2021 thereby reducing the available LPT funding for next year by 10%. This results in an income decrease of €1.7m to the Council, reducing the total net LPT allocation for 2021 to €12m.

Moreover, Wicklow continues to be a net contributor under the national equalisation model, with 20% of its gross allocation paid into an equalisation fund to ensure no local authority is worse off when compared to the 2014 General Purpose Grant allocations. Wicklow County Council's post equalisation allocation (80%) for 2021 is €13,838,605. However, as Wicklow will receive a greater level of LPT funding compared to its funding baseline (€8,547,247), part of this surplus, in the amount of €1,831,707, will be used to fund services in the Housing area thereby replacing Central Government funding for these areas. Consequently, the net LPT allocation for 2021 is €12,006,898, reduced from €13,720,320 in 2020.

Details on this are provided in Table 1 below and also in Appendix 2 of the Draft Budget Tables.

**Table 1 – 2021 Local Property Tax Allocation**

	<b>2021 LPT Allocation</b>
100% of LPT Income Allocation for Wicklow	17,298,256
20% to National Equalisation Fund	-3,459,651
80% of LPT to be retained locally	13,838,605
Baseline	8,547,247

Surplus	5,291,358
Amount of surplus to be retained for LA's own use	3,459,651
Amount of surplus to self-fund housing	(1,831,707)
<b>Discretionary LPT Funding for Budget 2021</b>	<b>12,006,898</b>

The impact of the LPT decision was communicated to the Members at the meeting in September. As the extra funding of €1.7m, arising from the 10% increase in 2020, had been ring-fenced for specific projects (per Table 2 below), not having this funding in 2021 has significantly restricted the ability of the Council to finance these projects.

**Table 2 – 2020 LPT Ring-fenced Allocations**

<b>Expenditure Item</b>	<b>€'000s</b>
NDP Matched Funding	452
Community Grant Scheme	48
Municipal District Public Realm Discretionary Fund	964
Climate Action Initiatives	260
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,724</b>

Therefore, the Council is left with the choice of either not funding these initiatives or identifying savings from elsewhere in the budget to fund them. It is my strong view that the matched funding provision of nearly €0.5m is absolutely essential to the strategic vision of Wicklow County Council, as it allows us the opportunity to apply for and drawdown substantial Government funding under the National Development Plan Schemes, such as the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and the Rural Regeneration and Development Funds etc. To date Wicklow County Council has been successful in securing €38m in Government funding in respect of ongoing capital projects which require matched funding of circa €8.5m. Furthermore, we have other applications submitted in respect of plans for future projects in the amount of €43m which will require a further matching requirement of nearly €11m (see Table 3 below).

A minimum matched funding element of 25% must be provided by the local authority for successful applications. In the majority of applications, the use of development contributions are used for matched funding. However this will not be the case for all projects especially in relation to smaller funding schemes

such as Town and Village, CLAR and Community CCTV etc., and therefore this matched funding element will have to be provided from the Revenue Budget. Of the €8.5m of matched funding committed to date under these schemes it is anticipated that nearly €2.3m will have to be sourced from the Revenue Budget. Moreover, of the new applications submitted we may require a further €9.7m of matched funds from the Revenue Budget depending on the number of successful applications.

To this end, it was agreed with the CPG that the IPB funding of €0.5m, which heretofore was allocated towards footpath repairs, will now be earmarked for our Revenue Budget matched funding demands in 2021. An additional cost demand in 2021 will also arise with regard to the commencement of works on the Content Creation Hub in Clermont, for which matched funds of circa €2m is required. This will have to be provided over a 10 year period at a cost of 200k per annum. Therefore, the matched funding provision for 2021 has been increased by a further €0.2m up to €0.7m to cater for this requirement.

**Table 3 – Capital Projects Matched Funding Requirements**

<b>Funding Scheme</b>	<b>Total Cost of Scheme</b>	<b>Match Funding</b>
<b>Successful Applications in Progress</b>		
URDF	€18,769,563	€4,191,141
RRDF	€4,043,968	€1,010,992
NRGF - Blessington Greenway	€15,000,000	€0
Regional Enterprise Development Fund	€3,500,000	€2,000,000
Failte Ireland - Destination Towns	€500,000	€125,000
Community CCTV Scheme	€230,000	€150,000
ORIS 2018	€1,087,131	€227,826
ORIS 2019	€346,700	€45,340
CLAR 2019	€157,112	€11,334
Town and Village 2018	€279,700	€53,940
Town and Village 2019	€312,716	€47,248
Town and Village 2020	€228,450	€22,845
Sports Capital Programme	€59,271	€5,927
Large Scale Sports Infrastructure	€2,057,726	€617,318
<b>Total Live Projects</b>	<b>€46,572,337</b>	<b>€8,508,911</b>
<b>New and Planned Applications</b>		

URDF	€37,182,945	€9,295,736
RRDF	€3,000,000	€750,000
ORIS 2020	€1,280,000	€256,000
Town and Village	€1,645,676	€261,098
Community CCTV Scheme	€115,000	€75,000
Mill Road, Greystones masterplan	€50,000	€50,000
Tourism Strategy	€40,000	€40,000
LEADER	€20,000	€20,000
BIM (Flag Scheme)	€30,000	€15,000
<b>Total Future Project Costs</b>	<b>€43,363,621</b>	<b>€10,762,834</b>
<b>Total Project Grant Scheme Costs</b>	<b>€89,935,958</b>	<b>€19,271,745</b>

Another funding stream previously funded by the ring-fenced LPT increase, but considered to be essential, is that of Climate Action. In order to meet our national commitments on climate action and continue the implementation of the recommendations in our Climate Action Adaptation Strategy, it is proposed to retain this allocation of €260k for 2021 from savings in other areas.

Unfortunately we are not in a position to provide funding for either the public realm discretionary expenditure or the community grant scheme in 2021. However, I can confirm that the Municipal Districts may carry forward any unspent monies under the 2020 Discretionary Funding Allocations for use in 2021. At the end of October there was a total of €1.7m unspent across the 5 Municipal Districts as follows:

**Table 4 – Municipal District Discretionary Expenditure at end October 2020**

Municipal District	C/F from 2019	Adopted	Committed	Balance to Expend
	€	€	€	€
Arklow MD	52,813	410,500	324,743	138,570
Baltinglass MD	159,389	375,500	164,261	370,628
Bray MD	180,991	539,500	284,436	436,055
Greystones MD	165,252	387,500	115,780	436,972
Wicklow MD	205,713	393,500	286,834	312,379
<b>Total</b>	<b>764,158</b>	<b>2,106,500</b>	<b>1,176,054</b>	<b>1,694,604</b>

In addition, the NTA Mobility Funding Schemes which were introduced in the autumn this year are expected to continue into 2021 and will therefore act as a substitute for discretionary funding in the Districts. Already a total of €4.8m has been allocated to Wicklow for projects under Interim Mobility, Climate Change and Active Travel.

**Table 5 – 2020 Municipal District NTA Schemes**

<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>Interim Mobility Scheme</b>	<b>Climate Change</b>	<b>Active Travel</b>	<b>Total</b>
Arklow	€295,000	€180,000	€932,850	€1,407,850
Baltinglass	€265,000	€130,000	€1,087,000	€1,482,000
Bray	€55,000	-	€513,000	€568,000
Greystones	€315,000	€50,000	€490,000	€855,000
Wicklow	€110,000	€18,000	€319,500	€447,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,040,000</b>	<b>€378,000</b>	<b>€3,342,350</b>	<b>€4,760,350</b>

### ***General Municipal Allocation***

The General Municipal Allocations (GMA) were considered by the Members under the draft Budgetary Plan that was presented to them at the most recent Municipal District meetings. At the time of these meetings we were not in a position to include any funding in the draft plan for the GMA, with the exception of those areas that have generated their own income via local sponsorship agreements, due to the fact that we had to first prioritise the funding of non-discretionary costs. However, it was pointed out that this area would be re-examined as part of the overall budget process and when we had further clarity from the Government in relation to the funding requirements of the local government sector for next year.

I am pleased to inform the Members that having received the necessary level of clarity from Government in relation to financial support in 2021, we are now in a position to re-instate GMA funding of €208,500 to the Municipal Districts as per Table 6 below. This will allow the Districts to provide the necessary financial support for important local initiatives such as the Tidy Towns, Local Festivals, Christmas Lights and the Town Teams. The only element of the GMA not reintroduced back into the Budget for 2021 is the Town Twinning funding due to the ongoing travel restrictions which are expected to continue into next year.

**Table 6 – 2021 General Municipal Allocations**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Arklow</b>	<b>Baltinglass</b>	<b>Bray</b>	<b>Greystones</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Town Twinning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic Development and Promotion	28,000	7,000	9,500	10,000	13,000	67,500



Christmas Festival	20,000	10,000	20,000	10,000	20,000	80,000
Festivals / Other	5,000	4,000	32,000	10,000	5,000	56,000
Civic Receptions	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,000</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>62,500</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>208,500</b>

### ***Schedule of Municipal District Works***

Following the adoption of the annual budget, a schedule of proposed works of maintenance and repairs to be carried out in each municipal district shall be prepared for adoption by the members in early 2021. To this end, it is appropriate that each Municipal District review their 2020 operations to assess how they have delivered on the Service Plan with a view to agreeing the 2021 works early next year. Furthermore, the process introduced back in 2018 with regard to Members' input into the decision making process for the Roads Programme will continue in 2021. To this end, Members will be asked to submit their requests in December in respect of Restoration Improvement and Restoration Maintenance works for next year.

Furthermore, the estimated additional income to Bray Municipal District, as result of their recent decision to increase parking charges in their area, will also be included in the Schedule of Municipal District Works under the Discretionary Expenditure funding stream.

Other Municipal Districts may also consider changes to the local charges applied in their district, with any increase or decrease in those charges impacting on the overall level of funding made available to the district.

### ***Commercial Rates***

Commercial Rates income is estimated at €32.1m for 2021 and is more or less unchanged from last year bar a small increase as a result of a number of global revaluations. There is however some additional income that has been budgeted for under the Property Entry Levy (PEL) for new properties that the Valuation Office are currently in the process of finalising valuations on. As the final valuations for these 'new builds' will not be completed by budget day they will have to be charged for PEL in 2021, but will be brought into the rates system for 2022.

Similar to last year, the 2021 budgeted rates amount of €32.1m includes a provision of circa €2.4m which must be set aside in the form of a capital reserve to cover any possible losses in the future, arising from appeals made to the Valuation Tribunal.

### ***2021 Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV)***

The total the valuation figure for Wicklow properties has is €147,824,983. However, the ARV of 0.217, which is set by the Members each year, acts as the multiplier to calculate the ratepayers estimated liability for the coming year. Given the devastating impact that the Covid 19 restrictions has had on local businesses, it is not proposed to increase the ARV from its current rate of 0.217. The decision to confirm the ARV for 2021 must be taken by the Members at the Annual Budget Meeting.

**Table 7 - Wicklow Rates Base**

Annual Rates Billing Band	No. of Properties	Rates Valuation	Rates Billing Amount	% of Rate Customer by billing band	Average Annual Rate Demand per customer
€		€		%	€
> to 1,000	828	2,419,930	525,125	21.84	634
1,000 – 2,000	932	6,169,220	1,338,721	24.58	1,436
2,000 – 3,000	574	6,581,960	1,428,285	15.14	2,488
3,000 – 4,000	338	5,340,120	1,158,806	8.91	3,428
4,000 – 5,000	225	4,658,880	1,010,977	5.93	4,493
5,000 – 10,000	478	14,962,300	3,246,819	12.61	6,793
10,000 – 15,000	149	8,385,700	1,819,697	3.93	12,213
15,000 – 20,000	75	5,946,000	1,290,282	1.98	17,204
20,000 – 30,000	71	7,976,883	1,730,984	1.87	24,380
30,000 – 50,000	61	10,508,848	2,280,420	1.60	37,384
50,000 – 100,000	30	8,911,154	1,933,720	0.79	64,457
100,000 – 500,000	25	21,387,126	4,641,006	0.66	185,640
> 500,000	6	44,576,862	9,673,179	0.16	1,612,197
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,792</b>	<b>147,824,983</b>	<b>32,078,021</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8,459</b>

### ***Rates Incentive Schemes***

The 2021 Draft Budget also provides for the continuation of the Small Business Rates Incentive Scheme. A grant of 5% of the current year bill up to a maximum of €250 will be available in 2021 as a financial support to occupiers of commercial properties with total annual commercial rates bills of up to and including €10,000, subject to certain terms and conditions. Nearly 90% of ratepayers currently operating in County Wicklow are small and medium businesses who are deemed eligible to apply under the incentive scheme.

We are also recommending the continuation of a separate rates incentive scheme that was introduced last year for new businesses. This scheme is aimed at encouraging the use of long term vacant premises in the County through the provision of grant support to new businesses. Wicklow County Council aims to

encourage the establishment of new businesses and wants to see the number of vacant retail/commercial properties decrease. This grant scheme is intended to incentivise and encourage new commercial ventures, reoccupy vacant properties and assist in job creation.

### ***Rates on Vacant Premises***

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for a change to rating law in relation to the refund of rates on vacant properties. The elected members may, by way of reserved function, vary the levels of rates refund applicable to vacant property. The Act does not make any change to the eligibility criteria for refunds. The decision to alter the rate of refund must be taken at the Annual Budget Meeting.

In order to stimulate the commercial rates sector and to compliment the introduction of the New Business Rates Incentive Scheme outlined above, it was decided last year to reduce the vacancy refund rate from 100% to 60%. This decision was also taken with the knowledge that new rates legislation provides for the introduction of a maximum level of vacancy to be determined by the Minister. It is expected that this section of the Rates Bill will commence next year and become operational for Budget 2022. Furthermore, considering the financial challenges we are facing next year any upward adjustment to the existing rate would reduce the income in the proposed Budget, therefore additional savings would have to be identified elsewhere in order for the budget to balance.

In light of these factors, it is recommended that the rate of refund for eligible vacant properties is retained at 60% for 2021.

### ***Payroll / Pensions***

A total of €49m is included in the budget for pay and pension costs. This is an increase of €2m on 2020. This increase arises as a result of additional pension costs, new staff and the application of the October pay increase of 2%. The additional cost of the current Public Service Pay Agreement to the budget in 2021 equates to approximately €1m of which we will normally receive only 80% compensation from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. As such, the balance of circa €0.2m will have to be met from our own resources. There is also an ongoing need to recruit staff (indoor/outdoor) to maintain services and Budget 2021 attempts to address these demands within the financial constraints we are currently operating under. Budget 2021 provides for the full complement of staff for Wicklow County Council's library services in line with the agreed workforce plan. It also provides for additional personnel in the areas of IT, Roads, Planning, Housing, Fire Services and Finance, as well as a number of extra outdoor staff. However, due to natural timing delays associated with recruitment campaigns, savings of approximately €0.7m have been identified within the overall payroll costs.

### **2021 Draft Budget Overview**

The Draft Budget presented to you provides for expenditure of **€118,730,565** in 2021. However, as the Council is statutorily required to prepare a balanced budget, expenditure provisions must be matched by income. The Draft Budget has therefore been prepared with the following income projections:

Divisional Income	€74.6M
Local Property Tax	€12.0M
Rates	€32.1M

While Budget 2021 is set at a higher level compared to last year, this is mainly due to increased grant aid for housing services and the roads programme which are contra items and also pay and pension increases.

### ***Financial Challenges in 2021***

In preparing Budget 2021 we have faced considerable challenges, none more so than the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. As stated previously, this budget has been developed and framed on the basis that the expected and required Government supports will be forthcoming in 2021. However, I would caution the Members that if the assumed Government support does not materialise then additional cutbacks may have to be implemented during the year.

As outlined already in this report, the decision taken by members not to retain the 10% increase to Local Property Tax has resulted in the reduction in the Council's income by over €1.7m. While alternative sources of income have been found to fund essential programmes relating to the matched funding of capital projects and climate action, we are unfortunately unable to provide funding this year for the Community Grant Scheme and the Municipal District Discretionary Expenditure Allocation.

As you are also aware, following representations made by Wicklow County Council last year, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage agreed to make a special once-off payment of €300k to mitigate the initial impact of the transition from Irish Water Rates compensation to Irish Water becoming liable for commercial rates. The Department confirmed at the time of this allocation that it would not be repeated in subsequent years, Therefore this has resulted in a reduction of €300k in income in the 2021 Budget.

One of the main expenditure demands each year relates to pre-letting repair costs incurred on local authority houses. These costs are currently in excess of €3m per annum and are paid out of the Council's capital account. This level of expenditure is creating an ever increasing deficit in the capital account which needs to be fully funded. The capital transfer from the Revenue Budget was increased to €2m last year, but to meet these ongoing demands this provision needs to be further increased to €3m in 2021. The alternative of not providing this additional funding would limit the number of relets for completion next year. However this action would not support the Council's goal to increase the number of available housing units throughout the County.

In addition to the Climate Action funding, the 2021 Budget also allows for a further €110k towards energy conservation measures, of which €40k relates to an annual capital transfer provision to offset capital costs incurred on our SEAI approved projects.

It is planned that Wicklow will commence the implementation of the Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project in late 2021. A significant loan amount of circa €8m will be used to support the roll out. However it should be noted that the energy savings of this project are not likely to materialise until 15 months after the project implementation. As outlined at the LPT meeting, based on current demands, public lighting repairs and maintenance costs are likely to exceed the budget by €500k next year. However, following an examination of the expected costs, it has been determined that within the estimated costs next year a significant portion will relate to LED replacements. As these works would be part of the national replacement programme, this element of expenditure will be transferred to a newly established capital account, thereby allowing us to keep the Public Lighting Maintenance Budget in the Revenue Budget unchanged for 2021.

As outlined at previous Council meetings the impact of COVID 19 on the finances of Wicklow County Council have been very significant this year. Significant additional expenditure was incurred on PPE purchases, accommodation works and IT requirements etc. It also resulted in loss of income in relation to commercial rates, housing rents and other goods and services such as parking and planning fees and road opening licences. In addition, following a detailed examination of our commercial rate accounts, it is estimated that the vacancy relief amount this year will likely to be less than the estimated budget.

However, it is proposed that this budget allocation remains unchanged for 2021 in order to cover any additional vacant premises that may arise from the impact of Covid 19, as this loss in income would not be covered by a rates waiver scheme.

Furthermore, an additional €200k has been included in the budget to support the ongoing operations of the Coral Leisure Centres in Wicklow and Arklow and to guarantee their continuation after what has been an extremely challenging time for the leisure industry. While Government support is expected in 2021, it is acknowledged that this will not cover all areas of expenditure and therefore a further €100k has been provided in the budget for general covid related expenditure next year.

On a positive note, IPB have informed us that they will be in a position to pay out a commercial dividend in 2021 in an amount of €487k. We have also recently received notification of our expected insurance premium for 2021 which will include a reduction of approximately €100k. In addition, a one off covid related credit of €274k will also be applied to our account in recognition of the impact of the pandemic on claims frequency and costs.

While addressing the financial challenges we face in 2021, we are restricted in the areas from which savings can be identified and taken. Up to 90% of our expenditure each year is considered to be 'Non-Discretionary', covering items like pay and pensions, contra/grant funded areas such as RAS/HAP, DPGs, Housing the Homeless, Roads Grants, SICAP, LEO, Sports Partnership, Irish Water and the Machinery Yard. Other non-discretionary costs include light and heat, insurance, loan interest, capital transfers and statutory contributions. This leaves the following limited areas of 'Discretionary' costs from which to find savings:

- Local Roads Maintenance (own resources)
- Public Lighting
- Housing Maintenance
- Community Supports
- Environmental Initiatives
- Arts and Festivals
- Book Purchases
- Economic supports
- Matching funding for Capital Programmes
- Discretionary spend in Municipal Districts

Therefore, in order to meet our statutory obligation to balance the budget but at the same time avoid having to cut front line services, we have made a number of temporary adjustments to certain expenditure lines in 2021 that will have to be reversed for Budget 2022. These include the capitalisation of the Library Book Fund underspend this year, resulting in a consequential reduction of 2021 Budget allocation. We have also paused the annual capital transfer from the Revenue Budget of 100k to the Playground Capital Reserve next year, as the existing capital account balance is considered sufficient to meet any requirements in 2021. Moreover, the IPB covid credit was a one off adjustment and therefore cannot be factored into future budgets.

Key changes in the Draft Annual Budget are summarised in Tables 8 & 9 below.

**Table 8 - Budget 2021 v 2020 Main Expenditure Variances**

Division	Expenditure	€000's

<b>Housing</b>	Pre-letting Repairs Provision	1,000
	Fabric Upgrade Works	-269
	Housing the Homeless	794
	RAS	-923
	P&A Agreements	1,193
<b>Roads</b>	IPB Footpath Repair Scheme	-500
	Local Road Improvements	618
<b>Development</b>	Town Twinning	-55
	New Business Rates Incentive Scheme	-50
	Capital Projects Matched Funding	200
<b>Environment</b>	Fire Service Operations	159
<b>Recreation &amp;</b>	Leisure Centres	200
<b>Amenity</b>	Library Service Operations	346
	Library Book Fund	-100
	Playgrounds Capital Reserve Transfer	-100
	Community Grants	-195
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	IT Operations	195
	Discretionary Expenditure	-1,264
	Pension & gratuity increases	421
	IPB Premium	-100

Table 9 - Budget 2021 v 2020 Main Income Variances

Division	Income	€000s
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<b>Housing</b>	Homeless Grants	653
	RAS	-822
	P&A Agreements	2,086
<b>Roads</b>	Local Road Improvement Grants	618
	IPB Footpath Repair Scheme	-500
<b>Development</b>	Creative Ireland	80
<b>Environment</b>	Burial Grounds	38
	Fire Safety Certificates	40
<b>Recreation &amp; Amenity</b>	Arts Council Grants	29
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Irish Water 2020 rates compensation	-300
	NPPR	150
	IPB Dividend	487
<b>Other</b>	Local Property Tax	-1,724
	Property Entry Levy	228

### **Conclusion**

I have prepared the 2021 Draft Annual Budget in consultation with the Corporate Policy Group and in accordance with the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 133). This consultation with the Corporate Policy Group has been a key aspect of the budget preparation. At these meetings significant factors within the Budget were raised and discussed and I am grateful to the Members of the Corporate Policy Group and the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Pat Kennedy for their constructive engagement with the budgetary process. I would also like to acknowledge the valuable feedback provided by members at the recent budget workshop.

The 2021 Draft Budget before you today is a plan of action to best deal with the challenging environment of local government. While significant challenges remain in dealing with the economic realities facing the Council next year, we can cautiously look to build on the progress achieved to date and translate this to increased and improved services growth across the County. Moreover we will continue to seek out alternative sources of funding and work in collaboration with the relevant State Agencies, Government Departments, Business Community and the Community and Voluntary Sector to maximise all available opportunities to address the local needs and support the economic and social development of County Wicklow.

The draft budget has been prepared in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions, and this report, with the accompanying detailed financial tables, sets out the position for consideration by the Council. There is considerable detail contained in the Draft Budget Report to assist the Members in their deliberations. Please take the opportunity to discuss aspects of the Draft Budget with each of the Heads of Function.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Council for their support and look forward to continuing to work with the Elected Members to deliver high quality services for the people of Wicklow.

The Draft Budget preparation required significant input from staff across the Council's Divisions. I wish to thank all the Directors and their staff who have contributed to and supported that process. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Head of Finance, Brian Gleeson and the staff in the Finance Section for their hard work in preparing and framing this Budget.

I recommend the 2021 Budget to you for adoption.

**FRANK CURRAN**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mr. B. Gleeson, Head of Finance presented to the Elected Members covering the following areas:-

#### **Summary**

- 2021 Budgetary Process
- 2021 Planned Expenditure and Income
- Budgetary Challenges for 2021
- 2021 Budget Policy Decisions
- Municipal Districts Funding in 2021
- Expenditure/Income Changes to 2021 Budget
- Commercial Rates – 2021 ARV and Rates Vacancy Relief

#### **2021 Budget Process**

- Local Property Tax Rate Variation Decision
- Municipal District Budgetary Plan including the General Municipal Allocation (GMA)
- Adoption of the Statutory Annual Budget
- Schedule of Municipal District Works

#### **2021 Budget Meeting Decisions**

1. Adopt Statutory Annual Budget for 2021.
2. Commercial Rates 2021:



- Agree Annual Rate of Valuation (ARV)
- Rates Relief % on Vacant Premises

### 2021 Planned Expenditure

Division	Description	€	%
A	Housing and Building	32,017,070	27
B	Road Transportation and Safety	26,091,345	22
C	Water Services	7,772,871	7
D	Development Management	14,294,076	12
E	Environmental Services	14,059,369	12
F	Recreation & Amenity	10,178,725	9
G	Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	1,812,373	2
H	Miscellaneous Services	12,354,736	10
	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>118,580,565</b>	<b>100</b>

### 2021 Income Sources

Income Category	€	%
Local Property Tax	12,006,898	10
Commercial Rates	32,078,026	27
Good and Services	36,703,103	31
Grants and Subsidies	37,942,538	32
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>118,730,565</b>	<b>100</b>

### 2021 Budget Challenges

- Ongoing financial impact of Covid 19
- Increased Pay & Pension Costs
- Reduction in LPT Income
- Increased demand on Housing Pre-letting expenditure
- Climate Action commitments/Energy Targets
- Matched Funding commitments under NDP
- Per Legislation must approve a Balanced Budget

### Local Property Tax 2021

- The decision taken by Members at the LPT meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup> to revert back to the basic rate has resulted in a reduction of over €1.7m in the Revenue Budget for 2021.
- Ring-fenced Funding from 2020 LPT 10% Increase.

Expenditure Item	€'000s
<b>NDP Matched Funding</b>	<b>452</b>
<b>Community Grant Scheme</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Municipal District Public Realm Discretionary Fund</b>	<b>964</b>
<b>Climate Action / Energy Initiatives</b>	<b>260</b>

<b>Total</b>	<b>1,724</b>
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### Why was 2020 LPT Increase required?

- Additional costs in 2020 included:

<b>Housing Maintenance</b>	<b>€1.65m</b>
<b>Pension Increase</b>	<b>€0.42m</b>
<b>Irish Water Rates Compensation Loss</b>	<b>€0.6m</b>
<b>Matched Funding</b>	<b>€0.45m</b>
<b>Climate Action</b>	<b>€0.26m</b>
<b>Library Services</b>	<b>€0.47m</b>

- Restricted sources of Funding in 2020 that were not expected to be repeated in 2021:
  - 1) Legislation required to allow for addition of new builds to LPT allocation.
  - 2) Rates Limitation Order prevented an increase in commercial rates in the year after Reval.

### Non-Discretionary Costs

- Payroll Costs: Salary/Wages/Pensions.
- Contra/Grant Funded Items: RAS/HAP, DPGs, Homeless Funding, Road Grants, SICAP, LEO, Sports Partnership, Irish Water, Machinery Yard.
- Other Non-Discretionary Costs: Light & Heat, Insurance, Loan Interest, Capital Transfers, Statutory Contributions, Rates Write Offs.
- 90% of Budget Expenditure

### Discretionary Costs

- 10% of Budget
- Local Roads Maintenance (own resources)
- Public Lighting
- Housing Repairs & Maintenance
- Community Grants
- Environmental Initiatives
- Arts and Festivals
- Book Purchases
- Economic supports
- Matching funding for Capital Programmes
- Discretionary spend in Municipal Districts

### Corporate Policy Group Input

- The Local Government Act 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, provides the legislative basis for the budget process.
- The adoption of the budget is a reserved function of the members of the local authority.
- The CPG should assist with the setting of overall parameters and the identification of issues and approaches to be taken.
- CPG met to agree Budget Proposals on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Nov

### Corporate Policy Group – Budget Proposals

Description	Arklow	Baltinglass	Bray	Greystones	Wicklow	Total
Town Twinning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic Development and Promotion	28,000	7,000	9,500	10,000	13,000	67,500
Christmas Festival	20,000	10,000	20,000	10,000	20,000	80,000
Festivals / Other	5,000	4,000	32,000	10,000	5,000	56,000
Civic Receptions	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,000</b>	<b>22,000</b>	<b>62,500</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>208,500</b>

#### Corporate Policy Group – Budget Proposals

- Reintroduction of the GMA i.e. Tidy Towns, Festivals & Economic Development. Cost €208k.
- IPB Funding of €500k to be ring-fenced for Matched Funding due to reduction in LPT.
- Failure to make provision for Matched Funding will mean WCC cannot proceed with projects where development levies cannot be used e.g. Blessington & Greystones CCTV.

Project Status	Matched Funding Source	Project Cost	Matched Funding Cost
Approved Projects in Progress	Development Levies	€22,764,359	€5,598,544
	WCC Funded	€4,707,978	€2,285,367
	Private Sector	€8,600,000	€1,000,000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>€36,072,337</b>	<b>€8,883,910</b>
Planned Projects	Development Levies	4,780,000	€1,131,000
	WCC Funded	39,083,621	€9,756,834
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>€43,863,621</b>	<b>€10,887,834</b>

- Pre-letting Capital Transfer increase of €1m.
- Transfer of LED Public Lighting replacement costs to a newly established capital account. Saving of 500K.
- Retention of Climate Action funding increase of €260k allocated in Budget 2020.

- Rent Bad Debt Provision due to impact of Covid 19. €200k
- Additional provision for extra vacant premises to be covered within existing budget provision.
- Commercial Rates – No proposed increase to existing ARV of 0.217.
- Retain Vacancy Refund Rate of 60% for 2021.
- Retain existing Rates Business Initiative Schemes for 2021 (Small Business Support Grant & New Business Incentive Scheme).
- No Community Grant Scheme funding in 2021
- Mobile Recycling to be retained in 2021 - €48k.
- Coral Leisure Centres in Wicklow and Arklow. Additional funding of €200k required for 2021 to guarantee their continuation.
- Mermaid Centre in Bray – no proposed reduction of €320K allocation.
- Capitalisation of 2020 Library Book Fund underspend of 100k and reduction of 2021 Budget allocation
- IPB Covid Credit to be applied to 2021 Insurance Premium
- Removal of the annual Capital Transfer of 100k to the Playground Capital Reserve for 2021 only
- Assumption made that Government Economic Recovery Contingency Fund announced in Budget 2021 will cover any reduction in income e.g. parking fees etc., and additional Covid costs in 2021.

#### Expenditure Variances in Budget 2021

Division	Expenditure	€000's
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Pre-letting Repairs Provision</b>	<b>1,000</b>
	<b>Fabric Upgrade Works</b>	<b>-269</b>
	<b>Housing the Homeless</b>	<b>794</b>
	<b>RAS</b>	<b>-923</b>
	<b>P&amp;A Agreements</b>	<b>1,193</b>
<b>Roads</b>	<b>IPB Footpath Repair Scheme</b>	<b>-500</b>
	<b>Local Road Improvements</b>	<b>618</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Town Twinning</b>	<b>-55</b>
	<b>New Business Rates Incentive Scheme</b>	<b>-50</b>
	<b>Capital Projects Matched Funding</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Fire Service Operations</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Recreation &amp;</b>	<b>Leisure Centres</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Library Service Operations</b>	<b>346</b>
	<b>Library Book Fund</b>	<b>-100</b>
	<b>Playgrounds Capital Reserve Transfer</b>	<b>-100</b>
	<b>Community Grants</b>	<b>-195</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>IT Operations</b>	<b>195</b>

	<b>Discretionary Expenditure</b>	<b>-1,264</b>
	<b>Pension &amp; gratuity increases</b>	<b>421</b>
	<b>IPB Premium</b>	<b>-100</b>

#### Income Variances in Budget 2021

<b>Division</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>€000s</b>
<b>Housing</b>	<b>Homeless Grants</b>	<b>653</b>
	<b>RAS</b>	<b>-822</b>
	<b>P&amp;A Agreements</b>	<b>2,086</b>
<b>Roads</b>	<b>Local Road Improvement Grants</b>	<b>618</b>
	<b>IPB Footpath Repair Scheme</b>	<b>-500</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Creative Ireland</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Environment</b>	<b>Burial Grounds</b>	<b>38</b>
	<b>Fire Safety Certificates</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Recreation &amp; Amenity</b>	<b>Arts Council Grants</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Irish Water 2020 rates compensation</b>	<b>-300</b>
	<b>NPPR</b>	<b>150</b>
	<b>IPB Dividend</b>	<b>487</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>Local Property Tax</b>	<b>-1,724</b>
	<b>Property Entry Levy</b>	<b>228</b>

#### Commercial Rates ARV 2021

1. Calculate Proposed Expenditure for year (A)
2. Calculate Income available for year (B)
3. A - B = Balance to be funded from Commercial Rates i.e. setting of ARV
4. Total Expenditure must equal Total Income

- ARV for 2020 was set at 0.217
- Impact of Covid 19 pandemic on local businesses
- Proposal to leave the ARV unchanged at 0.217 for 2021

#### Commercial Rates – Vacancy Relief Rate

- Recommendation that the rate of refund for eligible vacant properties is retained at 60% for 2021.
- Compliments the Council's Rates Incentive Scheme for New Businesses reoccupying Vacant Properties.
- Average relief applied across all LAs is 57%.
- Max level of vacancy relief in new Rates Bill is expected to be introduced this year.
- Any increase to the existing vacancy rate would generate an additional cost to the Budget

#### Budget 2021

- Avoids cuts to front line services
- Provides no additional charges to local businesses
- Supports the funding of capital projects

**Budget 2021 Review**

Division A – Housing & Building: Pages 65, 77-79  
 Division B – Roads, Trans & Safety: Pages 66, 80-82  
 Division C - Water Services: Pages 67, 83-84  
 Division D – Development Mgt: Pages 68, 85-87  
 Division E – Environmental Services: Pages 69, 88-90  
 Division F – Recreation & Amenity: Pages 70, 91-92  
 Division G – Agriculture, Ed, H&S: Pages 71, 93-94  
 Division H – Roads: Pages 72, 95-97

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At the conclusion of the presentation the Cathaoirleach thanked the Head of Finance and his team for all the work on the budget preparation. The elected members raised the following queries, made the following contributions which were responded to by the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance:-

- Reference made to CCTV for Greystones and Blessington and will there be an issue with regard to maintenance going forward?
- Is there a provision of maintenance of toilet facilities for Greystones
- Query as to the position with regard to the staffing of the library in Greystones and outdoor workers
- Reference made to the finance for festivals and that a budget should be provided for festivals in 2021
- Finance for community grants highlighted and request that this money be reinstated
- Ringfencing of budget for climate adaptation welcomed
- Concern expressed with regard to the decrease in energy efficiency upgrade programme and update requested with regard to this work in the Bray area
- Information requested with regard to the preferred N11 M11 route
- Reference made to requests for exemption certificates for NPPR tax and the request for utility bills is causing great difficulty. Council asked to examine this procedure so that people waiting on certs can get them as soon as possible.
- Query as to the increase in proposed expenditure for machinery and maintenance on the previous year and should this figure be capitalised?
- Reference made to expenses to LA elected members and should this figure be reduced because of online meetings?
- Reference made to the contribution the Mermaid Arts Centre makes to the community of County Wicklow and it is noted that the budget has not been cut for 2021.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cathaoirleach called for proposals:-

**1. TO ADOPT VACANCY RATE OF VAULTATION FOR 2021**

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Fitzgerald, seconded by Cllr. V. Blake and following a roll call it was agreed to retain the Annual Rate of Valuation for 2021 set at 0.217 by a margin of 30 votes for and 2 not present viz:-

<b>FOR</b>	<b>CLLRS. T. ANNESLEY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, M. CORRIGAN, M. CREAN, A. CRONIN, S. CULLEN, E. DOYLE, G. DUNNE, A. FERRIS, A. FLYNN KENNEDY, T. FORTUNE, P. GLENNON, M. KAVANAGH, P. KENNEDY, P. LEONARD, G. MCMANUS, D. MITCHELL, J. MULLEN, J. NEARY, D. O'BRIEN, P. O'BRIEN, R. O'CONNOR, L. SCOTT, J. SNELL, E. TIMMINS, G. WALSH AND I WINTERS (3)</b>
<b>NOT PRESENT</b>	<b>CLLRS M. MURPHY AND G. O'NEILL. (2)</b>

**2. TO ADOPT A VACANCY RATE FOR COUNTY WICKLOW.**

It was proposed by Cllr. G. Walsh, seconded by Cllr. P. Fitzgerald and following a roll call it was agreed by a margin of 30 votes for and 2 not present to retain the 60% commercial rates relief percentage on vacant premises viz:-

<b>FOR</b>	<b>CLLRS. T. ANNESLEY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, M. CORRIGAN, M. CREAN, A. CRONIN, S. CULLEN, E. DOYLE, G. DUNNE, A. FERRIS, A. FLYNN KENNEDY, T. FORTUNE, P. GLENNON, M. KAVANAGH, P. KENNEDY, P. LEONARD, G. MCMANUS, D. MITCHELL, J. MULLEN, J. NEARY, D. O'BRIEN, P. O'BRIEN, R. O'CONNOR, L. SCOTT, J. SNELL, E. TIMMINS, G. WALSH AND I WINTERS (30)</b>
<b>NOT PRESENT</b>	<b>CLLRS M. MURPHY AND G. O'NEILL. (2)</b>

**3. ADOPTION OF DRAFT BUDGET 2021:**

The Cathaoirleach called for proposals in relation to the adoption of the Annual Budget. Cllr. P. Fitzgerald put forward the following proposal which was seconded by Cllr. I. Winters

That Wicklow County Council adopt the draft budget as presented with the following amendment: That the projected income from the NPPR be increased by €50,000 and that the expenditure on the new business rates incentive scheme be decreased by €50,000 to allow an allocation of €100,000 to be made available to the community grants funds. Grants to be capped at €500 per club to all 200 clubs benefit from this fund in 2021.

As there were no other proposals the proposal was put to a vote and was passed by a margin of 30 votes for and 2 not present viz:-

<b>FOR</b>	<b>CLLRS. T. ANNESLEY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, M. CORRIGAN, M. CREAN, A. CRONIN, S. CULLEN, E. DOYLE, G. DUNNE, A. FERRIS, A. FLYNN KENNEDY, T. FORTUNE, P. GLENNON, M. KAVANAGH, P. KENNEDY, P. LEONARD, G. MCMANUS, D. MITCHELL, J. MULLEN, J. NEARY, D. O'BRIEN, P. O'BRIEN, R. O'CONNOR, L. SCOTT, J. SNELL, E. TIMMINS, G. WALSH AND I WINTERS (30)</b>
<b>NOT PRESENT</b>	<b>CLLRS M. MURPHY AND G. O'NEILL. (2)</b>

In conclusion, the Cathaoirleach thanked all of the Elected Members for their time and attention and extended thanks to the Chief Executive Frank Curran and Head of Finance Brian Gleeson and his team in Finance and all of the director of services and staff of Wicklow County Council involved in the process.

**THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING**

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**CLLR. PAT KENNEDY  
CATHOIRLEACH  
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**MS. LORRAINE GALLAGHER  
DIRECTOR OF SERVICES/  
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**

**Confirmed at meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2020.**