

# WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL



Wicklow County Council  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL MHANTAIN

## **Transcript of the County Council Budget Meeting Held on 23 November 2015 In the County Council Chamber, Wicklow**



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7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, good morning members, I just want to start off the meeting  
8 obviously with sympathies, since we last met, we have had the global terrorism, particularly in  
9 Paris, and I know we have opened a lot of books of condolences, but our sympathies to  
10 absolutely everybody who has been affected, be that in Paris, Mali or even in the Middle East in  
11 general, this is a worrying time for everybody.

12 MS GALLAGHER: And also a vote of sympathy for Kathleen Noah, the mother of a former  
13 Councillor Kathleen Kelleher.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Any other sympathies? Could you push your button. Cllr Thornhill, I'll  
15 come to you first.

16 Cllr THORNHILL: I would like to move a vote of sympathy in relation to - and I concur with  
17 your sentiments in relation to the French people. I think at the moment our thoughts and prayers  
18 are with the French people in relation to matters that have happened in France and especially  
19 from the point of view that we, in Bray, ourselves are twinned with Begley and I am sure those  
20 people who I met last summer, I mean great people, and like ourselves, we got on very well  
21 together, but I think it's very important that we should show support at this time. Now I also  
22 would like to move a vote of sympathy in relation to Kathleen Kinsella. Kathleen Kinsella in  
23 her 96th year, a person who was held in very high esteem in Bray and always to the forefront in  
24 relation to the community interests in Bray. Always involved in a lot of organisations, the Tidy  
25 Towns, the Bray historical society, and I think it's people like Kathleen Kinsella who have really  
26 kept community interests to the fore. I knew her mother, Nan Keogh, and the same person was  
27 very interested in Irish culture; at one stage, I received a medal from Pádraig Pearse for speaking  
28 Irish, but also I am delighted to say now in relation to the Tidy Towns that Kathleen Kinsella's  
29 daughters Leah and Maime are keeping the same community awareness going in Bray and  
30 (SPEAKS IN IRISH).

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

32 Cllr MATTHEWS: It was for Kathleen.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: And nobody else showing, so maybe we will stand. Sorry, Cllr Nolan.

34 Cllr NOLAN: Very late entry here, but I would just like to have sympathy for the family of the

1 late James Jock Healy of Newtownmountkennedy who passed away very suddenly. A legend of  
2 Newtown GAA, the only man to hold minor, junior and senior Wicklow championship medals,  
3 and it was a very, very sad occasion when we learned of Jock's tragic passing.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, we will stand.

5  
6 (A minute's silence was held)

7  
8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Since last we met, we have had a couple of awards, which I think is worth  
9 mentioning at the Chambers Ireland awards, we had Arklow's duck pond winning an award, and  
10 at the Pride of Place, Cllr Doran's Carnew Daycare Centre -- is that the correct term for it,  
11 community care centre and also Tiglin also a fantastic place. I think we are probably going to  
12 have hopefully a reception for the four entrants in the Pride of Place and also the people from --  
13 who were instrumental in that duck pond in Arklow. It's nice to get some good positive publicity  
14 and recognition for some great projects that are happening around the county.

15  
16 Okay, so we have obviously a busy agenda today with the estimates, so maybe -- we are going to  
17 have lunch at 12.30, to put you on notice of that. But maybe I'll ask Lorraine just to open up the  
18 meeting please.

19 MS LYNCH: Thank you Chairman. The budget for 2016, thank you, was circulated the week  
20 before last and it provides for a budget of 91 million. If we compare to 2015, the budget for  
21 2015 was 98.5 million. The reason for the big reduction is we have taken ten million out for  
22 landfill, but that would have left us with a budget of 88.5 million. Thankfully, the members'  
23 decision in December not to reduce the LPT basic rate has given an additional 2.5 million to be  
24 able to invest in services, improve services, and maintain services across the county. The extra  
25 two and a half million that we were able to spend has allowed us to I suppose help address the  
26 issue of homelessness in that we provided an extra 100,000 for homelessness between Bray and  
27 Wicklow. We have been able to maintain the provision for the housing adaptation grants for  
28 people assisting in adapting their homes. That's 150,000.

29  
30 In addition, I suppose we have been able to - we would have notified the members in September  
31 about a reduction in recycling income and because of the LPT we have been able to invest  
32 250,000 in the recycling centres to maintain the opening hours, the Saturday openings in Bray,  
33 Arklow, Wicklow, and also maintain the community facility that's there in Tinahely, and we  
34 would fund that by way of a contribution as well.

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On top of that, we have been able to invest an additional 280,000 in the libraries and that will go towards a book fund for 2015, or 2016 is estimated at 250,000 and additional - provides for additional staff both for the new Arklow library but also for libraries across the counties in some ways replacing vacant positions that were there, so with a view of increasing the opening hours again back to where they were.

On top of that, we provided 250,000 from the LPT for community grants. Again these are grants that go back to the community where they deliver huge benefits and pay back I suppose ten fold in terms of the Men's Sheds, the Active Retirement groups and Tidy Towns and so on. Additionally, we have provided 182,000 for the maintenance of playgrounds. That's playgrounds across the county from Ashford to Baltinglass, to Bray, and to Arklow. We have in the area of economic development provided 275,000 through being able to retain the 2.5 million. That will help towards the implementation of the LACP and the initiatives that were developed through the Co Wicklow Economic Think Tank and help improve the economic opportunities that are here in the town and the county for employment opportunities and to improve the retail product that's there, improve tourism product and develop the economic activity within the county.

In addition to that, we have provided an additional money for parks and open spaces to help maintain them. 90,000. We provided 225,000 out of our own resources for regional and local roads to contribution towards the maintenance of them. We have provided an additional 50,000 for traveller accommodation and across TÚS ambassadors, eight friendly initiative and access programme, we have investigated 70,000 to deliver benefits and add improvements in those areas.

2016 being the year it is, the additional income of 2.5 million has allowed us to provide a contribution from our own resources of 40,000, topping up the 60,000 we are getting from other resources and we have also been able to invest further in the swimming pools in Bray -- or Arklow and Wicklow and also provide for refurbishment of the toilets at blue flag beaches in Brittas Bay which were required. All of this helps in terms of providing and improving services across the libraries, being able to extend the opening hours, maintain recycling centres, maintain roads.

1 We have also and in the area of economic development, to be able to drive that -- in addition,  
2 there is 250,000 provided for rates incentive scheme, a payment incentive scheme if people sign  
3 up to direct debit or pay their rates before the end of July. They get a percentage grant capped to  
4 250 euro.

5  
6 On top of all of that, there is a fund included in the budget of 480,000 for the municipal districts.  
7 Last year, because of the NPPR funding we were able to provide the fund of 450,000. This year  
8 because of the LPT additional income, we are able to provide a fund of 480,000 which broken  
9 down, 20,000 for Bray, and 90,000 for Arklow, Baltinglass, Greystones and Wicklow.

10  
11 So that is a positive budget, not one we have been able to have for the last couple of years  
12 because of reductions and fundings and cutbacks, but we have been able to invest that 2.5  
13 million to deliver for the people on the ground through services and then to be able for the  
14 municipal districts, 480,000, to ring fence that, hopefully to provide public infrastructural  
15 projects and enhance things in the town like footpaths, lighting or civic areas.

16  
17 One other piece of information, more good news, is we were notified over the weekend that the  
18 global valuations, which we had mentioned, I had mentioned in the meetings with people, that  
19 we had a reduction in rates because of global valuations on the utility companies, Iarnrod  
20 Eireann, Bord Gais, the Telecom companies; that came late in balancing the budget and took  
21 360,000 approximately out of our budget. We have been notified that we will get a once-off  
22 compensation in 2016 for that. Now we are trying to finalise the figures because it doesn't  
23 appear to be -- the figure we got, we need to tally back to the information we have from our own  
24 database, but I anticipate we have 300,000 of additional income that isn't included in the budget  
25 and that's something we can go back through further in the afternoon when we are looking at  
26 division H and the rates side of things at that stage.

27  
28 But overall, it is a good budget, to be able to have that money to invest in additional services,  
29 and if it's okay with the Chairman, maybe I might proceed with division A and division B.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will take A and B first and then have any questions on that. Joe if  
31 you wanted to press your button there.

32 MS LYNCH: Before Joe starts there, procedural thing, I have to introduce them and notify,  
33 sorry Chairman. Division A provides for a budget of expenditure of 19 million 319,960, and  
34 income of 19 million 958,360. It's detailed on pages 65 and the greater detail that members will

1 be interested will be pages 73 to 75.

2  
3 A couple of key things in it, it provides for housing repair, budget increase of 91,000, traveller  
4 accommodation of 50,000, it also includes an increase for the land acquisition loans which we  
5 flagged previously in September, just the interest we have to start to pay on them. And as well  
6 as the increase in homelessness, it also covers the reduction in income that we would have  
7 anticipated from homeless grants as well.

8  
9 And the final thing on it is the housing rents, that is budgeted on 100% approval and we would  
10 put in a doubtful debt provision as well on the opposite side. But that's the key points of it.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay great.

12 DIRECTOR LANE: Thanks Lorraine. As Lorraine detailed, the expenditure for provision one  
13 starts on page 73, and that detail first of all is broken down in the AO1 maintenance and  
14 improvements of Local Authority housing and we have our own administration mainly  
15 assessments allocations, then the expenditure side of rents, tenant purchases, community  
16 development, the homeless services next, support services next, and then the RAS scheme is  
17 necessary and that brings a big contra on the income side on page 75. 74 is some of the other  
18 expenditure codes. If it's okay with Sean, I'll continue on to give you an overview of services -  
19 76 and 77 details the expenditure across RAS transportation and safety. This is broken down  
20 into the income which is a lot of contrast for housing. It's broken down into page 78. Okay. We  
21 will deal with services A which is housing and roads also if that's okay.

22  
23 Are we finished with programme group A and move on with water services maybe, there is no  
24 questions on programme group ...

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: You don't want to give any background to--

26 DIRECTOR LANE: Our members are fully aware it is an attempt to balance between the  
27 maintenance which is the day-to-day running which is an extremely busy programme, people are  
28 aware of the intense difficulties at the moment in the housing counter and the housing services.  
29 While at the same time attempting to get so capital schemes going.

30  
31 I suppose we are lucky in the last year in that we have up to 80 new units provided. It's just a  
32 start. Through the CAS programme, particularly Newtownmountkennedy, another voluntary  
33 group, Newtownmountkennedy. We have up to 24, depending on what timing of new stock  
34 brought back, of old relets brought back in, so really it depends on what date you start from, but

1 you can take anything between 20 and 25 units extra brought back in over the last year, and on  
2 top of that, we have purchases 26 units that are either people physically in them or people -- we  
3 have to tweak the houses and get people in over the next couple of weeks. So...

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, just before we get into questions, Sean do you want to detail  
5 anything in roads?

6 MS LYNCH: Just before Sean starts in terms of roads, I want to clarify that the budget, and this  
7 is a procedural thing, the budget for roads is an expenditure of 20 million 23,569 and income of  
8 9 million 814,746. Is a detailed on pages 76 to 78. A couple of key things in terms of our  
9 non-national road grants is reduced over 20 -- the allocations we are hoping for next year will be  
10 reduced over what we would have gotten on previous years. We have provided an extra 220,000  
11 for regional and local roads from our own resources and our NTA grant allocation, we have  
12 budgeted 2.5 million for this year, we expect to get 1.5 year in next year's budgeting for a million  
13 on that and the other I suppose one area is that national primary roads, we are no longer  
14 responsible for the M11 so we have a reduction in both income and expenditure on that. After  
15 that I'll hand it over to Sean.

16 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: That's pretty much it, I don't really want to seem like the Grinch and the  
17 220,000 is very welcome. We looked for 1.2 million to try and bring the services back up to  
18 where they were, so we are still a long way short of what we feel we need to provide the services  
19 that the members in all the municipal districts request. The 20 million is roughly broken down,  
20 there is seven million of our own resources and seven million of grants that are provided in the  
21 estimates. And the other five million is salary and service support costs and central management  
22 charge.

23  
24 As Lorraine said, the indications from the NTA are that we won't get any new schemes for next  
25 year. That has a double-edged cut for us. On the one hand, we won't be able to provide facilities  
26 in the districts say in terms of footpaths and crossings for pedestrian safety and so on and some  
27 of the schemes that we had hoped to fund, that's the indication at this point. Hopefully the word  
28 will get better when the budget comes out. But it also has an implication for us in terms of  
29 employment, because we have our own employees working on these schemes, and they'll  
30 probably have to be employed elsewhere, or we will have to try and find some funding for them  
31 to be employed elsewhere. We haven't funding back in the districts to take them back in. That's  
32 a difficulty we are going to face in 2016, by the looks of things anyway.

33  
34 As Lorraine said, we also - our allocation for national primary roads has gone. We would have

1 benefited this year from works that we carried out, ancillary to the Rathnew/Arklow scheme.  
2 Obviously they won't be there next year. So things will be tight for next year, and that's 600,000  
3 that you are looking at later on, we will find a home for it, if you want to put it our way!

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think the figure was 3.

5 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Well we will take it twice!

6 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: We will take the 300 twice if you are giving it.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Let's open up to questions then for both housing and roads. So the first  
8 one showing is Cllr Brady.

9 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach, firstly, can I just thank Lorraine and all the staff there in  
10 finance who of put -- who have put a lot of work in this...

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Could I just one second, just to explain the way I want to run the meeting  
12 today, we will just have questions on the particular divisions we are dealing with, and if anybody  
13 wants to make global comments about the overall budget and the like, we will leave them all to  
14 the end, just so that everybody doesn't get annoyed when I start to cut them off if they're making  
15 general speeches about the overall budget so, hopefully that's okay for everybody, I think it's the  
16 best way through it.

17 Cllr BRADY: Just to acknowledge the work that Lorraine and that did put in, certainly it's very  
18 beneficial, and I think the budgetary process is difficult, trying to get on top of all of the figures  
19 and that, so certainly it helps that. And whilst Lorraine tried to put a positive spin on things, let's  
20 not forget that of the 2.5 million that was brought in...

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Again, again, it's questions, it's questions to the directors of housing and  
22 roads.

23 Cllr BRADY: I am coming to that.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: If you go beyond that, I'll cut you off.

25 Cllr BRADY: But we have to realise that 1.9 million of that is gone just to maintain current  
26 services, and of that, one of the - I suppose and a direct question to the Director of Housing, one  
27 of I suppose the most disappointing cuts was towards homelessness. I think there was 130,000  
28 cut out of the budget, certainly that's the figure that we had been given previously. So I am not  
29 sure whether the Director can touch on that. Certainly it was contained in one of the  
30 presentations that Lorraine had given us previously, that there was a cut in homelessness  
31 services.

32  
33 And just in terms of the housing, again there is huge, huge pressures on, and I see it there, on a  
34 daily basis and the staff in the housing section do tremendous work trying to deal with it.



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2 So I welcome the fact there is an allocation there for additional staff to progress the housing  
3 projects that we need here within the county. But having said that, there is still huge problems  
4 there within housing in terms of maintenance in terms of condition of housing stock and I don't  
5 think the figures that we have contained there go far enough to addressing the serious problems  
6 that people are experiencing within their houses. I welcome the fact that there is an additional  
7 300,000 euro to be allocated and certainly I have some proposals for that, as we move on. I  
8 welcome, as I said, the 300,000, which was going into the pockets of utility companies which I  
9 think is difficult and again I'll touch on that Cathaoirleach. So I'll leave it at that for now.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Great, thank you. Cllr Mitchell.

11 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I just have a question, a couple of questions, one is  
12 on the housing, the first one, that -- I am just curious how much we are spending on each  
13 housing Local Authority unit, there is a heading there of 3 million spent on it. How many  
14 houses, and how much is that per unit? Also just in relation to the next two headings, 102 and  
15 103, traveller accommodation, maintenance and management, again how many units are there  
16 there and how much are we spending per unit therefore on each of those?

17  
18 That's on the housing. On the roads, I have a major concern, it doesn't list in it anything to do  
19 with completing or starting or even designing the Delgany to Blacklion road in Greystones. The  
20 management of the Council has been planning to build this road for 35 years, and there seems to  
21 be no effort to actually do anything about it. An element of it is being completed by a builder.  
22 But it's vital that this is done and that money is spent to do this. We have recently built three  
23 large schools on this road, there was already another large school and a small school on it and it's  
24 absolutely vital that this is done. I voted against the capital budget of the Council earlier in this  
25 year, because I was entirely dissatisfied that it contained no funds to deal with this project of 35  
26 years, so I am very concerned that -- I don't seem to see anything here. I would like to know  
27 whether there is anything in it. I know Cllr McLoughlin can't be here, she always feels similarly  
28 about this road.

29  
30 Just coming back to the housing, I would like to say that as a result of the vote on the property  
31 tax where we went for the 0% reduction, we have been able to allocate in the region of 350,000  
32 towards homeless projects in Bray, in Wicklow, and also the housing adaptation grant. And this  
33 is quite a substantial amount. And although Cllr Brady is giving out about lack of funds, he  
34 actually voted against this, and we would have much less money to give towards housing if we

1 had gone his way. So it's very hypocritical of him to be giving off about the -- it's very  
2 hypocritical of him to say there is no money for housing when he voted to reduce the amount of  
3 money we now have for housing.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

5 Cllr BLAKE: Thanks Chairman, and it's good to see Lorraine talking in the context of a positive  
6 budget for a change, with so many years here of cuts and negative budgets, so it's good to see we  
7 are back in a situation where we are actually in a situation where we are talking about a very  
8 positive budget. Obviously I should thank the members here for the two and a half million extra  
9 in the Local Property Tax. It's guaranteed a level of improvement in services in this county.

10  
11 A couple of questions with regards to first of all, and I know Derek alluded to it there in terms of  
12 the housing. We are still collecting a lot of money from housing rents and I know houses have  
13 to be built and there is a cost factor there, but nevertheless, there is a substantial amount of  
14 money coming into the Council in terms of rent, and each year on year here we have asked the  
15 same questions regards the position in terms of how much money we are spending on the Local  
16 Authority houses in terms of maintenance and repairs and whatever else in that regard. I know  
17 there is some improvements in it this year, but it's the equalisation of that amount of money that  
18 we are spending in the local authorities in terms of from the Town Councils to the county, there  
19 has been a significant disproportionate of money being spent in the county and I am asking in  
20 regards to the equalisation of that money, how far are we coming this year in terms of spending  
21 on houses in the small towns and throughout the county in that regard?

22  
23 One question in terms of roads: Yes we have seen down the years here roads have been the one  
24 thing that have taken a hit. In the last few years, when we were talking about looking for  
25 resurfacing, people said just fill the potholes for us, but certainly in the last couple of years, we  
26 have seen a significant improvement in terms of road maintenance and resurfacing and  
27 restoration of roads as well. But one area that I think we probably have struggled over the last  
28 couple of years was in bridge maintenance, and probably - or this year is probably the first time  
29 in a couple of years we have seen an improvement in that regard. I just question the aspects of  
30 the amount of money we can actually spend in the coming year on bridge maintenance.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Matthews.

32 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thank you Chairman, it's a question on roads. On the NTA cut,  
33 Government funding of a million, is that representative - I know overall NTA funding nationally  
34 has been cut, but have we been cut in the same ratio as other districts have been cut in their level

1 of funding because that's a huge cut for roads? And the NTA funded projects throughout this  
2 county have brought massive benefit and I am very disappointed to see that cut.

3  
4 Can we go back to them with a list of projects that we have ready? Would that influence the  
5 amount of funding that's available? I saw a presentation by them recently and they have a lot of  
6 projects in Wicklow that they're talking about over the next 15 to 20 years, and I just would be  
7 anxious that we make a strong enough argument with the NTA that we have projects ready to go  
8 here and that we need their funding. Thank you Chairman.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.

10 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. Just firstly on the process, and I know you have outlined it  
11 pretty much, but if members are seeking to make amendments, do we do that after all the  
12 divisions have been gone through all the divisions?

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: I mean like if you have a particular thing that think you would like to see  
14 when you are asking your questions, I think you can raise it at that point too, but it will be taken  
15 in the overall at the end.

16 Cllr FOX: Okay. First of all on housing, Joe maybe you might confirm whether there has been  
17 a reduction in funding for homeless services from the Government. I am not sure how we are  
18 actually funded nationally. Does it come through Dublin City Council? Am I correct in thinking  
19 that Dublin City Council get a sort of a regional allocation and they then allocate money to  
20 adjoining local authorities or does it come directly from the department? Because I think there  
21 has been a reduction from Government funding of 100,000 to homeless services. Correct me if I  
22 am wrong on that.

23  
24 Secondly, on roads, I would share Cllr Matthews' disappointment on the NTA cut. There is no  
25 doubt that we have cut roads to the bone, and probably even further than that. It is not  
26 sustainable to carry on with a roads allocation that we are giving them. When you go through  
27 the detail, the likes of the provision of the speed limit review, is that not national policy to  
28 review speed limits and why should we be carrying the burden financially if something is  
29 decided nationally?

30  
31 Also I notice the parking income budget is reduced by 67,000. Now as you know, Bray, the  
32 Bray area contributes significantly to income from parking. Is that as a result of less wardens,  
33 traffic wardens being on the ground? And do we intend replacing wardens that have retired or  
34 what is the underlying problem on the reduction in parking budget? Thank you Chairman.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Cllr Whitmore.

2 Cllr WHITMORE: Thanks Chair. Again I am just referring to the roads budget, and in  
3 particular to the NTA cuts. For the past couple of years, I have worked with the parents, the St  
4 Laurence's school in Delgany and local landowners to try resolve the issue of child safety up  
5 there essentially. The path to - on the approach to St Laurence's school, chapel road is incredibly  
6 narrow, the road is very narrow and it's a very, very dangerous walk for children to get into  
7 school. There is over 600 children in the school. And at the moment, in some places, the path is  
8 maybe - it just is slightly over a foot wide. That situation has been ongoing for quite a while.  
9 It's getting more and more dangerous and with the opening of the other end of the road at  
10 Blacklion, we will now instead of having one school on this road, we are going to have four  
11 schools on this road.

12  
13 Now as I said I have worked with the Council, I have worked with the local landowners, with the  
14 parents and with the schools for the past two years and I had spoken to the NTA about funding  
15 this project. And they gave indications that they would fund it and now I am being told that  
16 actually the NTA funding for the Council has been reduced from 2.5 to 1.5 million. To be  
17 honest it's just not good enough. The children at that school deserve a whole lot more. At the  
18 moment when they walk to school, if a car is driving beside a truck, I have seen it on numerous  
19 occasion, the truck mounts the path and the children are walking alongside the path wheels. It's  
20 an accident waiting to happen. Something has to be done. I am really, really disappointed that  
21 the NTA are cutting the funding and the impact that it will have on this school, particularly  
22 seeing as the traffic on this road is going to increase significantly early next year once the road  
23 is opened up into the Blacklion area.

24  
25 So I mean I would be interested to hear from Sean as to whether that cut is definite, what impact  
26 it will have on the projects. I know an application for funding to the NTA had gone in for that  
27 particular project. I would like the Council to prioritise any work and funding to go towards  
28 upgrading the paths for the children, because it is a very, very dangerous situation up at St  
29 Laurence's and something needs to be done to resolve it.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

31 Cllr RUTTLE: I would like briefly to support what Cllr Blake was saying about the bridges  
32 situation. We are not talking about large bridges, we are talking about all these small bridges in  
33 rural areas that have deteriorated greatly on the parapets and the general condition, and many of  
34 them are quite dangerous. We had our own bridge crew under Paul Byrne, very effective. I

1 wonder could we re-instate that again, because we did a lot of work there very effectively and  
2 very quickly and responded to need as well.

3  
4 Overall people would say we can't keep cutting roads all the time. Roads is often the whipping  
5 boy for a reduction in cuts at the end of the day at a budget meeting. It's always been the case  
6 over the years I have seen it here. But there are a lot of roads in very bad nick at the moment.  
7 We have roads over towards Glen of Imaal, Hollywood, Dunlavin, which are very bad and  
8 unfortunately all you need is one more bad winter to finish it off completely. You are in the  
9 hands of the elements. Another performance, even half of 2010, will do huge damage. I would  
10 just like to know on the bridges issue, can we -- how much -- what can we do, what's available  
11 and is there any possibility of re-instating our own very effective bridge crew to work on that?

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

13 Cllr FORTUNE: Just the general point on the process. Obviously we are going to discuss all the  
14 different categories. Do you maybe envisage or plan at some stage during the process today to  
15 take a break so we can reflect on what's been going on.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would say, just say just at the end of everything.

17 Cllr FORTUNE: Just on the housing part of it, could we get a broader, fuller picture on the  
18 homeless area. I know we have numbers before us here, and there is - it's generally referred to,  
19 but just to understand exactly where we are before we start making decisions. And for example  
20 under A0502, the homeless service, there is nothing in there at all. Why isn't there something in  
21 there, and let's talk about it. Also the whole area of rent allowance. There is serious challenges  
22 out there in the whole area of housing, and rents as we all know are going through the roof with  
23 the way the whole situation is being managed. And the whole area of rent allowance is causing a  
24 lot of heartache for a lot of people. And again maybe I am missing it, but I just don't see  
25 anything that helps that situation and maybe we will talk about that as well. Also there has been  
26 a recent announcement, I don't know whether it's been rubber stamped or not yet, about tenant  
27 purchase, that tenants are going to be allowed purchase their housing stock, if that's going to  
28 happen and if it's in situ, what effect is that going to have? Is that going to be good, is it going to  
29 bring in more funding, if it is, what effect will that have on the budget. I would like to  
30 understand that better before we start signing off on things.

31  
32 And on the area of roads, Sean was saying that obviously he is disappointed that he doesn't have  
33 the amount of funding he needs to do what he has to do and I would concur with him on that. In  
34 that area regards the NTA which we tend to talk about but don't tend to get into, do we know

1 why they're saying at this stage that no funding for next year and we won't be able to do  
2 projects? I would like to know more about that. If you take the comments from Cllr Mitchell  
3 and Cllr Whitmore in regards to Blacklion and St Laurence's in our area, they're linked, those  
4 two particular scenarios, one impacts the other. We need to get a handle on why that is and  
5 maybe do we need to as a Local Authority supporting the Director, all the members, make from  
6 what we are being told today, get directly back on to the NTA and say look, hang on, we can't do  
7 our business this way, it's just not on.

8  
9 Also under road safety, I would like to get a better picture on the funding in regards to school  
10 wardens. School wardens in my opinion are essential in regards to safety, the safety of our  
11 children going to school. That whole area needs to make sure it's not too tight. I would like to  
12 know the funding we have available that's been given to us, is that going to give us a full  
13 complement of school wardens that's required indeed throughout the county. That's what we are  
14 looking at here today. They're just some initial thoughts on those two sections.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

16 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, again Cllr Fortune touched on school wardens in regards to  
17 the roads section. B0801 and the reduction from 183,000 to 165,000. I just wanted to -- an  
18 answer in regards to why it's reduced. My understanding was that we would be adding to school  
19 wardens in actually getting more people out there. We are building new schools all over the  
20 county and I assume that school wardens will be part and parcel of that.

21  
22 Also on roads, Cathaoirleach, B0603, traffic improvement measures, a reduction from 2.5  
23 million to 1 million. Just to hear the Director Sean Quirke's views on that in regards to traffic  
24 improvement measures, measurements.

25  
26 And also down at the bottom there, there is a reduction in agency and recoupable services,  
27 service support costs, reduction in both of them, it's 1101 and 1199. Just a general feedback on  
28 why the reduction in them.

29  
30 If I could Cathaoirleach, I would like to come back in at the end in regards housing, if I could -  
31 but at the moment I just want to let the members know that there has been a reduction in the  
32 homeless funding from the department, and we don't need the Director or anyone else to tell us  
33 that, it's there in black and white, unfortunately. The vote on the Local Property Tax took place  
34 here a couple of weeks ago. My understanding is that that's done and dusted, that we are here

1 today to shape and implement the budget of 91 million, irrespective of what we do, Lorraine  
2 only has 91 million, it's not elastic money, she can't stretch it. It's up to us as members to decide  
3 and vote what way we can best put the services out there to cover all the agencies. Obviously I,  
4 along with other members, will be hoping that housing will get a fair share of that. I am very  
5 interested to hear that there is 300,000 up for grabs there.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry Councillor, just questions re housing if you could, we can talk  
7 globally at the end.

8 Cllr SNELL: Obviously just to confirm, if the Director could confirm what we already know,  
9 which is that under the labour Minister, he has reduced the funding to Wicklow County Council  
10 by over 100,000 euro for homeless services. Could he also confirm that the traveller  
11 accommodation scheme, funding for that has been reduced by the 90% nationally. And that  
12 Wicklow County Council only received 63,000 last year. Irrespective of what the Minister has  
13 said publicly, irrespective of what members might have heard on the Claire Byrne show or RTE  
14 or anything else, can he confirm that Wicklow County Council drew down all the money that  
15 was available for the traveller accommodation scheme? I know the answer and you know the  
16 answer Cathaoirleach, because you have been closely aligned to it, but just for the other  
17 members. Thanks.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Shay Cullen.

19 Cllr Shay CULLEN: A couple of quick points, with regards to the expenditure for maintenance  
20 of Local Authority housing units, I would just like to get an idea on the number of houses that  
21 we have spent money on.

22  
23 And secondly, if I could get an update on the RAS scheme to see if there is much of a  
24 withdrawal from landlords to this scheme, or what's, where we are at with that. And finally, it  
25 was touched on by Cllr Fortune just maybe an update on the rent allowance situation currently.  
26 Thank you.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Cllr Murphy

28 Cllr MURPHY: Two things, again on the homeless thing, I think it's just it's not just in one point  
29 of our county now, it's nearly in every town, whatever, and there is very limited scope of placing  
30 these homeless people, and we probably need to look at that as well in the sense of funding, and  
31 allocation of more accommodation.

32  
33 Also the roads, I mean as Cllr Whitmore said about schools, in rural parts there are roads that  
34 have never been touched for years and years and they are the main roads where families are

1 travelling with young children to schools, up country roads and whatever. I mean the cut in that  
2 is very sad to hear. Also just traffic lights, there is one particular place in Arklow where the  
3 lights are not working anymore, and there is a particular person who very -- with very bad sight  
4 mobility, put in a request to have them repaired and was told there is no costing for that. That  
5 traffic light particularly is her link to her independence, and it's her independence of being on her  
6 own. Now she needs a person with her to go to and from work. And I would be very concerned  
7 about that specific funding of getting those repaired, where does it come from? And those are  
8 issues that are not highlighted in this. Thank you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, great. So can I ask the Director to come back in there.

10 Cllr BRADY: Just it's an important question I forgot to ask the Director.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Really quickly, if you have been in before you know yourself.

12 Cllr BRADY: Just in relation to the Housing Assistance Payment as to whether there is any  
13 provision in this for it or any indication from the department as to whether HAP is going to be  
14 rolled out in Wicklow? I think there will be huge financial implications and staff resource issues  
15 there as well.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: And Cllr Thornhill, you just got in there.

17 Cllr THORNHILL: Cathaoirleach, a good few of the members were on about the homeless  
18 situation. I would just like maybe just quickly and maybe the Director might assure me as to  
19 Bray and what is the update on the situation in relation to the homeless situation in Bray and  
20 about it being funded and the go ahead of it?

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Joe, do you want to hit the button there.

22 DIRECTOR LANE: The first thing is just because Sean has already put in the 300,000, there is  
23 plenty of services still short in housing, if you have 300 or part of it, you all see the amount of  
24 progress that has been made with the three new staff this year, two architects and the QS and we  
25 have progressive schemes - okay the State has produced a lot of money, Murphy's land,  
26 Brewery's Bend are now moving ahead. Extra resources, just bear that in mind. On top of that,  
27 bear in mind central heating, you still have no central heating fund for 2016. We can spend  
28 money on fascia and soffits and maintenance, we are not just concentrating on just roads.

29  
30 Okay, before we start, homelessness, and I can go on, we also could do an assistant homeless  
31 officer, if you have money available.

32  
33 Okay, homelessness, what happened there was originally we think homelessness was something  
34 like 90% of funding and we got grants of 90% and we always put that in. As Wicklow County



1 Council put extra money into homelessness, the State money remained the same. When you talk  
2 about there is no reduction, it remained the same but our gap got much bigger as we didn't get  
3 money available. On a regional basis, Kildare gets money, Kildare is the regional authority for  
4 Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. It divides it out then, and Wicklow gets that. That hasn't changed,  
5 it's about 163, 165, we have put in, through the three directors, we have put in requesting extra  
6 funding for 2016, or 2015. To prove the point that it's not a Dublin or Cork issue, it's also as bad  
7 in the peripheral of Dublin, being Kildare and Meath and things. We have requested extra  
8 money for 2015 and mark people's cards clearly for 2016.

9  
10 Maintenance of housing, yeah, it really depends on what way you are looking at figures here.  
11 Pure maintenance across codes would be about millions, and that would be fairly - 346 sorry,  
12 and that would be just taking 1.5 million and divided by the 4346 units and that would be 346,  
13 and that's fairly evenly distributed across the area. it would be difficult to compare that 346 with  
14 the units per - the question was per traveller units, because there is stuff in it and stuff not in it,  
15 give or take, if you assume, which is Derek's question on table A101 or A103, if you assume the  
16 maintenance of a traveller unit there of 141,000 and if you take 52 travelling units that will work  
17 out at 2,700, but it's totally different expenditure and you won't be able to balance that across the  
18 question you are looking at, because you won't see the maintenance of housing, you will just see  
19 a sub -- you won't see the actual maintenance, you will see other things including insurances tied  
20 across to that. If you compare that, it would be 750 against 2,300. It's a different question,  
21 because it's a different type of expenditure.

22  
23 Yes, it spreads roughly now across per area, we have equalised the areas roughly give or take.  
24 Disappointed at rate of maintenance, yeah give us money, we will spend it for you. Homeless  
25 and regional, yes.

26  
27 Yes, and HAP, as far as we are concerned, the HAP programme, when it comes in, it comes in  
28 with resources. We are fully aware it would be resource incentive, we are not lined up so far for  
29 2016, as far as when we are concerned, when it comes in, it should come in with resources, it's  
30 no secret the pressures people are under, putting HAP on top of that at the moment would cause  
31 problems without the resources.

32  
33 Last, we have been - RAS, we have been able to replace RAS. we have an increase from 2015,  
34 there are extra units, but on top of that, we have been able to replace new units where people

1 leave, in a lot of cases landlords are very accommodating in this case and nationally it's given  
2 that 60% of landlords are one-off landlords, accidental landlords, we have looked at reviews of  
3 rents, but in a lot of cases we don't have that many people unless through no fault of their own  
4 coming out of the RAS scheme. There are people who have no option, the houses are being sold  
5 or through their own circumstances, they want to remove, but we have replaced or increased our  
6 RAS units.

7  
8 Tenant Purchase Scheme, we are expecting one to start in 2016. Traveller accommodation, I  
9 didn't get the question on traveller accommodation, just that ordinary expenditure like I said is  
10 143,000 plus there is other expenditure incurred here and that would be pure maintenance for the  
11 schemes for the 11 official sites that we have. Okay I think that answers the questions.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. I suppose just you don't know if you do yourself justice and the  
13 people in the Housing Department in the absolute fantastic work that you have done in particular  
14 the last year. I mean obviously the biggest way to deal with homelessness is provide houses.  
15 And I mean the scheme brought on 32 units, how many people who might have been living in  
16 hotels.

17 DIRECTOR LANE: There were 15 direct homelessness, plus a whole lot of other schemes,  
18 people at risk of homelessness, so 15 homeless taken out from the homeless Register.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: How much money was provided for the Newtown project?

20 DIRECTOR LANE: From the State 7.2 million.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: In terms of the other projects we are working on, Brewery Bends,  
22 Dunlavin and Murphy's land, I am trying to get a sense.

23 DIRECTOR LANE: Brewery Bends we expect 20 units, we expect to get that out to consultants  
24 in the next couple of weeks. It's tied up to procurement and we should have it on public display  
25 before Christmas. Murphy's land, we have spoken informally to the Area Councillors and hope  
26 to have that on display in the months.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: In terms of those projects how much...

28 DIRECTOR LANE: 32 units, people in houses, plus we purchased 26 units this year that will be  
29 back in stock very, very quickly, plus we have the re-lets. The other two units, the 20 and 32,  
30 sorry, Brewery Bends is 42, 20 and 42, that'll be on public display, but that will be over a year or  
31 two.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: How much money has been provided for those projects?

33 DIRECTOR LANE: 14, 3 and 7. 24 million. Plus there is also four million on purchases over  
34 the last, that we bought bit by bit over the last year.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: And the other piece I want clarified, Cllr Fox was asking whether or not  
2 the homelessness funding was coming through Dublin City Council?

3 DIRECTOR LANE: That's the regional.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Quickly explain that one more time. I don't think everybody fully  
5 understands how that works.

6 DIRECTOR LANE: Kildare is the nominated Local Authority, they get money on a regional  
7 basis and give it to us on a base year given, and then we all get money accordingly. Of the three  
8 I think we get the lesser of the three, but they take money off for housing, they take money off. I  
9 can get you figures if you need that.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: I do think as members we want to make sure we are getting our fair share  
11 of the money that's been provided there, and so I know Cllr Snell and myself have requested that  
12 we meet, along with the Director, with those two authorities to find out exactly what the story is  
13 to make sure that we are getting fair funding from that. Councillor Snell, you wanted to come in  
14 there.

15 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Again, I suppose Joe was trying to underplay the role that  
16 him and his department have played in regards to securing the 40 units in  
17 Newtownmountkennedy which people received their keys in the last couple of weeks. Eight  
18 units in Rossmore, and 32 in Glenbrook. Also the housing section is working very, very hard in  
19 regards to the voluntary sector, and there is a number of projects coming downstream in regards  
20 54 units in Rathnew. But I must unfortunately just - I look around the Chambers here and I think  
21 they've come in for unfair criticism, and I know you and myself have met the five TDs in here a  
22 number of months ago when there was, shall we say, cross wires. And what was said in that  
23 room will remain in that room. But unfortunately, you know, there comes a stage when as Chair  
24 of the SPC that I must defend not just the officers of Wicklow County Council, and the housing  
25 section in particular, but also the new Councillors who have come in for unfair criticism in my  
26 opinion. For a sitting TD to criticise new Councillors and lay the blame for their lack of  
27 knowledge or suggest that they need to go and get training I think is despicable coming from  
28 Deputy Ann Ferris. Deputy Ferris as we all know is and her colleagues in the Labour Party, are  
29 responsible for the posturings coming from the Department to this Local Authority. And for her  
30 to suggest that money is available and yet they're cutting the homeless funding to Wicklow by  
31 over 100,000 is despicable.

32  
33 We all know that she takes the long route to Dáil Éireann, so I suggest she take a detour down to  
34 Wicklow County Council and touch base with the members this chamber and also the housing

1 section.

2  
3 The homelessness is an issue and I think handing out sticks of rock at the railway station in Bray  
4 certainly won't alleviate the homeless problem. So while I look around the Chamber and I would  
5 like to publicly thank Cllr Behan, Brady, Annesley, Burke and Pat Kavanagh for their input into  
6 the SPC, Trojan work has been done there, and unfortunately when we have conflicting stories  
7 coming from a sitting TD, it's very frustrating and we don't get the credit for what's being done  
8 in regards to the homeless section.

9  
10 We could sit here today and elaborate about the lack of windows and door scheme, gutters and  
11 down pipes, insulation, ventilation; but there is a number of very good schemes out there, and we  
12 had last year where 150,000 were put to one side from the NPPR due to the members of this  
13 chambers. That meant 30 families got some form of central heating. Unfortunately we still have  
14 more families that need that and that's why I would be very interested in Lorraine's 300,000 euro  
15 and I hope the members agree with me at a later stage today. But just to downplay what's  
16 happening in the housing section, if someone would go over there and see what's going on, to see  
17 the joy in the faces of people who are actually securing, whether it be a Local Authority house,  
18 the staff over there are working very hard in regards to the Rental Accommodation Scheme,  
19 long-term and short-term schemes, and for a suggestion to say that the staff of Wicklow County  
20 Council earmarked a site in Dunlavin above and beyond a site in Bray is total and utter  
21 nonsense. We were asked by the Department to provide ten alternative sites where they could  
22 pick - where they would prioritise and put in social housing.

23  
24 Everyone in this Chamber, including the members from West Wicklow know there is not 30  
25 people on the housing list in Dunlavin, yet the Minister in his wisdom elected to pick Dunlavin  
26 and said he would put in 30 units there, knowing we didn't have the infrastructure or the green  
27 light from Irish Water. Thankfully through a number of meetings where you Cathaoirleach, your  
28 predecessor Cllr Fox, senior management, Joe and his staff, Margaret Malone, Alison Minnian,  
29 we have held many, many meetings and thankfully that's been re-addressed. There is a number  
30 very exciting projects coming down the line in regards the convent lands in Wicklow Town,  
31 Murphy's lands in Bray, the 26 acquisitions - I must point out and I know Cllr Annesley and Cllr  
32 Bourke have been very, very vocal on behalf of the members of South Wicklow, particularly in  
33 the Arklow area, that the majority of them houses was purchased in the Arklow area because of  
34 the problem in regards to sewage and waste water. There is two projects there that hopefully can

1 be pushed along in the Arklow area, and plus we have 30 houses coming on stream in Brewery  
2 Bend in Rathdrum.

3  
4 But I cannot and I won't sit here and accept what Councillor Ferris is putting out in the public  
5 domain. She held a Labour conference up in the Glenview in Wicklow here, and actually  
6 spouted out in regards to the problem lies here in Wicklow, we are not drawing down the fund.  
7 We have always drew down the funding. Unfortunately you see today in the budget, the funding  
8 is not enough. It's been cut. And the meeting that you mentioned to the members in regards to -  
9 because we are outside of the Dublin greater area in regards to homelessness, a lot of people in  
10 the national media think that homelessness is a Dublin, a capital problems, and is certainly isn't.  
11 That meeting between ourselves, Kildare and Meath will be a very important meeting with the  
12 Minister and with yourself, and Joe as the Director of Housing here. And I look forward to that.

13  
14 And I would like to thank the members here for their support in regards to housing. I know each  
15 and every one of you are working very, very hard on a local level with your constituents. But I  
16 would urge you to have a look at the homeless budget, not just the homeless budget, the  
17 maintenance in regards to any schemes that's coming on stream through the housing section.  
18 Rents from our housing stock, 4,500 houses brings in 12 million. Unfortunately we know 80%  
19 of that has to be ring-fenced for other services, but I am sure we will get down to the crux of the  
20 figures later on. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Cllr Fortune.

22 Cllr BRADY: Are these in order, I had indicated before other members there.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: You are next in line, yeah.

24 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Just to come back on a couple of things. The Director  
25 is confirming the tenant purchases is coming in 2016. I wonder are we putting any kind of an  
26 estimate in to what might come from that, if it is in place, and what that money could be possibly  
27 used for? And then the other thing, I asked the question about rent allowance, because rent  
28 allowance is a very, as I said earlier, a very serious issue and I would like to get some  
29 clarification on what input, as we are in the budgetary process, what input we can put in to try  
30 and see can we streamline that better and make sure people can get access to it in a better way.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: And just short clarifications, Cllr Snell is Chair of the SPC and that's why  
32 I extended the time there. Cllr Brady.

33 Cllr BRADY: Well Cathaoirleach I agree with everything Cllr Snell said there and just to go  
34 back to my initial question there on the cuts to the homeless service of 130,000, which I mean

1 you can dress it up whatever way you want, but the bottom line is we are being grossly  
2 underfunded here for homeless services and when you have a look at the homeless figures for  
3 this year, I think for the first six months of this year, it had exceeded by 20% the entire figure of  
4 last year, shows exactly how much of a housing crisis that we are in, and I acknowledge publicly  
5 that there is excellent work going on here in terms of delivering new housing projects, but the  
6 reality is they're not going to come about quick enough, that this problem unfortunately is going  
7 to continue to get worse before it does get better, and unless there is a serious investment in the  
8 overall homeless figures to this Council, we are going to see an influx of more people sleeping  
9 rough on the streets.

10  
11 Could I propose that we pass a resolution here today calling on the Minister, the Labour  
12 Minister, with responsibility, Alan Kelly, that this figure is increased substantially, because it  
13 was nearly a year to the day when Jonathan Cory died on the streets of Dublin and the Minister  
14 with all his rhetoric and speak, talking about investing heavily in homeless services, the reality  
15 on the ground is completely different.

16  
17 Can I propose that we write to the Minister with responsibility and ask him to invest seriously in  
18 the homeless budget here in Wicklow, otherwise we are going to be here dealing with more and  
19 more people, the staff out there cannot deal with the influx of homeless people. And when you  
20 have the Director appealing for us to provide for a homeless officer to deal with the influx of  
21 homelessness, I think that speaks volumes. So can I propose that we write to the Minister asking  
22 for an investment in homeless services here in the county Cathaoirleach.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

24 Cllr MURPHY: Just on one or two things which will be short. I just have two questions about  
25 the DPG allocation. And I would also like to know the list of people that are on that, and have  
26 been on it I suppose going down the ladder, because my impression of the DPG grant is that  
27 people are on it are really - people are getting it are people who are in very serious priority cases  
28 and the people who are -- maybe of small minor jobs are way, way down the line and keep being  
29 pushed down by no fault of I suppose anyone. But these people need to be allocated their  
30 funding. And the DPG funding is very, very slow to come in from the Government and I am  
31 wondering why does that happen every year?

32  
33 Also on housing, for people with disabilities and families, what have we on the list? Have we  
34 people in crisis on the list? And is there specialised funding that we can apply for say outside

1 the box of our funding for housing in general?

2  
3 And as Cllr Snell has brought up about Ann Ferris TD, all I would like to say is if I feel I wasn't  
4 good enough to be at this table as a new by, I am sure the people of my district wouldn't vote for  
5 me and I have long life experience of being here, and I feel that I have every right and so has  
6 everyone in this Council a right to be here.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Fox.

8 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. I'll be very quick. I think Cllr Murphy has asked a very good  
9 question on the DPG. As we all know the DPG keep people in their own homes and what sort of  
10 a backlog of people approved in money terms are on the DPG waiting list?

11  
12 I actually just came in to talk and publicly thank Cllr Snell for the work that he has done as Chair  
13 of the Housing SPC. It's quite obvious how passionate he is and the energy he brings. You have  
14 seen it first hand Chairman. I seen it last year and I think Deputy Ferris' criticism of the  
15 members of the SPC and new Councillors was unwise and unhelpful to say the least.

16  
17 Finally Cllr Brady also made a very good point about the money, the 100,000 reduction. But I  
18 think it might be pertinent to get a handle on Kildare County Council and their process of  
19 allocation. If it is a case that the department are allocating sufficient funding to Kildare County  
20 Council, to divvy it out on a regional basis, then we are not getting our fair share, perhaps the  
21 difficulty is that Kildare County Council on a regional level have it and maybe we should go  
22 through that avenue first before the Department, thank you Chairman.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters.

24 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach and actually it's just I suppose in relation to the point that  
25 Cllr Fox has just raised: I didn't actually realise how the homeless funding was allocated until  
26 Joe Lane told us there a while ago. I just looked online and it would appear from the  
27 department's figures that they've actually given the same amount of money this year to that as  
28 previous years, and that their allocation for this year. I have actually sent an email to Alan  
29 Kelly's office asking is that true and hopefully we will have a response by the end of the day. If  
30 that's the case and the funding hasn't been cut to the body, how did Wicklow end up 100 grand  
31 worse off this year than last year and which of our Councillors sit on that body or who represents  
32 Wicklow on that body that we would end up 100 grand worse off? So I don't expect an  
33 immediate answer, obviously this is all fresh, but maybe by this afternoon, we could know  
34 something, thanks.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

2 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, just two brief issues: While I recognise the work that's going on in the  
3 SPC and by people in the Housing Department, really it's only a drop in the ocean to what really  
4 is needed out there. If you go back to the minutes four years ago, I recognise that there was  
5 going to be a problem here because of the lack of funding that was going in, and the lack of  
6 building that was going in as well. And really and truly, like at the type of level that we are  
7 building, there is no way we could even get rid of the housing list that's there at the moment, I  
8 think over 3,500 people waiting on housing, with the type of building that's going on at the  
9 moment, and the type of purchases that are going on for the whole county as well. So there is a  
10 major crisis out there, and the crisis, as well as being a homeless crisis, it's a crisis of building  
11 actually enough houses and, as I say, it's good to see a little bit of activity there, but even the  
12 little bit of activity is nothing to do, it certainly will not go any way in any shape or form to  
13 alleviate a lot of people that are on the list, because there is major, major issues out there now,  
14 with rent increases, people going to live with their parents and various things like that, and really  
15 that's happening at the moment. It's never been like this in my experience. This is the worst that  
16 it has been in the last 30 years. And there is a housing crisis out there. And people will want to  
17 start addressing that particular position.

18  
19 In regard to - unless I missed it or not, Cllr Thornhill asked about what the position is in regards  
20 to the homeless shelter in Brighton Terrace. It's a policy of this Council that that would be  
21 closed at Christmas. I just want to know is that the case at the moment or what is the situation in  
22 regard to the provision for homeless people in the Bray area? Thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

24 Cllr BLAKE: Thanks Chairman. Just briefly again, I certainly welcome the Director's  
25 comments regards equalisation of the money to be spent on repairs to Local Authority houses  
26 throughout the county, because there has been a serious bone of contention over the last few  
27 years in that regard. He did also mention and Cllr Snell also, as the Chair of the SPC, did  
28 mention the fact that we purchased quite a number houses as well but we are purchasing those  
29 houses continuously again in the large urban areas. There is a number of houses that are  
30 available in more rural towns and villages as well that they are available for purchase as well at a  
31 very reasonable price. I brought up on a number of occasions here with the staff in the Council  
32 and also at our own Baltinglass Municipal District meeting as well. While it hasn't happened,  
33 hopefully down the line, we will be able to roll out a purchase of houses throughout the entire  
34 county rather than in the more Bray, Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow areas and Blessington as



1 W hopefully we can actually continue to purchase houses that are available out there, to be  
2 brought on stream for the people who are desperately in need of it.

3  
4 Cllr Vance has alluded to the fact that we have a long way to go in terms of being able to house  
5 all our people, but it was a policy that has been adopted here for quite a number of years that we  
6 went out of the market of purchasing and building our own Local Authority houses here. We  
7 were depending almost entirely on the private sector to build houses for us. It was a mistake that  
8 was made back quite a number of years ago and I am glad to see that we are back now in  
9 building houses. It's a slow process, we have to get extra staff in here and everything else to do  
10 that but it is happening in that regard and Cllr Snell, I do compliment him as Chairman of the  
11 planning SPC. Members have said here, he is passionate about it and the staff in there have done  
12 a lot of work coming from almost a zero point in terms of providing houses for our people who  
13 are desperately in need out there for them. So I do welcome the effort that has been made in  
14 there. But I would ask that we would continue to try and purchase houses that are out there in  
15 the smaller towns and villages as well.

16  
17 And look at, to have meetings with the TDs, if there is some argument there between the Labour  
18 and Sinn Fein TDs, with regards to the only thing I'll say about Deputy Ferris is that while she  
19 was here for quite a number of years, she was I think the second lady chairperson of this County  
20 Council, from the late Senator Mary Walsh, which was the first and only lady to Chair Wicklow  
21 County Council. The time of Ann Ferris here in the Chair and I thought she was a very  
22 constructive and good Councillor.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: A final word from the members on this Cllr Snell.

24 Cllr SNELL: Just a very brief point and if I could ask that all chairs of the SPCs maybe take  
25 account of the nominating pillars or sectors outside of the public reps. I found as Chair of the  
26 Housing SPC and the seven or eight meetings we have had, we have had to write to two  
27 members, one was the SIPTU representative, representing the trade unions who hasn't attended  
28 not one meeting, not one meeting. And as we all know SIPTU is very closely aligned to the  
29 Labour Party. And the other person is Deputy Ann Ferris' husband, who failed to turn up to one  
30 meeting. So I would suggest deputy Ferris, if her husband had attended the SPCs she would  
31 have known what's going on rather than criticising new members or otherwise. Thanks  
32 Cathaoirleach.

33 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, can I come in on that, I think Cllr Snell is right in saying certain  
34 things, he doesn't know what the circumstances may be in regard to health problems that people

1 might have in regard to attending. Really if he did know, maybe he wouldn't make that type of  
2 remark and I regret now that he made that remark. It's a cheap shot now. It's a cheap shot.

3 Cllr WINTERS: Can we get back to the budget.

4 Cllr VANCE: The SIPTU thing, I can well understand. You don't realise -- there could have  
5 been health problems.

6 Cllr SNELL: All they have to do is send another nomination.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

8 Cllr VANCE: Having a go at somebody's wife...

9 DIRECTOR LANE: First of all, to Mr Brendan Thornhill, I do apologise I missed that. First of  
10 all, the date of Christmas was not given by me, people want to pick what I say out of it. At the  
11 time we had a CAS applications, we had a number of CAS applications in our number one was  
12 they call it Glenbrook, number three I think was a Simon application regarding Bray where we  
13 would look at the Brighton Terrace model, whereas it was a short-term solution, it became more  
14 of a medium term solution which is not in accordance with good practice with Housing First,  
15 Housing First I think is the name of the term.

16  
17 So the idea was that a lot of the residents in Brighton Terrace would move into more supportive  
18 units. We didn't get CAS funding. Since then Wicklow County Council has been attempting to  
19 source units that would be suitable which would be smaller four bedroom units, that would be  
20 suitable in Bray, that would deal with some of the Brighton residents. We haven't been able to  
21 get those in the short-term. We are still looking. We may have one or two, so that's - we are just  
22 not in a position to do it ourselves, we are hoping the CAS programme would do it for us. We  
23 are aware of the problem. If we can identify units in Bray, whereas people have alluded to  
24 earlier on, there has been pressure for all types of units in Bray, so it's just a balance.

25  
26 DPGs, yeah, with the funding we are only to do priority one, there are people priority two and  
27 priority three, even now it's unlikely we will get to it, depending on where we get the money.  
28 Priority ones, we have to deal with them and there are priority threes longer, there is nothing we  
29 can do, we just don't have the funding for them.

30  
31 As regards allocations, we have a number of allocations where we were in a position to allocate  
32 the - based on criteria, and it's done on a case by case basis, again if members have particular  
33 questions we don't want to get involved in a case by case basis, talk to me afterwards. I missed  
34 Cllr Fortune's second question, but I'll answer the first one. Have we income in for the tenant

1 purchase? No we haven't. It's treated as ICRs, I am not sure what the new scheme is but the  
2 chances are the old schemes are - all the old schemes was capital

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: ICR?

4 DIRECTOR LANE: The urban people know Internal Capital Receipts, it's basically when we  
5 get properties back, originally we were allowed charge some of it to revenue, get some of it  
6 back, it was then put into a capital account where some of the re-lets, some of the bigger jobs we  
7 were allowed fund through this capital account, it would be through capital rather than revenue.

8 Cllr FORTUNE: The second one was about rent allowance, I mean it's a massive issue out there,  
9 I was wondering how we can get on top of it, because...

10 DIRECTOR LANE: The rent allowance really is, whereas we deal with it and give letters and  
11 we talk to the health board, it's not...

12 Cllr FORTUNE: The reason I am raising it is to me it falls into the whole area of housing  
13 service. People are depending on rent allowance to actually be housed. There is a massive issue  
14 as we all know out there with the way rents have gone through the roof and there is no  
15 consideration been put into play, to counter balance it, I am sure the public reps like myself get  
16 people coming on in all kinds of very, very sad circumstances and it's very difficult for them to  
17 navigate through the system while the various officers are good in their own way, I just think  
18 that as we are looking at housing and we are talking about looking after the people looking for  
19 housing, sorry I am not finished, I think we do need to have some kind of management way of  
20 dealing with people so they're not left frustrated and in some cases depressed. I think it's deadly  
21 serious. I really do.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: All right. Thank you.

23 DIRECTOR LANE: I get that.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Hold on, wait, wait.

25 Cllr VANCE: A point of information in regard to Joe there, he didn't answer the question Joe. I  
26 mean I know people in the area have a circular from a certain public rep that it is to be closed at  
27 Christmas, is that the case or not, or is there a date on when that information was actually ... and  
28 when or can you put a timeframe on it?

29 DIRECTOR LANE: I can't put a timeframe at the moment. Glenbrook, we took one or two  
30 residents out of there, even if we got a four bedroom we would hold it for a time being, we are  
31 going through a cold weather situation, I couldn't afford to lose Brighton Terrace.

32 Cllr VANCE: So you can't put a timeframe.

33 DIRECTOR LANE: I would like to say we would not be in a position to close, we are not in a  
34 position to close at the moment.

1 Cllr VANCE: Effectively that information was wrong there.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, we have got the point. Please, shush, shush, shush. Let the  
3 Director just complete, will you just please let the, will you let the Director please just finish  
4 thank you.

5 DIRECTOR LANE: Like I said again going back to one of the questions again, yes whereas  
6 with 3,600, we will always struggle. There is the suite of stuff includes the PPP that was  
7 recently allowanced regarding convent land here, the social housing, the purchases, part fives are  
8 beginning to kick in again with the new act, approved housing bodies are an essential part of this  
9 partnership too. Just again Cllr Winters, no, in 2014, 2015, at the time I think homelessness, we  
10 think was either 80 or 90% of the homeless expenditure was recouped. Then as our expenditure  
11 increased that percentage no longer became applicable and the 300,000 last year would  
12 effectively have been 90 or 80%, I can't remember the percentage, I wasn't there, of the  
13 expenditure for 2014 or 2015. We are now putting a more realistic, we are saying they're not  
14 following it anymore, they're sticking it at the 179, whatever Kildare are giving us, that might  
15 account for the gap. The gap is getting bigger between allocated expenditure and between  
16 income and expenditure.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you done. A couple of people and they've promised me it's really  
18 quick. Cllr Lawless.

19 Cllr LAWLESS: I'll be very brief, just in regards to Cllr Brady's proposal, are you on for the  
20 resolution, I would like to second that, but I would also like to support Cllr Fox that we get in  
21 contact and liaise with Kildare. I think we should be doing both simultaneously.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: What we said at the start and Cllr Snell also clarified that that's in  
23 progress at the moment, we have requested that meeting with Kildare because we want to find  
24 out

25 Cllr LAWLESS: But I feel we should still write to Minister Alan Kelly.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Anybody making a proposal today, please write it down and give it up to  
27 Lorraine but you are seconding that position. Cllr Fortune.

28 Cllr FORTUNE: I have asked the question about the whole area of rent allowance. I know the  
29 Director doesn't have a magic answer to it, but it's such a massive issue, we can't sit here today  
30 and talk about housing services and housing this and that and ignore it, it's a key requirement and  
31 a key issue for loads and loads of people out there. So we need to do something about it.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Okay. Have you a proposal.

33 Cllr FORTUNE: I think there needs to be a more collective coming together on it. I think  
34 what's happening is the impression I get from people ringing me is they feel as if they're left out

1 on an island, that suddenly it's not the Local Authority's responsibility for rent allowances, it's  
2 someone else's. I am saying as a collective, between the executive and ourselves, I think we  
3 need to come together and see can we address it.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Maybe the SPC could take that as an item. And finally just Cllr Murphy.

5 Cllr MURPHY: Just maybe I missed the answer, did you give me an answer on the specialised  
6 funding for housing for people with disabilities or the DPGs, how we can...

7 DIRECTOR LANE: We get money, we rarely get to priority two and three, priority one is on  
8 medical grounds is where the grants come from.

9 Cllr MURPHY: But there is more people on your list that is not get to go the requirement. So  
10 how do we - where can we push for funding for that?

11 DIRECTOR LANE: Unless we get extra funding we always have to prioritise on medical  
12 grounds.

13 Cllr MURPHY: The people who were not getting the top priority, by the time the situation  
14 comes, their health situation has deteriorated, so the purposely probably will need more of a  
15 need. I mean this is very serious, and I am sure --

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy, it might be worthwhile, as you know we have the 300 here  
17 to look at, so maybe we might be able to look at something in under that and you might think  
18 about proposing something in that regard.

19 Cllr MURPHY: But the specialised funding for specific housing is a very serious issue.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you members, thank you Joe, Sean do you want to come up and  
21 answer the ones with regard to roads please.

22 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Very quickly, I suppose the one difficulty we said about roads funding  
23 is that we will come to our budget and we don't know what grant funding we are going to get for  
24 next year. So in terms of our bridge funding we have included for the same funding as we had  
25 last year which was 240,000. Hopefully that will come again this year. We will be able to  
26 continue our programme. We do reconvene the bridge crew to spend that money where it's  
27 applicable or use contractors where not. The NTA funding which a number of members referred  
28 to, which we put in at one million as against 2.5 last year, that's based on the discussions we  
29 have had with the NTA so far this year. We may be slightly pessimistic on that, but I don't know  
30 and they haven't given us a figure yet, so I can't really say, but they have said to us that they  
31 don't envisage us starting too many new schemes next year. I think that's for everywhere not just  
32 us. But we have a list of schemes with them for funding. Such as the one at St Laurence's  
33 school and we will continue to work on that in the background to have that ready to go, I think if  
34 we do get some news from them, some good news.

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Just in terms of Blacklion, the housing development in Blacklion will generate development levies. Now they are building part of the road there, so - but the additional levies I think we could use for design funding for the rest of the road. So that could be a positive development from that point of view.

The question on parking, we are trying to rationalise the three areas with paid parking, Bray, Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow, to have one consistent provider and provision. It makes sense from the point of view of procurement to do that. We would hope to bring that through procurement in 2016 and hopefully that will resolve the issue in Bray as well in terms of parking wardens.

School wardens, we apply for permission to replace all school wardens and in fact on a positive note we have had interviews in the last week to replace more school wardens and we will continue to replace school wardens and keep the people on the ground.

Finally in terms of agency services, I think there was a question on that, agency services are in and out, so the reduced figure for this year is based on our activity last year. If we carry out agency services, we look to recoup the money and so it's expenditure plus income.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach just on that, just specifically the parking issue in Bray, I listened to the Director there talking about I suppose getting one not policy but procurement that covers all of the paid parking areas within the county and Bray will be looked at as part of that process. There is huge concern in Bray that a private operator is going to come in and take over the work that had been done excellently by the Council's own staff in Bray. Unfortunately due to the recruitment embargo we are down to one member of staff there at the moment who is trying to do the work. Are you saying Director, that we are going to look at - and I know there has been different notions there that the Council will still have overall control and it will be Council policy and that, but the principle of bringing in a private operator to control the parking issue in Bray, it's raised serious concern there right across the Board and I know there is different notions of clamping which I think has been ruled out and hopefully will be ruled out into the future, just to put that on the record. But it's the principle of bringing in a private operator, can I have that ruled in or out here?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

1 Cllr LAWLESS: I just want to ask the Director something came up in our municipal districts  
2 about our footpath schemes. We had certain estates that we had more or less promised that they  
3 would have their footpaths repaired like hillside and we have been told that funding has been  
4 taken away from us. I have asked other members in other districts, but their footpath schemes  
5 seem to be still in place and I am just wondering is it just Greystones is isolated and what's the  
6 future for this - for footpath scheme for 2016? Because I have to say it does look bad in the  
7 Municipal District that we have promised to do work to certain areas and now the funding has  
8 been pulled. I can't remember all the ins and outs of it, my head is foggy this morning I am  
9 afraid. I asked other districts and their footpath funding seems to be still in place. I am just  
10 wondering is it just Greystones, thank you?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

12 Cllr MATTHEWS: Just a clarification on the NTA issue that we have to provide, we have to  
13 supplement NTA funded schemes, we have to provide a certain amount of money towards that as  
14 well, so how much -- when the NTA decides how much they're going to allocate to us, how  
15 much of that is governed by our ability to be able to provide a portion of the funding for those  
16 schemes?

17  
18 And the second issue on NTA funding, would decisions that are made by the Local Authority  
19 which conflict or undermine NTA strategy have an influence on the funding that would come  
20 from the NTA?

21  
22 Chairman I want to make a proposal under one of these sections, at what stage in the meeting...

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: If you want to make a proposal now.

24 Cllr MATTHEWS: Well it's in relation to section B09, which is paid parking, parking  
25 management, parking fines, parking fees. And I want to propose that the income from paid  
26 parking would be retained by the municipal districts and would be managed by the municipal  
27 districts and that the parking management would be a function of the municipal districts. And  
28 that funding would be retained locally and that the funding would be used for works within the  
29 area where the paid parking exists, civic amenity, public realm works, and that it would give the  
30 Municipal Districts a greater autonomy. We are talking around this table fort last 18 months that  
31 Local Authority, especially in areas like Bray and previous Town Councils completely  
32 undermined by this change in Local Government structure. And I would see this as an  
33 opportunity for members to actually bring back a little autonomy back to their areas, that they'd  
34 be able to govern, manage this paid parking scheme. It would be in their remit to increase or

1 decrease pay parking if they wish to, extend the areas of paid parking and for areas that don't  
2 have paid parking, they could introduce paid parking and they would see it as a benefit to their  
3 overall Municipal District.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you have a seconder for that proposal?

5 Cllr MATTHEWS: I have just written it, I would be happy to take a seconder.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Thornhill.

7 Cllr THORNHILL: I would second that proposal, I think it's a great proposal, and as Cllr  
8 Matthews said in the light of Bray and the amount of money collected from parking, it would  
9 bring a little bit of autonomy and I am sure an awful lot of people don't like paying parking fees,  
10 but if they saw at least they would be getting something for the money that they're paying for  
11 parking, I think it's an excellent proposal and I second it.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to come in.

13 CE: Things have moved on a little bit with regard to the wardens in Bray. We are a conciliation  
14 as members would be aware, the Lansdowne Road Agreement provides that there would be no  
15 redundancies, that really outsourcing would be the last resort, we have been in discussion with  
16 the unions in that regard.

17  
18 We have a conciliation, we are not really moving forward, it's likely it will go to the Labour  
19 Court. The scenario was we did put it out there that we wanted to have a service provider  
20 providing parking services in the four towns, that's the way we wanted to go. Three of the towns  
21 already have that process. So we are within a system of discussion.

22  
23 With regard to the parking fines, the whole issue of parking fines was clearly set out in the  
24 preamble to the alignment process that all funding that existed would be - come into the pot, and  
25 would be allocated as we have seen here in the budget heretofore. The only funding from  
26 parking that could go directly to the Municipal District is if the increased parking areas as Cllr  
27 Matthews has said. That in effect would be a complete withdrawing, or redrawing of the budget  
28 if that motion was to be proposed and accepted by the members.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Sean Quirke.

30 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: I think maybe the other thing to say on parking is the bye-laws would be  
31 made in the Municipal Districts anyway, so there will be local control.

32  
33 Just in relation to the NTA funding then, the co-funding varies actually in terms of particular  
34 facilities that are being provided. In some cases the NTA fund 100%, and in other cases maybe



1 where there are public realm enhancements and so on, they ask that we would contribute towards  
2 those costs because they don't see them necessarily as accessibility issues, that they're public  
3 realm enhancements. I haven't seen any of the funding being decreased because of conflicting  
4 reason.

5  
6 In terms of funding repairs Cllr Lawless, footpath repairs can be funded from the roads budget,  
7 unfortunately what happens the practicalities of it are that we tend to try and fix the roads first,  
8 but we can do footpaths and I think a number of them have been done in Greystones over the  
9 past year. And that can continue again on into next year.

10 Cllr LAWLESS: Just we were told, I don't know about the other Councillors, we were told that  
11 the likes of Hillside and that, they were specifically pinpointed, possibly won't get done now, so  
12 I am just wondering why?

13 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: For repair? They wouldn't have been funded under NTA schemes.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you complete?

15 DIRECTOR QUIRKE: Yeah.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady just very quickly.

17 Cllr BRADY: On the issue of the parking in Bray, just so I am getting this right what the CEO  
18 is saying, obviously the preferred choice of the management is that the four areas have the same  
19 scheme in place, but the reality on the ground is Bray is obviously - has been separate up until  
20 that and we employed our own staff, so the -- the Haddington Road agreement had said that the  
21 preferred or the best way is I suppose to staff existing services from within, and that outside  
22 procurement is the last resort so my understanding is that the Council has opted for the last resort  
23 in trying to outsource it as opposed to trying to use staff to provide that critical and very  
24 important service that has worked extremely well in Bray up until this point. And the question  
25 has to be asked as to whether an application has been made to the department to provide for  
26 additional staff to maintain that essential service that has been operated excellently up until now  
27 and if not, why not?

28  
29 I have also been informed that an existing staff member had applied for an extension of time  
30 there, that he didn't necessarily want to retire at this point, that maybe that could be looked at at a  
31 year or so down the road and that I believe went unanswered, so there are other options there as  
32 opposed to the last option that is being pushed upon the people of Bray.

33  
34 And just on the point Cllr Matthews proposed there, I agree with the motion and I suppose the

1 whole paid parking issue has been used up until this point as a cash cow to bring in revenue due  
2 to the gross underfunding of Local Government and unfortunately what we are seeing now is the  
3 pot of money that's been brought in Bray, over a million euro collected in parking charges in  
4 Bray...

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll just bring the CEO back in on the other item, you have had an  
6 opportunity to go in.

7 Cllr BRADY: That pot is now being raided by the entire county and that money is being spread  
8 all over the county. Can I just ask what implications to the budget, if that proposal was accepted,  
9 what implications -- could we get a breakdown on what that would mean in terms of loss of  
10 funding to the other districts?

11 CE: Before I let in the Head of Finance, it's quite clear you look at the format of the budget, it  
12 sets out the analysis of the budget, the income from goods and services, it's 30 million euro, it's  
13 set out there. So it's spread across all programmes. And I'll check up the statutory background  
14 to that because it was quite clear that when we combined and had - and would have only one  
15 rating authority, which is the County Council, when all the rating authorities were dissolved, that  
16 any funding that was there was a combination of that funding. In some of the Town Councils it  
17 resulted in an increase in our debit balance, but you have to take the rough with the smooth and  
18 it was quite clear in the guidelines that we received that only extra car parking income that can  
19 be generated within the district is to be - can be availed of by the Municipal District because we  
20 have a pot and that pot is a global pot, just the same as the rates are a global pot and the housing  
21 is a global pot. So just that.

22  
23 With regard to the traffic wardens, we have made an application to the Department, so that we  
24 are running both -- we are riding two horses. The Councillor is correct, my preference was that  
25 we would look at the efficiencies of having one contractor providing the service for us. At the  
26 moment we have two service providers I think, if not three. And we will -- depending on what  
27 the discussion out of the -- if it goes to the Labour Court or the conciliation, if we can get  
28 agreement, depending on that we will be moving forward, but we have put in the application for  
29 positions in Bray, and hopefully -- because the members are correct, it is affecting the income  
30 stream in Bray at the moment.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Lorraine, do you want to...

32 MS LYNCH: Just in terms of the pot of money that members are referring to, my understanding  
33 going back over the accounts, there is - the income we get from parking, firstly and foremost has  
34 to pay for parking and the running of it, be it private operators or internally and running through

1 our own staff. While there was a time when we were able to utilise that money particularly in  
2 Bray, be it for a town centre, with the increasing costs across all areas, but I think, and former  
3 Bray Town Council can correct me if I am wrong but just looking at the budgets, things like  
4 providing for the water services, and the increased cost of contracts as well as the increased costs  
5 across all services have managed to eat into that surplus. There hasn't been a provision  
6 transferred to capital for parking from Bray in many years, even before the unification. But in  
7 agreeing with what the Chief Executive said, unification, it has all come into the one pot. There  
8 is 30 million, it has to be spread across all the goods and services and goes into paying for street  
9 cleaning and your operation of your car parks and parks and open spaces as well. It's a  
10 combination of all those factors.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, great. Cllr Winters.

12 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Just in relation to Cllr Matthews' proposal, as in our  
13 Municipal District in Wicklow, that would give us Brittas Bay and Glendalough and Wicklow  
14 Town and it would be deadly. However I also know that when we had Wicklow Town Council,  
15 we had a county demand. So we got the revenue from the parking, and then we had to pay the  
16 County Council for the Fire Service, for the libraries, for all of the other things, so you can't get  
17 to keep the income without paying the bills. And I am just wondering did Bray always pay its  
18 county demand when they were having the use of their parking money to do their town centre?  
19 Did they balance? Okay.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Casey.

21 Cllr CASEY: I'll be brief. Just in relation to the car parking, and Cllr Winters mentioned it  
22 there, we do have two other car parks apart from Bray, Arklow, Greystones and Wicklow and  
23 that's Brittas Bay and Glendalough. And they're completely treated different in the estimate  
24 process. And I think that needs to be reviewed because that money is from what I can  
25 understand is staying in the environment section, and there has been no reinvestment into the  
26 Glendalough car park now for over 15 years. And we do need to look at the income stream that  
27 it's generating to the coffers here in the county and reinvesting in what is having significant  
28 traffic problems in the Glendalough area. It's just that it's funny the revenue from car parking is  
29 being treated differently in relation to Brittas Bay and Glendalough compared to the towns.  
30 That's all I am saying.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake.

32 Cllr BLAKE: Briefly, we have a policy in this Council here that we do promote Bray, Wicklow,  
33 Arklow and Greystones as the main location for housing, for industry and everything else. We  
34 have a policy here that we don't promote or encourage industry in the rural areas of the county.

1 So based on that, we are dependent on the rural areas to maintain the roads, and whatever else is  
2 out there, on the bigger towns, to pay their fair share in regards to it. It's only a few years ago  
3 when we tried to expand the film industry outside of Bray, into Ashford here, that the Bray  
4 Councillors all voted against such a proposal. That's my recollection of it. We want on one  
5 hand to generate the money in Bray, but we want to keep it all there in Bray as well and we want  
6 to ignore what's been done out there in terms of roads or anything else throughout the rest of the  
7 county as well. I thought we were all wearing the one jersey in this county in that regard.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sean do you want to ...

9 Cllr MATTHEWS: Are we taking that proposal now?

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: We are not voting on it now but if you want to have a final ... go for it.  
11 Press your button.

12 Cllr MATTHEWS: I am not trying to create an urban rural divide here. All I am trying to do is  
13 to ensure that revenue collected in the districts is retained in the districts. And that's the simple  
14 description of what I am trying to do. But the process which we have at the moment, we are  
15 looking at 2.02 million income from parking fines and management. We are looking at outgoing  
16 of about 1.3 million. Now as those figures stand, there is over 700,000 there that's the profit let's  
17 call it of paid parking. If that were to be distributed to the regions which had the paid parking, I  
18 think that's regions would benefit and we had talk about this roadway down at St Laurence's and  
19 schools in Greystones, that's money that can be spent in those area and money that can be put to  
20 supplement NTA funded schemes as well. At the moment there is no incentive to manage the  
21 parking well if all the fees are going straight into the pot in Wicklow. If you had it locally based,  
22 locally run and locally managed, there would be a lot more incentive to have it well managed  
23 and we could probably drive down the costs of it, have better income. But in relation to what the  
24 Chief Executive said about this would require a complete redrawing of the budget, I don't agree  
25 with that, because at last year's budget we had a proposal made of something over a million euro  
26 about a profit and loss fund, that didn't create a redrawing of the budget, so I don't think this is.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll let Lorraine come in.

28 Cllr MATTHEWS: Just one thing Chairman, it is in the schedule handed out there, it is in the  
29 remit of us to make the resolution to determine the manner in which fees in respect of parking  
30 shall be disposed of. That's within our remit to do that.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine.

32 DIRECTOR LYNCH: In terms of what the Councillor was talking about in terms of having the  
33 revenue raised in the district spent in the district. As a Local Authority we can't do that. If you  
34 are doing that and I know I'll open up the whole issue in terms of you started looking at rates and

1 everything. It's just not feasible. We are here as Wicklow County Council and deciding for  
2 Wicklow County Council. In terms of the net of the income versus the expenditure, there is  
3 about 900,000 taking it all in. But on the flip side, we are spending 1.3 million on street cleaning  
4 across the districts. So if you are talking about taking that 900,000 across all the paid parking  
5 areas, excluding Glendalough and Brittas Bay before you correct me, and take that out, and use it  
6 discretionary, then you have to cut somewhere else. It's already been spent in the areas of street  
7 cleaning or litter management or whatever the case is. If you want to use it for other things, then  
8 that needs to be funded from somewhere else or we need to cut the services. It is one pot of  
9 money. Some Councillors said earlier, I have 91 million and it depends on the way you want to  
10 divide it up.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Lorraine, John if you don't mind...

12 Cllr BRADY: Just on that, I think the legislation is specific, it highlights revenue from paid  
13 parking as opposed to rates and it talks about keeping that within the local district. Maybe it  
14 might be helpful even after lunch if we could pull out that legislation, photocopy it and send it  
15 around to the members. I think it highlights that distinctly as opposed to rates so, we are not  
16 comparing like with like.

17 CE: I reiterate my point, it's only the extra income that can be raised by increased charges, by  
18 having extra car parking in municipal areas that goes directly. That's not part of the main pot  
19 that has been part and parcel of the budget for the last two years. For instance, if the Greystones  
20 Municipal District decided to charge for the car park at the offices, that income, which is not  
21 there previously, could be retained in the Greystones area. Not what we are talking about here.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: As we said anyway, we are doing a budget for the whole of Wicklow, I  
23 think it's important we don't fall into that other trap. Lorraine you want to make two points.

24 MS GALLAGHER: Thank you Cathaoirleach, just two items, the elected members were  
25 circulated with a survey that came down from the department, a review of the operation of Local  
26 Government reforms 2014. Now there are a number of forms that have come back, if any  
27 elected member doesn't have a form, Susan has a form and if you wouldn't mind completing it, it  
28 would only take a couple of minutes. And also there will be an external training session here on  
29 Thursday, 25th, to train elected members in on Minute Pad, the sessions kick off, they're hourly  
30 sessions kicking off at 12, so Susan in the afternoon will go around each elected members and if  
31 you could populate those times. I know some of you said you were unable to attend, but if you  
32 might be able to attend one hour.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's 12.30, see back here at 1.30. Lunch is served up in the canteen.

34 MS GALLAGHER: And for staff as well and for PCR.

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Luncheon adjournment

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay members, welcome back, hopefully you enjoyed your lunch. We will continue with C and E.

DIRECTOR LYNCH: We are doing division C which is water and which is environmental. We are doing division C which is water services and we are also doing environmental services division E because Michael will be the Director over both of those areas. Division C is water services, and it's an estimated expenditure budget of 8 million 606,212 and income of 7 million 328,810. It's set out on page 79 and 80. The biggest part of this is Irish Water in that there is a large, the water services, the waste water services, the collection and the support to capital are all works that we carry out on behalf of Irish Water, and we recoup those costs from Irish Water. There is an estimated reduction on both expenditure and consequently income of 346,000, and that's in line with the national business plan from Irish Water in terms of reducing costs and it ties in with the fulfilling of vacancies of being able to deliver the service here.

The other part of water deals with public conveniences and the rural water scheme and the Local Authority aspect of the retained aspect of water. Division E is environment, that has an estimated budget of expenditure of 11 million 351,960 and income of 1 million 787,468. I suppose the one big change in this which is something I have highlighted already, we have taken out the ten million on income and expenditure relating to the landfill levy, money we get from Ballinagran landfill, it's a levy we collect and pay over on an agency basis from the Department. That's been taken out of income and expenditure. The other areas would be in terms of recycling, there is a reduction in recycling income estimated for next year but with the LPT, we have been able to subvent that from the LPT income and maintain the services in recycling across hazardous waste and keeping the opening hours for the five recycling centres, etcetera. And other than that, I'll leave Michael.

DIRECTOR GEANEY: Just on page 66, it just goes through the various items of water supply, waste water supply, and so on. Now the water supply, waste water treatment collection of water, waste water charges, support through the capital programme, and agency and recoupable services, all of these are chargeable to Irish Water and we get a corresponding income for it. Now our income from Irish Water, any work we have done for Irish Water or that we will do in 2016 is 7.2 million approximately. Works that are left under the control of Wicklow County Council are small schemes, surface water, and well grants. Basically in --if we just move on

1 then on to the environmental side, we have responsibilities for the recycling centres, for five  
2 recycling centres. We also have completed the de-capping of Ramphere in 2015. There is still a  
3 small bit of work to be done in 2016. A waste management plan, the lead authority there is  
4 Dublin City Council, and we will have to do some work to maintain that. And also in  
5 enforcement, we will have to keep up our work in enforcement as well. That's all I have to say  
6 at this point Chairman.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Cllr Behan.

8 Cllr BEHAN: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just I have two questions for Michael. Or maybe Lorraine  
9 in the case of the first one. A person who pays commercial water charges said to me at the  
10 weekend that they haven't received a bill for the past year. They used to get a bill every three  
11 months. And they're quite concerned about the fact that a demand is going to come in now at the  
12 end of the year for a very big sum of money. And they were just wondering what -- the reason  
13 for that. They wouldn't mind not paying it at all if they didn't have to, but they were saying it's a  
14 small business person, and he was saying that having this kind of demand coming at the end of  
15 the year, puts a big burden on him, and I am sure it would on many other commercial users. So  
16 has there been a change in policy in terms of collection of that money? That's the first question.

17  
18 Will I go on to the second question? Maybe I could get an answer on this one as well. I have  
19 written to Michael not so long ago actually and I have become aware of other cases as well of  
20 people who are involved in road traffic accidents or maybe they have a chimney fire or  
21 something like that, and somebody else phones the Fire Brigade, not themselves, but someone  
22 else at the side of the road or whatever decides to call in the Fire Brigade. And the particular  
23 person then gets landed with a bill, even though they weren't the people who actually summoned  
24 the Fire Brigade and the bills are quite astronomical for an ordinary family to try and meet and I  
25 have written to Michael in relation to one of them some time back. What is the policy there? I  
26 mean if a third party contacts the Fire Brigade, it's surely not right to bill the person who may  
27 have been an unfortunate victim of a car accident and I am just wondering is there a corporal  
28 policy here on this, and if there is I would suggest it should be relaxed a little bit?

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

30 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just a couple of points there, firstly, just under the water  
31 services, now I presume septic tanks and the inspection of septic tanks would come into that  
32 category. I know this was a change that was made a couple of years ago, and the responsibility  
33 lies with the Council to carry out inspections of septic tanks to ensure they're up to a certain  
34 level. But the Government at the time did say that they were bringing in a grant system to help I

1 suppose homeowners or householders to upgrade their septic tank if indeed they did fall below a  
2 certain standard. I am just wondering, I don't see any mention of that, if that scheme is in place  
3 and if it is, as to whether it's administered by the Council here, and if indeed it is administered by  
4 the Council what kind of numbers are we talking about, what kind of figures in terms of grants  
5 are we also talking about there?  
6

7 Just in relation to the commercial water charges, can I just get I suppose an idea as to what the  
8 collection rate is for the commercial water charges and what it is I suppose worth to us on an  
9 annual basis? Because I do have concerns and I'll bring it up under different headings around  
10 commercial rates, where there is a huge non-collection rate there, and I think, and hopefully I am  
11 proved wrong that, the same can be said there around the commercial water charges. Just in  
12 relation to environmental services, can I just get an idea or an update in relation to the court case  
13 there between Brownfield and Wicklow County Council and the Whitestown site. I had heard  
14 there was some negotiations there taken place by the Council to try and settle that particular  
15 case. If that indeed is true, I am sure there would be some sort of a vision there for a settlement  
16 clause, because as members are aware there is probably huge, huge legal costs there at this stage,  
17 so if I could just get some sort of an idea on that.  
18

19 And just the last issue relates to the Fire Service and I know this hasn't actually come before this  
20 Council and I forget this particular heading, it is, it's under the - it's to do with the reduction of  
21 manning levels on the fire tenders when they go out to a call, I think is it section nine or  
22 something like that, if I get the particular heading. But basically it is relating to the reduction of  
23 fire fighters on appliances going out and it has to come before each Local Authority to either  
24 implement or reject that particular thing.  
25

26 Now we had been told previously that it would be coming before the Council at some point. It  
27 hasn't done. I just want to see if there is a provision here to implement that in terms of reducing  
28 wages to the staff, the fire fighters. Obviously there would be a reduction in payroll, because  
29 there would be less fire fighters going out on each appliance. So if there is any notion by the top  
30 table that this is going to be implemented, it has to come before the members, because certainly  
31 from this side here of the Chamber, there would be no appetite for any reduction in fire fighters  
32 on any appliances going out to deal with emergencies. Thank you.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

34 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, on water services, it's just a point of clarification, there is



1 some glaring differences in regards to what was adopted by the Council last year and what's  
2 estimated this year and I am sure there is an explanation when we get down to it.

3  
4 First one is 101, water plants and networks, it's up from 169,000 to 531,000. Second one is 201,  
5 waste plants and networks, up from 137,000 to 875,000. Third one is 601, technical design and  
6 supervision. It's up from 34,000, adopted at last year's budget to 296,000. The fourth one under  
7 water services is the Local Authority water services up from 46,000 to 488,000. It's just maybe a  
8 clarification around that Cathaoirleach.

9  
10 And then under environmental services, fire prevention and I see last year and again this year,  
11 it's the inspection and monitoring of commercial facilities, is that carried out by someone other  
12 than this Local Authority? Is that why there is no funding down there for it?

13  
14 And in regards to the maintenance of burial grounds, it's probably more so for the SPC, I see a  
15 reduction there and I assume that's because the Joint Burial Board is no longer in existence? But  
16 if we could have some information filtered down to the Municipal Districts from the SPC on the  
17 burial boards.

18  
19 And one other point Cathaoirleach, is the provision and improvement of litter bins. E602,  
20 10,000 last year, 10,000 this year. Yet the SPC found 30,000 in recent weeks and 6,000 went to  
21 each Municipal District. I know in our own district, a lot of that went on litter bins. Is the  
22 majority of the 10,000 on the collection from the litter bins or is it actually to install new litter  
23 bins? Thanks Cathaoirleach.

24 DIRECTOR GEANEY: On commercial water charges, I'll get the Head of Finance to come in  
25 as well here. There was parts, there were certain parts of the counties where I had issues with  
26 meter readers this year, that might be an explanation for the lack of an invoice issuing. This  
27 question has been raised as well regarding the actual percentage collection, and I am sure the  
28 Head of Finance will be able to answer the actual amount of collection.

29  
30 On the Fire Service, generally if I suppose in any case, it would be unlikely if there was ever an  
31 incident that it was yourself that would be calling the Fire Service, if you had a car accident or  
32 even a house fire, it would be always someone else that might end up calling in the Fire Service.  
33 And in -- generally speaking, these items would be covered by insurance in any event, and all of  
34 these - any invoice that is issued would certainly be dealt with in a fair and reasonable way.

1 That's what I can say to you.

2  
3 On Cllr Brady's questions regarding septic tanks, yeah, we are inspecting septic tanks this year.  
4 We have I think in 2015, the figure is about 30, 35 septic tanks being inspected. They're  
5 inspected basically on the risks that come to ground water as a result of the septic tank being in  
6 position. Now there are grants available if -- once the person is registered, there was a  
7 registration process for septic tanks a number of years ago now, I think it might have been 2013,  
8 and once a person is registered, they can apply to get a grant. Now they will also need an  
9 inspection before the grant is given to them. Now there is no correlation between the two, we  
10 cannot be asked to inspect the particular septic tank. We inspect the septic tanks based on the  
11 risk to the ground water, and there is very -- the criteria are very high actually on how that's  
12 done, the EPA give us guidelines and we have to agree the particular inspections with the EPA  
13 before we carry them out. It's not a case of a reactive type of inspection.

14  
15 In the Whitestown case, I suppose what I can say really is that that site has now been cleaned up,  
16 and has been funded, the clean-up has been funded centrally.

17  
18 On the Fire Service, there is no provision in this budget here for any reduction in staff or the  
19 manning level of fire appliances going out.

20  
21 I didn't get all the questions that Cllr Snell raised, I got a number of them. 101, yeah, what I can  
22 say to you there is that it's basically, it's under basically different headings because the total  
23 expenditure this year, the estimated outturn is 7.3 million and the estimated expenditure next  
24 year is 8.6 million. An awful lot of the differences there is we have got approval from Irish  
25 Water to fill a number of staff. Now all of these weren't filled completely in 2015. A lot of staff  
26 didn't come in until -- staff started to come really from June of 2015, so by the beginning of  
27 2016, we will have a full complement of staff. That's why there is a basically there is an increase  
28 in the amount of expenditure there and the total.

29  
30 Now the particular details, I am just not able to go into the particular ones, but it would have to  
31 be a change in the coding, because like the total is basically the same, so it would be how various  
32 staff were coded up. You must remember that in 2015, 2014 was the very first year of Irish  
33 Water, 2015 we were getting, we were starting to line up things, integrating staff with the  
34 particular job to be done. So 2016 we are trying to hone in on what exactly is happening on the

1 ground I would say.

2

3 Litter bins, that 10,000 would be for new litter bins rather than the emptying of litter bins. That's  
4 under a different code.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, were there other questions Cllr Snell?

6 Cllr SNELL: Yeah in regards to the fire prevention, a question around the inspection and  
7 monitoring of commercial facilities, there is no expense, is that carried out by maybe the fire  
8 brigade or probably billed under a different heading?

9 DIRECTOR GEANEY: It must be in a different spot, prevention is being carried out, you know,  
10 there are three planks to the Fire Service, one is operation, the other is prevention and the other is  
11 major emergency management, so it is under the fire prevention.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine.

13 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Just to clarify on that, I suppose it is - it is just a coding thing, it's under  
14 E1299 rather than E1202. Just in terms of the billing for water, we carry that out on behalf of  
15 Irish Water, we do it on an agency basis. And just as Michael said, we have had an issue in  
16 terms of filling vacancies for meter readers and getting sanctioned for it, so there are some areas  
17 who haven't been billed and we are aware of that and we have started reading those areas in the  
18 last month. So there will be -- we have tried and have been pushing hard for the last six months,  
19 or longer, nine months, to get these readers, meter readers replaced, but it's just taken that long to  
20 fill them. They will be available, but we will work with each individual as regards payment on  
21 it. In terms of the collection for percentages, we collect on behalf of Irish Water, we don't report  
22 on -- it's not something that -- it's not our collection, it's not our income, we don't keep it, we  
23 hand it over.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Thornhill.

25 Cllr THORNHILL: Michael just one little question I wanted to ask you, and maybe you might  
26 clarify it in relation to the recycling centres. I just see here that the E0202 brings centre  
27 operations, there is a reduction there from 55,000 down to 32,000. Maybe you might tell me in  
28 relation to recycling centres what's the policy or is there cutbacks?

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle.

30 Cllr RUTTLE: Are we dealing with F at the moment as well?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: We aren't, no.

32 Cllr RUTTLE: I am going to come in when F is on.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Doran.

34 Cllr DORAN: Thank you, just a question on Irish Water. Last year, when Irish Water done a

1 presentation here, they told us all sorts of different things, but we never could find anyone since  
2 to tell us and one was in particular for the community centre down in Carnew. We were already  
3 paying -- we have been paying for water on that community for the last ten years to Wicklow  
4 County Council. But in the last year, we have got a number letters for each house, there is 28  
5 houses down there, we are already paying for the water that's going on to the community and on  
6 to the village, and they're still sending letters every couple of months looking for money for each  
7 house. But we are already paying it. And it's paid here, it's up-to-date here in Wicklow County  
8 Council. But we can't get any -- the elderly people that are there are worried about these bills  
9 coming all the time. But we can get no satisfaction from Irish Water, no matter what area you  
10 ring, they tell you it should be some other area, and I am just wondering is it possible to get  
11 somebody from Irish Water back up here so that we can talk to him again. It's a waste of time  
12 ringing them. You could be on the phone for an hour, and at the end of it, you are still getting  
13 nowhere. We are not -- we don't mind paying for water, but we are not going to pay for it twice.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

15 Cllr MURPHY: Just on the issues on the bins, is that okay? I am sure it's the same in every  
16 Municipal area, like there is a shortage of bins, and we are trying to improve the image of our  
17 towns and whatever, especially for tourism you know, and for locals as well. But there is no  
18 problem in purchasing the bins we are told. It's a problem of emptying the bins. Because we  
19 don't have staff. Do you know, so it's once -- one thing is leading to another, and something like  
20 that has to be looked into.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Behan.

22 Cllr BEHAN: Sorry Chairman, if I could come back on the two replies: First of all in relation to  
23 people calling the Fire Service, okay yeah they have to send off the bill to their insurance  
24 company, but their premiums are going to go up then. So I did hear what you said at the end  
25 Michael that each case will be dealt with fairly. As long as that is the case. In some cases fire  
26 brigades are called when there wasn't a necessity to call them. I am not talking about genuine  
27 cases where they're needed, but there have been cases where somebody takes an initiative and  
28 maybe it wasn't necessary. Once there is flexibility, I would happy enough that that would be  
29 the situation there.

30  
31 Just in regard to the question of bills for commercial users, this is another farcical part of Irish  
32 Water and its operations that they're asking us, as a Local Authority, to collect the money, send  
33 out the bills, collect the money, but we are supposed to be using our own staff to do it? And we  
34 are already understaffed. Then they don't tell us what the collection rate is afterwards, so we

1 don't get any feedback on it. And in the meantime, the ordinary honest to God commercial user,  
2 small business person, shop keeper, whatever the case might be, depending on what part of the  
3 county they're in, they're going to be landed now shortly with a bill for maybe a whole year's  
4 supply. Now if any of us got a bill for our electricity once a year, rather than a couple of times in  
5 the year, we would find it difficult. And when businesses are struggling at this time of the year  
6 when they've got a lot of financial commitments, it's really wrong that they're expected to pay  
7 up.

8  
9 Now again Lorraine said it very quietly, but I did hear what she said, and I think the message  
10 should go out loud and clear to commercial users who are presented with a bill having waited for  
11 a long time to get it, that they'll be treated sympathetically I think is what you said or words to  
12 that effect, and that some arrangement can be made if necessary. I think some people are going  
13 to need a bit of time to pay this.

14  
15 The other thing that might be looked into in the future is estimated bills based on previous usage,  
16 but that may not be possible, I am not sure. I just think it's a sad state of affairs and these people  
17 have been paying commercial water charges for many years now, depending on where they are  
18 in the county, they are being really put in a very bad position at the moment.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

20 Cllr BRADY: Just two points coming out of the responses there, one just in relation to the  
21 manning levels on fire tenders and that, and this is built into the Keeping Community Safe  
22 document, where each Local Authority has to have a vote in terms of the -- this proposal or this  
23 section within the Keeping the Community Safe and I think the CEO at one point said there  
24 would be a proposal coming before this Council at some point.

25  
26 And look, I heard the response there, that there is no provision for any reduction in payroll or  
27 staffing levels, so I am hoping the proposal coming from the CEO will be that the manning  
28 levels on each appliance will be kept at six, as opposed to what Keeping Community Safe is  
29 talking about, reducing it down to four. Hopefully that will be and maybe you might be able to  
30 give us an update when that proposal will be coming to the Chamber.

31  
32 Just in relation to the response with regard Whitestown, it didn't really answer the question they  
33 asked, I know the Department have funded the clean-up. I don't think they've removed all items  
34 of illegally dumped material on site, there is still come being kept there, I think that's the

1 information I have that has been stated previously. Now I had heard that there are some  
2 negotiations going on that the case would be settled. If it is the case, I don't know, there would  
3 need to be some provision within the budget for the legal cost, or either the department has given  
4 an indication that they will also fund that aspect, the legal bills, because I think certainly they are  
5 going to be very substantial.

6  
7 So A, whether the Department have given an indication that they are going to provide the  
8 funding and cover the legal bill, or B, whether there is provision here or C, if there is any  
9 negotiations going on, or whether it is going to be a protracted legal battle into the future?

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr O'Neill.

11 Cllr O'NEILL: Yeah just one, Michael, on the questionnaire where you say that the Council are  
12 collecting on behalf of Irish Water. Who pays that bill? Who pays the staff to go out and  
13 collect? And also, the situation we have now in Blessington where Irish Water only a couple of  
14 weeks ago have admitted a local family their claim that when the valley was flooded in 1939,  
15 that as compensation that the people of Blessington and the surround of the lakeside, the  
16 surround of the lake, would not have to pay charges. And Irish Water have admitted now to -- in  
17 writing and apologised to the lady in question and they no longer are required to pay any water  
18 charges. So will we be continuing to send out bills to people in the Blessington and surround?

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Michael, do you want to come back in there?

20 DIRECTOR GEANEY: Regarding the reduction in the bring centres is basically a reduction in  
21 the mobile recycling.

22  
23 Emptying bins, there is money provided for in the budget to empty litter bins in all the areas.  
24 The figures are very similar to last year's figures.

25  
26 Regarding the Fire Service and the keeping community safe proposal, this will come via the SPC  
27 to the full Council sometime, I would say, in 2016.

28  
29 The Whitestown remedial works, now and I am -- I don't have any information on the legal costs  
30 and that, and that sort of a thing, but all I can say is that all remedial works, there is going to be  
31 no more removal of material from Whitestown. All the work that is to be done has been done.  
32 Part of the landfill was capped and that was sufficient to do that.

33  
34 Regarding who pays the staff that goes out to read the meters was a question I think that Cllr

1 O'Neill asked. Basically the staff are under a service level agreement with Irish Water, so you  
2 could say Irish Water are paying these staff. Now I am -- I don't have any detail on the question  
3 you were asking about the flooding of the valley and all that. I just don't have that information  
4 about at this point and time, but I am sure that circle can be squared. If they're not to get a bill,  
5 they won't get a bill, but I am not just able to say what the story is on that.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Michael.

7 Cllr BRADY: There is no information there from the Department whether they'll foot the legal  
8 bill or none of that has been discussed at this point?

9 DIRECTOR GEANEY: I certainly don't have any information on that.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll bring in Brian.

11 CE: Cathaoirleach, as Michael has said, we have completed the remediation scheme in  
12 accordance with the EPA guidelines for dealing with unauthorised landfills. The owner of the  
13 lands is not happy. And has taken court proceedings against us in that regard. We are currently  
14 filing our defence to fight those vigorously. So at this early stage, it's -- we have been --  
15 recouped all our costs to date on Whitestown. We are now into a new area and wait and see if --  
16 I am hopeful that we will win the court case, very hopeful that we will win the court case, but  
17 that's exactly where we are at, at the moment, and it's imminent we have to file within the next  
18 fortnight, file our defences.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you, okay, so we move on to D and F.

20 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Division D deals with planning, economic development, and community  
21 cultural and social development. It has a estimated budget of expenditure of 10 million 316,193  
22 and income of 4 million 371,158. It was in division D, as I said, there is a number of things, it  
23 includes planning, economic development and community and social development. A couple of  
24 key areas in it, the planning income has been increased, the budget, due to activity. We have a  
25 reduction in income from the Department of Education, just that was money we would have been  
26 getting for assisting and securing sites for schools. We don't anticipate receiving or having  
27 activity in that area next year, so we won't receive the income.

28  
29 There is an increase in planning legal fees for enforcement, an increase in community and social  
30 development for the LCDC, and the PPN. As well, you will see there is a large increase for Site  
31 Cap and for Leader. Between them they're nearly 2 million, that's on both income and  
32 expenditure. As well as in the community and social development, we have a provision for the  
33 access programme, additional money for age friendly initiative and for TÚS ambassadors as well  
34 as for Ireland 2016, there is a total provision of 100,000 in there.

1  
2 In addition on the economic development side, I suppose two aspects, there is an additional  
3 provision of 175,000, and also we have included 250,000 for the rates incentive scheme. Which  
4 is a payment incentive scheme for our commercial rate payers.

5  
6 And then we also have -- we will take division F as well, which is recreational amenity. Sorry  
7 that's outlined in more detail on pages 87 and 88. But the estimated budget is 7 million 166,794  
8 with an income of 534,678. Main areas would be the parks and open spaces, there is an  
9 increased budget in there, including for the Bray/Greystones walk; there is an increase for Brittas  
10 Bay, public convenience refurbishment there; an additional 280,000 for the libraries between the  
11 book fund and for additional staff; and also there is an increase for Arklow and Wicklow  
12 swimming pools of 38,000, included in division F, as well as community grant fund of 250,000  
13 for 2016.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Tom, do you want to come in? Okay, Cllr Fox?

15 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. I suppose just two questions, the first is the rates incentive  
16 scheme. Obviously I would welcome a rates incentive scheme. I think it's a good idea. It would  
17 promote a more efficient way of collecting money and it would have benefits too if the right  
18 systems could be put in place for business owners to pay it, exactly the point that Cllr Behan  
19 made a few minutes ago, rather than getting large bills, if direct debits could be taken over the  
20 year, I think it would be a much more efficient type system.

21  
22 But just a question on it, is it going to be capped, because I see little point in giving rewards to  
23 some of the very large companies. I know, and I don't mean to pick on the ESB, but the ESB is  
24 quite a large rate payer here in the county, and I am not sure a rate incentive scheme would be  
25 specifically designed for somebody, or some company like that. So I would be in favour of  
26 capping the rates incentive scheme at a certain level, so we would catch most of the smaller  
27 businesses in this scheme.

28  
29 Secondly, on the economic development, I would like a breakdown perhaps of -- it's quite a large  
30 amount of money that we are giving towards economic development. I know you yourself,  
31 Chairman, promoted the Think Tank, and it was a very worthwhile project. But now it needs to  
32 take the next step on, and I would like maybe a breakdown of probably it comes to about  
33 350,000. I know it's listed down here as in D1, 10011, property management costs and service  
34 support costs. I don't know what that means. Maybe you could enlighten me on that Tom,



1 thanks.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

3 Cllr BRADY: Thanks Cathaoirleach, just on development management, code D, firstly can I  
4 just welcome the fact that the huge reduction that was going to be imposed on us there in terms  
5 of the loss of rates from the revaluation for the major utility companies, that's been kind of  
6 curtailed this year, but I think that will be implemented next year, and that would have seen a  
7 revaluation of between 20 and 40% to the major utility companies, of which I think the vast  
8 majority of them are returning a huge profit. That would have been a loss of 362,000. Now  
9 Lorraine has said we are going to get possibly 300,000 of that back, but there is still 62,000 that  
10 we are going to be down. At the same time our own retailers, commercial premises, and that,  
11 there is no revaluation there going on for them, and certainly no write down of between 20 and  
12 40%. In fact what we are talking about here due to the rates harmonisation, we are going to see a  
13 rates increase of 3% in Arklow, 3% in Wicklow Town, and a 2% rates increase in Bray as well,  
14 which is going to further impact on people.

15

16 Now the rates incentive scheme that we are talking about, it's a 5% reduction in the rates. But  
17 still, when you have a 3% rates increase in Arklow, a 3% in Wicklow Town, that's only a  
18 marginal, marginal saving. And that's if that business, retailer, etcetera, whatever, is in a  
19 position to be able to pay on time. And we know for a fact the vast majority of them can't. That  
20 leads me on to my next point. Just in terms of outstanding or non-collected commercial rates,  
21 and the figures that I got from Lorraine there, from 2010 up to 2014, there is a serious amount of  
22 money not collected in terms of commercial rates. 55.8 million euro of uncollected commercial  
23 rates within the county. These are your figures Lorraine? These are your figures. You can  
24 come back in and challenge me, but these are the figures that were circulated on foot of a written  
25 question that I put in. 2010, it's 8.6 million, 2011, 10.6, 12.1, 12.8, and 11.5. Those are the  
26 figures I have, they add up to the 55.8 million. Now the question coming out of that, and some  
27 of those are small little retailers, small businesses and that that are really struggling, now there is  
28 a chart on one of the first pages there that gives a breakdown as to how much or what kind of  
29 rates, different sized businesses or premises or whatever are charged. I am wondering as to  
30 whether that could be broken down, those figures broken down to show what size units or how  
31 big a business is, and how much they actually owe, because I have a real concern that there is  
32 big, big businesses here, profitable businesses within the county and they're not paying their fair  
33 share in their commercial rates. We were supposed to have a Revenue Collection Unit set up  
34 here in the county a number of years ago and it was sold to the members here, some

1 unfortunately bought it, that with the reduction in the opening hours of the Motor Tax Office in  
2 Blessington, that we would have a revenue collection service here set up in the county to collect  
3 some of this. Now myself and my colleagues voted against that. And we were proven right to  
4 do so, because not only have we a reduced service in the Motor Taxation Office in Blessington,  
5 we don't have a Revenue Collection Unit set up here within the county to collect some of that  
6 money. So maybe if we could get a breakdown, I don't expect it here and now, but it would be  
7 useful to see what size businesses are not paying their way here within the county.

8  
9 Just another couple of points here and just in terms of tourism and tourism promotion, it's  
10 unfortunate that there is no proposal to increase the allocation of money towards Wicklow  
11 Tourism. As a board member, I don't know whether I should declare an interest here or a  
12 conflict of interests or whatever, but...

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: For people on boards, as a result of being on the Council, it doesn't  
14 require any...

15 Cllr BRADY: I am going to wear that hat. They do Trojan work and I think everyone is in  
16 agreement that it's one of the biggest areas that we still have huge potential to tap into, and I  
17 think if we are not out there selling our county, nationally and internationally, which Wicklow  
18 Tourism does, they do tremendous work there, and to have no increase there whatsoever, I don't  
19 think that is justified. So certainly I think that should be looked at. There is a lot of very, very  
20 proactive progressive measures. They're there talking about what could be brought forward if  
21 there was an increase there. I would strongly, strongly suggest that that is looked at and changes  
22 are made to that.

23  
24 I think that's it for now Cathaoirleach.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Vance.

26 Cllr VANCE: Chairman just to questions in regard to the swimming pools. And the cost to the  
27 Council of supplementing the income for the swimming pools. Could I get the figure for that,  
28 both for Wicklow and Arklow? I presume, well my knowledge is that Bray and Greystones are  
29 fine, but I think there is a significant, or there must be a significant amount of money there I  
30 think over 300,000 euros, that is going into these two pools, I just wonder what is the plans; in  
31 any type of business that if you are going to have a huge loss or certainly a grant of that type of  
32 magnitude going into business, that all right in a short period of time, it's acceptable enough and  
33 I don't have a problem with that, but I just want to know what the long-term plans are in regard  
34 to dealing with this? You know, what are the officials planning on doing, dealing with this

1 particular problem? Because it's something -- that it's a subsidy that really is very, very  
2 significant. And I just feel that I said on record a number of years ago when I said that it was  
3 impossible for two pools within the short space of time, with a low population base, to operate at  
4 a profit or a break even level; and that's proven to be the case. But I just wonder what the  
5 situation is? I am not asking for pools to be closed down or anything like that. I am prepared to  
6 support the budget that pumps money in the shorter term, but I just wonder what the long-term  
7 process is and what the officials intend to do about it?

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

9 Cllr MITCHELL: Just in terms of the rates, it's my understanding that the rates over most of the  
10 county, the county area, they have reduced this year and I would just like to know how much is  
11 that reduction and which areas does it apply to, thank you?

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

13 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Just a few questions. Just on the utility companies, in  
14 light of the -- all the publicity around it and what's happening and what's not happening, can we  
15 just get an overview on the rates area of what -- how we are based on what's going on. Has  
16 something happened this year and is something different going to happen next year? I would  
17 just like clarity on that.

18  
19 Also Cllr Brady raised Wicklow Tourism, I would like to know what is the amount of funding  
20 we have allocated in here for Wicklow Tourism? I know they put in a request for increased  
21 funding because the record will show that over the last four or five years, their funding has been  
22 on a downward curve quite steeply and I know this year they've looked for that to be built up  
23 again. So I would like to know what the figure is before we debate it any further.

24  
25 Also can I get some kind of idea on category D0603, social inclusion. There is over 2 million in  
26 there. I would like to get an understanding of how that's going to be spent and what's that about.  
27 And then there is a figure in under D0701 of 25,000 classified unfinished housing estates, it  
28 seems a small amount of money, I wonder what that's about. And also then D0905, economic  
29 development promotion, that's up quite significantly. What is our plan? What is the rationale  
30 behind that? I would like to get an understanding of where we are going with some of the stuff.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Murphy.

32 Cllr MURPHY: Just one or two things that other Councillors have highlighted and I wish to  
33 highlight it as well, as I sit on two of the boards and one of them is the tourist board and I know  
34 that a subcommittee was formed to do a survey. They were given six months, they came back

1 with the survey in three months. Very, very in-depth survey and very effective towards all the  
2 county and further than that as well. But as Cllr Fortune has stated, the budget has been sliding,  
3 and when this survey was presented to the full board, I mean it has to come to an increase in  
4 budget for to do any of the work. I know it's a five-year plan. But as you know, you have to  
5 take small steps first, but then a bigger picture will be formed and I think it's vital, vital for all  
6 our towns and villages that this is seriously looked at today.

7  
8 And also I sit on the maritime business committee, which have been very -- I have been very  
9 educated very quickly, to realise that our marine tourism and business can have huge potential in  
10 our ports and in our towns across the county. And I think that's something that there is a good  
11 team of people on board that business development committee. But I think we, as county  
12 members, need to be fully supportive of it. And we -- to know more about it as well.

13  
14 I would also like to ask about social inclusion budget as Cllr Fortune has also said, and going  
15 back just lastly on the swimming pools, I am speaking for myself, as from Arklow, and I know  
16 that Arklow is -- the pool is not in great shape at the moment. But as other Council members  
17 from Arklow said, it will be over my dead body before that's closed. We will fight tooth and  
18 nail. But I think we need to look at it separately and I think we do need to look at it at a  
19 Municipal area as well. Thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

21 Cllr SNELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach, economic development and promotion is covered, so it  
22 social inclusion, so there is no need to go into them. Just in regards to the building control  
23 inspection costs, they're down basically 50%. Yet we are factoring in an increase in enforcement  
24 costs in the building control. Just to get a run down on that. Also in this is -- I know Lorraine  
25 you said when we had our workshops and that that the cost of legal cases is implemented in the  
26 figures here. I was hoping to get an overall figure on legal expenses throughout all sectors, not  
27 just development management right across the spectrum of all the services we provide. The  
28 other thing would be on property management, and the Property Asset Register, where we were  
29 mapping all of our own Local Authority land. That started I think in 2014, early 2015. Is there  
30 some sort of a timescale on when that will be finished? Because I assume there will be savings  
31 on that then come next year, because it's the one thing God's not making any more of is land. So  
32 once we have it mapped, it's mapped. So therefore we will be looking for that money to be  
33 recircled or regenerated in the budget next year.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

1 Cllr FITZGERALD: Just -- I won't go back too much over ground there, but I just want to focus  
2 on the Arklow swimming pool which concerns me. And I have no doubt that swimming pool is  
3 quite effectively managed, but I do accept that there is a need to have a look, because I see the  
4 figure we have in for this year is 160,000 I think for supporting the Arklow swimming pool and  
5 that's against the background where we had a swimming pool in the late 50s, and we then had a  
6 swimming -- the swimming pool was -- there was a lot of people collected for to have that  
7 swimming pool put in place, including former Councillor Nicky Kelly, and it does need a  
8 reappraisal of the operations there, but I can tell you it won't be over my dead body, I won't say  
9 that, but I think there would be huge anger in the Arklow area if there was any decision. But I  
10 know it won't be made to interfere with that swimming pool. It does need to be looked at  
11 because 3,000 a week is a fair figure to subsidise a swimming pool by every week. But maybe  
12 there is issues. The big concern there is as well, the huge issue there is that the dry centre and  
13 the wet centre are separated, and there is a cost in the dry centre, maybe there is not a lot of  
14 money coming in there, but certainly it needs to be looked at.

15  
16 Just on another front, the rates incentive scheme, just Cllr Brady mentioned figures there of  
17 uncollected rates which seems to be an astounding figure, 55.8 million, not collected over the  
18 last seven years. I think the collection rate at the moment is about 69%. Striving to get that to  
19 73% this year. And it would be interesting to note that those who can afford to pay, are they  
20 paying? Or is it people that can't pay, haven't the ability to pay? But the rent incentive scheme  
21 with the rate in Arklow going up -- in the Arklow area going up 2.9%, against that backdrop  
22 people in the rural areas aren't affected because they were paying a much higher figure than the  
23 town centre. Look it, the conditions on that incentive as well is people have to clear their  
24 arrears, have to pay either by a date in August or set up standing orders or whatever. I hope it  
25 has an effect. I hope it helps people, 5% minus 2.9 is 2.1%, but I don't know how it will be  
26 greeted to be quite honest about it. You have to try something. I know it has been tried in five  
27 or six counties and it's worked in some counties. In others it hadn't. The reason the collection  
28 rate is down, particularly in the old Arklow Town area is because over six or seven years we  
29 have went through a torrid time there, and with businesses closing, with 50 premises closed on  
30 the main street. But certainly our rate collection figure needs to be got up because it's not right  
31 that if the figure is correct and we have no doubt that Cllr Brady is quoting that figure of 55.8  
32 million, that's a lot of money owed by people. I see you shaking your head Lorraine, so I am  
33 looking for clarification on that figure. Also could you just tell me, I am trying to search here,  
34 what is the annual figure that we collect in on commercial rates, just to -- I can't find it here, and

1 could you just clarify the background to that 55, is that a roll over figure?

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. Cllr Winters.

3 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I have looked through the figures that Lorraine has sent  
4 us in the post and the email, which was the summary of the draft budget, and it's the point that  
5 Cllr Snell had also mentioned and it's the legal fees. Because they're never actually mentioned in  
6 our budget. I know they're somewhere in there in service support costs, so we have a figure that  
7 Lorraine sent us at the weekend, which is consultancy, basically it's a million pounds in  
8 consultancy fees broken down by the different categories and obviously some of them are for  
9 designs of structures or whatever, with engineers and all the rest of it. But when we decide on  
10 our legal fees and there is obviously an enforcement figure in there, and there is areas where we  
11 actually have to provide legal services to fulfil our role as a Council, but then I look at last  
12 week's North Wicklow Times, and the article in relation to Deirdre De Burca and the amount of  
13 money that we spent. And I wonder who made that decision? How much did that cost us?  
14 Where was it in the budget? Where is it in this year's budget? How much is that bill? And why  
15 was that decision taken, I mean did it go to the Corporate Policy Group or who made that  
16 decision? And how can we as Councillors prevent decisions being made to spend money on  
17 things that have no benefit to the residents and the rate payers of Co Wicklow? Thanks.

18 Cllr BRADY: I had put in a written question on that specific item, the legal costs. We haven't  
19 got the figures on it yet, I was going to come in later on it so.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so Tom.

21 DIRECTOR MURPHY: Thanks Cathaoirleach. On the first question in relation to the budget  
22 for economic development, during the debate on the Local Property Tax, the members here made  
23 it abundantly clear that if this was going to go through, and if there was going to be no discount,  
24 that there was a requirement that the provision for economic development would be ring-fenced.  
25 There are a number of emerging actions flowing from the Co. Wicklow Economic Think Tank.  
26 And these include the development of a new brand, the design of a new web portal, the  
27 procuring of consultants for the -- sorry, the compiling of information necessary for doing  
28 business in the county, the carrying out of survey of Broadband speeds, the development of town  
29 teams, the preparation of recommendations in relation to rates incentive schemes, the  
30 development of strategies in relation to tourism, and a number of other actions. And some of  
31 these will be crossing over with the actions and objectives in the Local Economic and  
32 Community Plan, which is currently being developed. So a similar provision has been made in  
33 the budget this year of 200,000.

34

1 In relation to Wicklow County Tourism, I would like to endorse the remarks of the members in  
2 relation to the work of Wicklow County Tourism. It's a very, very effective committee that  
3 works very hard. Again during the debate on the Local Property Tax, the members again  
4 emphasised the importance of ensuring that there was adequate provision made for tourism  
5 initiatives in the budget. So the Chair of the Wicklow County Tourism has submitted a number  
6 of projects which he would like to see advanced. This has been endorsed by the Board of the  
7 Committee. And so he has made a very compelling case, and I think the Cathaoirleach has -- or  
8 the Head of Finance has managed to find a few extra bob for it this year, I think she has  
9 increased the provision by 20,000.

10  
11 In relation to the maritime issue, that Cllr Murphy raised there, that actually is one of the actions  
12 that has flowed from the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank that we would focus in on the  
13 maritime business and the maritime industry. So arising from that, the County Wicklow  
14 Maritime Business Development Group has been set up and the group is engaged with  
15 developing a harbour stroke maritime strategy for the county and with developing of proposals  
16 for the development of ports within the county. So shortly it's hoped that we would get a  
17 consultant to prepare a baseline assessment of our four harbours, and that we would also -- there  
18 would also be a call for proposals from Enterprise Ireland for feasibility studies for future  
19 strategic sectorally focused and regionally based projects such as this. There is a lot of work  
20 being done under the auspices of the Wicklow Economic Think Tank and certainly the maritime  
21 is a priority and has been identified as a priority.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Michael do you want to deal with Site Cap and Leader.

23 DIRECTOR NICHOLSON: First of all in relation to the two pools, yes we subsidise Arklow  
24 and Wicklow pools. We subsidise Arklow by 160 grand and Wicklow on 90 grand, which is 250  
25 per annum. And you are right, we can't continue to do that, so what we are doing is we are going  
26 out early in the New Year for consultancies to examine the operation of both pools from our  
27 operational point of view and from an income maximisation point of view, because we can't  
28 continue to justify paying -- it's actually lost subsidisation as opposed to grant. We subsidise the  
29 loss of both facilities every month and we can't continue to do that. So we are going to see what  
30 the consultants come up with. They may recommend a different type of methodology for the  
31 two pools, we will wait and see.

32  
33 With regard to social inclusion, the budget for social inclusion is 972,584, just less than a  
34 million, under D0603. It's to run Bray area partnership and County Wicklow partnership. That's

1 an annual amount. That's a contra item. We pay that and get it back from the Department, so it  
2 doesn't cost us anything.

3  
4 And then I think Cllr Murphy you were asking about disability access and you will be pleased to  
5 know for the first time we have a separate code of 40,000 provided next year specifically for  
6 disability access in surveys, etcetera, so you will be pleased to hear that. That's it thank you  
7 Chairman.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: You don't hear that too often. And by the way congratulations to you and  
9 your staff for the Pride of Place awards, that was fantastic to win those. Great, okay, we will  
10 move on to the last two. Sorry, I didn't see any lights on, Cllr Murphy.

11 Cllr MURPHY: I would just like to sincerely thank Lorraine and Michael and the executive for  
12 that, because disability is not just disability sector, it's the whole load of everything that is in this  
13 book. Disability is across the whole board. But with that, it is a huge start, and I would say  
14 watch this space, because every year, it will be increased! Thank you.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Ruttle.

16 Cllr RUTTLE: You are moving very fast there.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Move at pace. Stay awake.

18 Cllr RUTTLE: Just on the libraries, when you go through the divisions of, division F and you  
19 look at the first few pages, you can see how much the library service does for us in Wicklow, not  
20 just in area books but in all the other technology, flagship operations, Wi-Fi access, it's good to  
21 see the extra allocation as well. I am checking to make sure the extra book fund is not just for  
22 the stocking of the Arklow, but goes right across the board where we had staff difficulties at  
23 Blessington and Greystones, etcetera. That's covered in that I presume?

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: So Brendan is giving you a nod there from the back.

25 Cllr RUTTLE: That's all right.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: It is Brendan, I know you may not recognise him!

27 Cllr RUTTLE: That's not the moustache he historically has! He gives excellent leadership in  
28 the library service as well and has done an awful lot. I am happy that things are moving on. If  
29 we can resolve the staffing issues, get the extra books and get the Arklow library going, but  
30 again congratulations to all involved. All levels in the library service, they're providing a  
31 fantastic service right across our county, and deserve great praise for it.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Brady.

33 Cllr BRADY: Just back to the issue there of commercial rates and I know Lorraine was nodding  
34 her head there when I was reading out the figures, I don't think it was clear from the response I



1 got initially to the question. Now there may be...

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: No problem, I'll let Des answer his and then let Lorraine...

3 Cllr BRADY: Okay.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Des, do you want to come in with a couple of questions?

5 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: I would like to ask the Councillors for something some questions of the  
6 planning directorate. We felt left out there. Just on the unfinished estates, there was 5,000 per  
7 Municipal District put in to cover those estates where there was no bond, sometimes Bord  
8 Pleanala don't put a bond condition, and just try and finish off the estates and get them taken in  
9 charge.

10

11 The other one, Cllr Snell asked about building control, why it went down, one of the main  
12 reasons there is the senior engineer who has building control in his portfolio has been mainly  
13 charged with the flood scheme in Bray, so there is a saving there and in between enforcement  
14 and inspections, there is -- the admin costs there have been spread across the two of them rather  
15 than one. That explains that.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Behan, you just wanted to come in quickly.

17 Cllr BEHAN: Just before Des leaves the chair there if I could, we got communication there from  
18 the Oireachtas in the last few days that there is some proposal coming that will allow Councillors  
19 to make representations, written representations on planning files without paying the planning  
20 fee, and I am wondering if the Council executive have heard anything about this possibly  
21 legislation. But connected with that, could I just ask another question, when the person who is in  
22 charge of the lobbying body, whatever it is under the ombudsman was here, she said that if a  
23 private person comes to a Councillor asking them to make representations on their behalf, and if  
24 it involves property greater than one acre, even if it's for a family home, on a family plot of land,  
25 that the applicant would have to register as a lobbyist. At the same time everybody who comes  
26 to Councillors looking to make representations are now being asked to sign a data protection  
27 form as well. And it would appear to me that if you sign a data protection form, you are  
28 effectively also saying that in a lot of cases you are supposed to be now declaring yourself as a  
29 lobbyist. Now it's -- I think it's very unfair on the small person in this county, you know the big  
30 lobbyists in Dublin probably have no problem registering. But for people who need a hand with  
31 the planning process at a local level, it's putting them in a very, very awkward position, and it's  
32 putting us I think in a major difficult situation as well. So there is a financial element to it to the  
33 extent that we could put in written representations at the moment and pay the 20 euro fee. There  
34 is nothing stopping us doing that I presume. But again I think that mitigates against our

1 effectiveness if we have to do that in every particular planning case. I would be interested to  
2 know that.

3  
4 The final point I would ask is this: Is there a policy in this organisation that planners are  
5 supposed to talk to us if we ask to speak to them about individual planning applications? If we  
6 go to the trouble or an applicant goes to the trouble of signing a forma data protection form,  
7 allowing us as Councillors to make representations, and we ring up and ask to speak to a planner,  
8 or meet a planner, are we entitled to speak to that planner, having gone through that whole  
9 process, or are we not? What is a reasonable period of time that we should wait before we could  
10 get to speak to a planner about a particular planning application. Because I am finding severe  
11 difficulty trying to get to speak to planners in my area, and I am wondering is it something I am  
12 not doing correctly or is there a policy? Because we have gone through the hoops, we have got  
13 the forms signed and then we don't seem to be able to get to the person who would be making  
14 the recommendation, so while Des is here, perhaps he might clarify as the Director what is his  
15 policy on that matter as well.

16 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Yeah, first of all I haven't heard of the impending legislation. There is a  
17 planning bill going out, but it was mainly stuff on Mahon, the Planning Regulator and the likes.  
18 I think the problem that was seen before was that people would just go to their reps instead of  
19 paying the 20 quid to make a rep reckon - or a submission on planning and that was the difficulty  
20 before. That's why that wasn't done, but I actually haven't heard Councillor.

21  
22 On the property greater than one acre, I think when Cheri Bro talked here, she did mention that  
23 the planning application was the same as for zoning. Some directors on the land use and  
24 transportation economy went and met with her and got clarity on this. The only planning  
25 applications are ones where there would be a question of policy being involved, and that's been  
26 broadly interpreted to be a material contravention and they're meant to be changing their advice  
27 on the website. So someone coming to you about their planning permission that they're entitled  
28 to get in any case, one thing, if they're looking for something that's on unzoned land or on the  
29 edge of town, it would mean material contravention, that would be in the realm of lobby. That's  
30 my understanding.

31  
32 On planners, obviously there is no entitlement to go to planners, but within reason most planners  
33 talk to Councillors. Obviously if someone was ringing them day and night and they have to get  
34 their work done, but I didn't understand there was a problem, but if you maybe let me know what

1 it is, I'll have a chat.

2 Cllr BEHAN: So when somebody signs a data protection form giving us the right to represent  
3 them, you are saying that we are not necessarily entitled to speak to a planner to represent them.

4 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: The reason you sign the data protection form isn't what you say, it's  
5 what we say back to you, because there could be personal information involved. You can say  
6 what you like to us. It's what we say back to you it is the problem. It doesn't -- I am just talking  
7 practically here.

8 Cllr BEHAN: I want to be practical too, I regret having to bring it up here.

9 DIRECTOR O'BRIEN: Have a chat with me and we will sort it out.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Des, Lorraine, could you ask the 50 million euro question?

11 Cllr BRADY: 55.

12 DIRECTOR LYNCH: If I had 55 million outstanding in rates, I reckon I wouldn't be in a job  
13 right now! I can see where you came one the figure, at the end of every year, it's 11 million and  
14 it rolls over and you collect your arrears from the previous year and it rolls over. So at the end of  
15 2014, we would have had an outstanding balance of 11 and a half million in commercial rates,  
16 which is still higher than we wanted it to be. We have a collection rate at the end of 2014 of  
17 69%. That was up on the 64% we had in 2013. And the target for this year is to bring it up to  
18 73%. So we are improving our percentage collection. Part of the reason I suppose why it has  
19 been poor is number one, look any businesses, they're all going and have gone through the  
20 recession and it's been difficult trying to collect the money and local authorities aren't always at  
21 the top of the payments list when it comes to handing out cheques. But part of it then is also  
22 down to ourselves in terms of having the resources and we have lost about three or four  
23 collectors between retirement and other reasons for the last -- over the last number of years.  
24 Now we have looked for sanction and received sanction to fill two of those posts, that will  
25 improve our percentage collection and our work on the collection area for 2016.

26

27 In addition in terms of the debt management side of it, we were able to avail of the Motor Tax  
28 staff when we put them into revenue collection at the time, but again we have lost other staff in  
29 the meantime, but they have been able to keep the ship moving and keep our collection coming  
30 in. But we are also taking part in a debt management project to look at what way we do collect,  
31 what systems we have, what procedures we have, and we are starting that in December, well  
32 January probably of 2016, and we will be kind of making changes obviously and improvements,  
33 which will in turn increase our percentage collection and bring us back to where we have been  
34 and we have been up in collecting percentages of 92 and 93% in previous years and that's where

1 we hope to go back. In terms of breakdown of the arrears, I don't have it with me John, I'll get it,  
2 but I don't have it with me today. I can get that information.

3  
4 In terms of the rates incentive scheme, the proposal, I suppose there was an initial proposal that  
5 it would be a 5% grant capped at 250 euro for everybody who had a rates bill of 10,000 or less as  
6 one option. Or else 5% capped at 250 for all rate payers. Looking around the country, there is  
7 different ways of approaching that and different local authorities have different schemes. The  
8 idea would be that people would sign up to direct debit and pay it throughout the year. You  
9 could look at introducing an option that if they pay in full by the end of July, that they wouldn't  
10 have to sign up to direct debit. That might suit other people. To be fair to everybody, we have  
11 to -- it will apply, the 5% would apply to the rates bill for 2016. It wouldn't apply to arrears and  
12 arrears would have to be cleared as well.

13  
14 The other I suppose criteria around it is that you could exclude the utilities from it, you could  
15 apply it to everybody excluding the utilities. You could, some local authorities have done it, but  
16 for the sake of 250, I don't think so, ESB will take me to court on it. The rates must be paid in  
17 full. I suppose what it will boil down to 5% to a max of 250 and whether it will apply to those  
18 with a bill of 10,000 or less, it will be 90% of our rates base or apply to everybody, it would  
19 apply to 100% of the rates base. If you are costing it out, it would - if everybody who could  
20 avail of it availed of it, 10,000 or less, it would cost 450,000 and not everybody is going to avail  
21 of it. If you were giving it to everybody but still capped at the 250, it would cost 565,000, but  
22 again you would estimate half of that would be the people who would avail of it.

23  
24 But that's something I suppose is for the decision of the members, whether decision today or  
25 CPG, I'll leave that to the members.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

27 Cllr BRADY: The point I made at the outside, the 55.8 million was over the course, since 2010  
28 up to 2014, it wasn't just for one year. 2010 for example was 8.6 million, and there is others in  
29 between...

30 DIRECTOR LYNCH: At the end of any one year for the last three or four years, is about 11, 12  
31 million. What you don't collect by the end of the year, you collect in the first few months of the  
32 next year, and then -- it's not that 55 million are owed to the Council.

33 Cllr BRADY: So the figures are not correct.

34 DIRECTOR LYNCH: They are correct. The figures I sent out said the commercial rates

1 outstanding at the 31st December of 2010 was 8 million. Of 2011 was ten million. That's the  
2 figures outstanding at the end of every year and it's accumulative.

3 Cllr BRADY: I suppose the question then at this point and time, what is the outstanding figure  
4 since 2010, I know you have collected?

5 DIRECTOR LYNCH: 11.5 million at the end of 2014.

6 Cllr BRADY: For the previous four years?

7 DIRECTOR LYNCH: That's the cumulative outstanding rates figures at the end of 2015.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

9 Cllr MITCHELL: What's the reduction of rates over the county and what areas does that apply  
10 to?

11 DIRECTOR LYNCH: The reduction in rates across -- for the county is just under 2%, and  
12 applies to about 55% of the rates base.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: 55% of the rate base in the county.

14 Cllr MITCHELL: The rates are reduced by 2%, I would like to welcome that and I think it's  
15 important. Thank you.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so the last two areas are G and H.

17 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Division...

18 Cllr WINTERS: Cathaoirleach, the answer about the legal fees, because they don't come into  
19 any category as such, I mean you can do it at the end.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will do it at the end if that's okay.

21 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Division G deals with agriculture, education, health and welfare. So it's  
22 a mixed bag of things. It's a budget of 1 million 480,340 and an income of 691,240 and it's  
23 broken down in further detail on pages 89, 90 and 91. Two things that are in there really or a  
24 couple of things: One it includes for 2016 the take on of Wicklow Harbour, which is an income  
25 of 200,000 and an expenditure of 200,000. It also, you will see the reduction of the higher  
26 education grants is tapered off and moved to Susie. We have a reduction in the income and  
27 expenditure there.

28  
29 And also in division G is the control of horses, there is a reduction in the net of that of 90,000.  
30 Miscellaneous is detailed on pages 92 to 94. It has an estimated budget of 12 million 638,067  
31 and income of 6 million 84,673 P miscellaneous, as the name stands, deals with a lot of  
32 miscellaneous. It deals with the machinery yard, the rates, Register of Electors, coroners, it deals  
33 with the civic leadership and local representation, yourselves, and Motor Taxation. I suppose  
34 three main things in that, we would budget for investment income in there, but our investment

1 income, our rates have gone through the floor basically, so we have had to reduce our income  
2 there by 140,000. On the flip side we got an increased dividend from IPB. We are expecting the  
3 same next year and that's an increase of 142 and also included in this distribution is the 480,000  
4 for the Municipal Districts for the discretionary fund to be spent on public infrastructure to be  
5 facilitated through the LPT.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Mitchell.

7 Cllr MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I just want to speak about the operation of and  
8 maintenance of piers and harbours. At the time when this Council took over the operation of -  
9 can you hear me? At the time took over the operation of Arklow Harbour, we were told that this  
10 would operate on an even keel, it wouldn't need subsidy. Now I voted against the taking over of  
11 the harbour because I don't think - this Council since 1895 made a complete shambles of  
12 Greystones Harbour, as a result we had to go to a private sector and highly controversial solution  
13 for the 120 years of neglect which the Council made of it. And I don't really see how this  
14 Council is - has the funding and capability of managing serious infrastructure things like  
15 harbours, which need significant amounts of money and subsidy. And now I see that this year  
16 we have a deficit of 200,000 on the operation of harbours which I assume relates to Arklow  
17 Harbour. And it certainly seems that what I was told when we were taking it over was not  
18 correct. This is another example of Central Government, of all sorts of different hues instructing  
19 councils to take over major deficit items. 200,000 takes a lot of property tax to pay. So I have a  
20 concern about it. Now we also have talk that we might take over Wicklow Harbour and I would  
21 be concerned as well that while we are told, as we were told in Arklow, that it would operate on  
22 an even keel, that we would also be in for a substantial costs in relation to that without any  
23 subsidy from the national Government to take over this new cost. And having seen what a  
24 shambles the Council made for as I say 120 years of Greystones Harbour, it does concern me  
25 that we are having to spend so much taking over other harbours when nothing was being spent  
26 on Greystones and I think Bray is also in a fairly similar situation, where the harbour is pretty  
27 wrecked after 120 years of Council ownership. I would just like to know how certain are we that  
28 we are going to limit the cost to this amount, and what are the proposals to try and balance the  
29 costs under this item, thank you.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

31 Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, you might want to leave for this part because I want to raise a question  
32 about the Barracuda.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: No problem as all. Thanks Chairman.

34 Cllr BEHAN: We are at the point now we are talking about income and expenditure under

1 general headings and to me this looks like the most relevant point of the meeting, to raise the  
2 whole question of the possible loss of a huge amount of income as - because of decisions made  
3 by the executive here with regard to the Barracuda. Now we recently received the latest legal  
4 advice on that situation. And I have to say in relation to my own queries, they weren't answered  
5 exactly as I had put them. There was a general answer given, which I am not happy about at all.  
6 Now, I think that there is something in the paper today that somebody has said that the order has  
7 not been completed yet in court and that there is still time for something to be done about this  
8 from the point of view of the taxpayers of this county and we are talking about finance here  
9 today. And I want to ask directly now of the Chief Executive where are we now as a Council  
10 with that particular matter? And I want to say to the Councillors that I do think the question of  
11 referring this to the Attorney General is a very relevant thing to consider now because the  
12 independent legal advisor is more or less saying well she didn't really give an opinion on  
13 whether we could or couldn't or should or shouldn't, but she did say it's a matter for the Attorney  
14 General. And I think at the end of the day, the Attorney General is the custodian for all of the  
15 people. Some people might say we should appeal it. And that's it. And take our chances. I am  
16 not necessarily sure that we should appeal it, we might end up causing the Council more money  
17 by appealing it. I don't know. Certainly that's what Mr O'Brien said on a previous occasion, that  
18 there was something about specific performance that might leave us liable. Obviously I certainly  
19 don't want to cause any further cost to the taxpayer of this county or indeed to individual  
20 Councillors.

21  
22 So if nothing has been done to progress this or to its finality, I certainly would like to support I  
23 think - originally I think it was Cllr Fortune and he obviously can decide if he wants to propose it  
24 again here today with your permission Cathaoirleach, but I think this is the time now to ask the  
25 Attorney General to examine this from the very beginning and ensure that every single aspect of  
26 every question we have asked is answered once and for all, so that we can be sure that the people  
27 of the county are not being short-changed in any way by what has happened with regard to this  
28 matter. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

29 Cllr FORTUNE: I know Cllr Brady and Cllr Snell, can I just comment quickly on what Cllr  
30 Behan said, that proposal is sitting, ready to be put to the members, it was proposed by myself  
31 and seconded by Cllr Kavanagh, so that was back in September. And it's only sitting there  
32 because we decided we would wait until there was some more work done on it, so at this stage  
33 that proposal should be now put to the members as you suggest.

34 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Do...

1 Cllr SNELL: If you want to move on to other members and come back.

2 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

3 Cllr BRADY: There was a couple of other things, I'll come back to them on a later point. Just  
4 on the Barracuda, I agree with Cllr Behan, we should now refer it over to the Attorney General,  
5 but you know, there was a proposal put forward at the Municipal District in Bray which was I  
6 think the majority members, some went against it for different reasons, that it would be  
7 appealed, I think we should follow through on that as well. I stated at the meeting in Bray,  
8 because the officials now tell us that it wouldn't be prudent to go and spend taxpayers money  
9 down the legal route, I think some of the discussions we have had here around the table, around  
10 the management taking cases to the Supreme Court again Deirdre De Burca, we have cases  
11 where the management of the Council fought the families of the fire fighters that lost their lives,  
12 costing thousands upon thousands of taxpayers money and because now the officials don't think  
13 it's a good idea to spend any more taxpayers money down the legal route. I think if the members  
14 want to go down the legal route we should go that route. Because the officials who don't come  
15 back and ask us in the majority of cases if we should go down the legal route because they're  
16 saying it's not prudent now, I don't think that's enough of a reason not to go down that road. I  
17 think we should use the two tracks, appeal it as was proposed by Cllr Matthews at the Municipal  
18 District in Bray, go down that route and also refer it over to the Attorney General, because I  
19 think it is -- it's too important an issue to allow go unchallenged and I think there is still a very,  
20 very narrow window of opportunity there that we need to get in and get it done immediately.  
21 Thanks Cathaoirleach.

22 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Thornhill.

23 Cllr THORNHILL: Thank you, I would just like to add my weight to Cllr Brady's words on this  
24 matter. This is a very important issue and there is an awful lot of people speaking about it,  
25 especially in Bray, and there is an awful lot of people like in years to come, you would be  
26 walking down the Esplanade and looking across at the Barracuda and saying how did this  
27 happen? Things like this has happened -- you know like the Town Hall, and it's in the public --  
28 it's in the public interest that they should be made aware of it, I think it's something that shouldn't  
29 be dismissed lightly and we should really look into the matter and as Cllr Brady said, maybe we  
30 should take a two track approach on this appealing it and the fact about the legal costs or  
31 whatever, an awful lot of things has been done about this Council, an awful lot of money has  
32 been spent on legal issues, but I think this Barracuda issue is very important and should not be  
33 dismissed lightly. Thank you.

34 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman, certainly I know there was a commitment given to have a



1 meeting once the legal opinion had been received, which it now has. And I think before I could  
2 agree personally to appealing anything, I would have to know the financial implications, because  
3 ultimately this is about protecting public money and the disposal of public lands. But if, for  
4 example, we run into a case like Lisadell House where something was appealed and actually it  
5 ended up costing more money, you could have bought Lisadell House with what money it  
6 actually cost, I would have to know what the financial implications -- I would certainly agree  
7 with Cllr Behan that we should seek some direction from the Attorney General. But at this  
8 stage, to suggest appealing it without knowing the financial implications, I think would be  
9 unwise. Thank you Chairman.

10 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor. I don't -- Cllr Vance, are you looking to speak  
11 there.

12 Cllr VANCE: Just briefly Chairman, I wouldn't be seeking any advice from the Attorney  
13 General that we have at the moment given the advice she has given in the past couple of months  
14 that have been absolutely disastrous. I mean legally I am not qualified to make a decision on this  
15 one way or the other, but I mean if we employ people to come up and examine files and various  
16 things like that, we have two choices, we accept what the recommendations and the information  
17 that's in there, and -- or we don't. Now I mean as far as I am concerned, the full examination, I  
18 don't like this one bit by the way in regard to it and when Barracuda and all was discussed, it was  
19 never discussed when I was on the Council in regard that this was a possibility that could  
20 happen, it was never even discussed. But it has happened, and legally it seems like it's within the  
21 remit of these people to go down the road that they're going down. And I read all the legal  
22 opinions on it and various things like that and I just don't know where people want to go now  
23 from now on. Do we accept that we employ the Senior Counsel? Do we accept the  
24 recommendation of that Senior Counsel? Or do we go down another route? I think it's  
25 absolutely crazy to be expending public money on something when you have got a  
26 recommendation and you have that from a Senior Counsel that's been employed by the Council  
27 in regard to this.

28  
29 There has been all sorts of stuff thrown around about missing agendas and various things like  
30 that, and the minutes that were there all along. All crazy stuff. But the fact of the matter is that  
31 the decision which I am not happy with, is seems to be a legal decision and it seems to be the  
32 proper legal position really on it. I don't know where Councillors expect to go on this, and as far  
33 as I am concerned, I think we just need to move on and accept that what it is, because really and  
34 truly, to go down the route of expending more public money on legal fees, and probably coming

1 out with the same, same thing, to me is just not on. And I would want to know exactly what the  
2 story is in regard to everything like that, before I would even dream of looking at - like what Cllr  
3 Fox says, a legal opinion on it, but my opinion at this particular stage is that we should be  
4 accepting the legal opinion as it is, as it stands and moving on.

5 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

6 Cllr MATTHEWS: Thanks Chairman, just to make a point there, it's the tenant who is trying to  
7 purchase the land who has gone down the legal route, so for the Council, we are coming back  
8 with a -- coming back on that legal route. We haven't taken a legal challenge against them and  
9 that's not what we are looking for. We are looking to revisit the order. They went down the  
10 legal route in terms of doing that. So that proposal was made by Bray Municipal District and it  
11 was sent down to Wicklow, so I am wondering do we have any update on how that's progressing  
12 at this stage? Thank you Chairman.

13 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to come in again Cllr Brady?

14 Cllr BRADY: There was a resolution there, Cathaoirleach, that once all the files came back  
15 from the Senior Counsel, that they would be made available to the members for inspection, so  
16 just wondering when that process might be availed of.

17 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Councillor. Do you want to come back in Cllr Fortune?

18 Cllr FORTUNE: Just to come back to what Cllr Behan raised. There is a proposal before the  
19 Council that we do refer it on to the Attorney General and that was passed. Or the proposal was  
20 seconded, it was only put on hold until various investigations were going to take place.

21 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: You say it wasn't passed.

22 Cllr FORTUNE: I said that already Chair. Are you ignoring what I am saying?

23 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: There is some questions that need to be answered. I am not  
24 ignoring you whatsoever.

25 Cllr FORTUNE: I think you are.

26 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: I am certainly not ignoring you, to be fair the director wants to say  
27 a few words.

28 Cllr FORTUNE: What about what I am saying, there is a proposal already before.

29 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: If you want to put the proposal to the meeting...

30 Cllr FORTUNE: I am talking and speaking to you and you are ignoring and talking to the Chief  
31 Executive.

32 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not ignoring you, do you want me to go down and hold your  
33 hand?

34 Cllr FORTUNE: Absolutely not, you are not my type!

1 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Neither are you mine! Far from it! I am going to ask the Director,  
2 I am asking the Director to give answers.

3 Cllr FORTUNE: The fact that you would prefer to be a comedian rather than Chair a meeting is  
4 interesting, I am intrigued on that fact. I have put something to you and you are ignoring it. If  
5 you want to be a comedian, that's your business, but it's not in the interests of the people of  
6 County Wicklow.

7 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: You can rewrite the proposal.

8 Cllr FORTUNE: It's there.

9 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: In the meantime...

10 Cllr FORTUNE: The proposal is there.

11 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: If you want to keep talking I'll go on. Could I ask the Director to  
12 come back in, there was a lot of questions asked.

13 CE: There was only a few questions asked, I think Cllr Fox hit the nail on the head, what was  
14 agreed here in this Chamber was that as soon as the legal advice was available to the members,  
15 the files were available to the members, that we would have a meeting -- it would be on an  
16 agenda for discussion at the Council meetings. That was what was agreed.

17  
18 Last week the members got the legal advice. We have not received clearance to have -- from  
19 third parties that the files are open for inspection, but we will take it that if we haven't heard back  
20 from those third parties this week, that the files will be available for the members to examine  
21 next week. The Notice of Motion that was passed by Bray Municipal District will be on the  
22 agenda for the meeting of the 7th of December, and I would have always thought that this -- that  
23 meeting would be the appropriate meeting to have a full discussion on the Barracuda to include  
24 all Notice of Motions.

25  
26 My memory is not great, because I was trying to cram in 91 million euro worth of expenditure in  
27 my head over the weekend. But I thought that the legal advice that we received, that the  
28 members received on two occasions from the counsel that was engaged for them, is quite clear.  
29 The members might have difficulty with it. But I can't recall what she did say about the  
30 Attorney General. What she did say about the -- a case to be made against the - appealing it, we  
31 would have to have solid grounds for appealing it anyway, because we have to get leave to  
32 appeal. So I thought all those issues would be better answered to be fair to the members, to have  
33 it on properly on an agenda for discussion rather than take it in the heat of a budget meeting,  
34 which it really hasn't been flagged to be discussed.

1  
2 I am certainly not hiding from any of the issues therein in case anyone would say that. Certainly  
3 not. The decisions were made. We have at pains pointed out every step of the direction, every  
4 bit of information is out there, next week members will have an opportunity if they so wish to  
5 examine the files. The County Council started out this process with their own legal advice, and  
6 for all intents and purposes, the two sets of legal advice that was given to the members come  
7 back the same way. I acknowledge that Councillors might have a view on it, but no-one has  
8 come back to me suggesting or to Lorraine, that we should raise queries with the legal advice,  
9 that in certain instances they weren't answered specifically. So I take it that the members have  
10 such queries or come back, I certainly don't wait to read the Wicklow Times to determine what  
11 questions I should ask -- further questions of the legal advisor to the members. If the members  
12 want further points to be put to her, I'll arrange to have them in time for consideration before the  
13 meeting on the 7th of December.

14 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune there.

15 Cllr FORTUNE: Just a letter we got from Mrs Gallagher in connection with the barrister  
16 "Having read the files it says under point 8 that Councillors Fortune and Kavanagh suggest the  
17 advice of the Attorney General be ...(Reading)... exclusively a matter for her".

18 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: I am just taking two more speakers there now. Cllr Winters.

19 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I think that the points that have been raised by the  
20 members are valid. But actually the County Manager, Chief Executive, whatever, with Brian  
21 Doyle, today is not the place. I really do think we should be considering this at the next Council  
22 meeting when it's on the agenda when that is what our focus is going to be, thanks.

23 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

24 Cllr MITCHELL: I essentially want to say the same, I think if it's going to be on the agenda, we  
25 shouldn't be discussing it at the budget meeting which has its own difficulties and I think we  
26 should follow what we did. I also asked a question about the harbours and the subsidy for it, I  
27 haven't got an answer to that.

28 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Just on the Barracuda we need to bring it to a conclusion in my  
29 opinion and I would be proposing we would try and bring it to a conclusion on the 7th of  
30 December. That's my opinion. Because we have gone through five or six different  
31 (INAUDIBLE) at this stage, I certainly - I take on board the views of Cllr Fox there, I want to  
32 see exactly what it means to me as a Councillor with regard to legal costs and whatever else. I  
33 mean the Attorney General, as Cllr Fortune has proposed is one issue, the other issue is taking  
34 legal action. I would propose if the members agree that we, we will have to extend that meeting,

- 1 because it seems like it will be a long meeting on the 7th -- oh we have the Ambassador, so we  
2 may start early. Well sure, if members are happy with that, you are coming in again there  
3 Councillor, are you.
- 4 Cllr FORTUNE: As my light is on, just picking up on what you just said, maybe at that meeting  
5 it would be high up on the agenda, not down number 16.
- 6 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: The Ambassador is here at 2 o'clock.
- 7 MS GALLAGHER: There is a proposal to suspend standing orders to consider outstanding  
8 Notice of Motions.
- 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will make arrangements to make sure it's high up on the agenda.
- 10 CE: Or if the members want to have a meeting again like today.
- 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: If we start earlier.
- 12 MS GALLAGHER: You have J PC at ten
- 13 Cllr LAWLOR: Can we not have a Special Meeting for this, if this comes up at the general  
14 meeting, it will escalate as it has in the past, it will take up an hour, hour and a half if not more.
- 15 MS GALLAGHER: I think we have enough time under Standing Orders for a Special Meeting,  
16 between this and the 7th.
- 17 Cllr LAWLESS: It's just a suggestion, I can just envision how Monday is going to go.
- 18 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: But Mr Doyle has state that had he won't know until next week  
19 you are getting legal advice.
- 20 CE: The members can have a look at the file, but if there is other queries, I'll certainly go back.
- 21 Cllr FOX: Can we continue on the 7th until the meeting is finished
- 22 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: We can continue on on the 7th if the members are agreeable with  
23 that. We need to bring it to a conclusion anyway one way or the other. If we start at two, and if  
24 we have to do what we have to do and continue on then until whatever.
- 25 Cllr BEHAN: Through the Chair, will you let us know when the files are available to look at
- 26 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: Can you bring in Councillor Ryan please quickly!
- 27 Cllr BEHAN: Do you want to come down and sit here!
- 28 LEAS CATHAOIRLEACH: I am used to Tommy over the many years!
- 29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, actually, it's Councillor - there is three other Councillors. We will  
30 do the Councillors first and then -- Cllr Snell next.
- 31 Cllr FITZGERALD: Cllr Bourke is first there actually.
- 32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you mind for one quick sec, we will go to Cllr Snell because I have  
33 hit that button.
- 34 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, you missed all the fun and the craic, so I'll change the tone

1 anyway, I would like to start by thanking Lorraine and Breda, I have been asking for a number  
2 years to itemise the operation of the dog warden service under its own code and it's there for all  
3 to see. Just in regards to the operation of harbours, and there is 163,000 of an increase, my  
4 understanding is that that's to do with Wicklow? There was a suggestion earlier in regards to  
5 Arklow, but could we have some sort of an understanding of what that exactly entails. As I say,  
6 I thought it was to do with Wicklow Town and the operations and I am wondering is the  
7 Department not funding that?

8  
9 The other thing is hugely disappointed in regards to the 90,000 euro decrease on the control of  
10 horses. And in regards to the coastal protection, there is no figure in there for planning  
11 protection of the coastal region, general maintenance is 141,000, but I think it would be remiss  
12 of me not to acknowledge 130,000 that come into the Municipal District of East Wicklow for  
13 protection works on the Murrough. While it is only a drop in the ocean, it is a start, and I do  
14 believe that we did talk about it in regards the Municipal District, that we should be looking for  
15 EU funding, and I am just wondering did the Director ever chase up EU funding for the  
16 protection of the Murrough in Wicklow Town?

17  
18 Under miscellaneous services, H, refunds and irrecoverable rates, there is - it's estimated an  
19 increase of 800,000. Just to get a breakdown on that. And then in regards to the operation of  
20 morgue and coroner expenses, and I asked you a question on that last year and I think you told  
21 me it was national policy and that Wicklow County Council couldn't get out of the payment of  
22 these, but I think the public would be startled to know that we pay nearly 200,000 towards  
23 coroner fees and the operation of the morgue within the county. Could I have an update on that?  
24 Is there no way the Department should be sort of subsidising that? Thanks Cathaoirleach.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

26 Cllr BOURKE: Thank you Cathaoirleach, there is three items I would like to raise under this  
27 heading Cathaoirleach. The first one in relation to Arklow Harbour which has been mentioned  
28 by previous Councillors, now we had a presentation at the Municipal District last week from a  
29 harbour user who pointed out to us that revenue from the harbour could be greatly enhanced if  
30 we did a little bit more dredging at the mouth of the harbour. At the moment there is some  
31 siltation which has resulted in ships unable to enter the port, and subsequently we are losing  
32 business to Rosslare. So I was hoping that the Director and his team would be able to bring a  
33 little bit of extra pressure to bear on the funding authorities for dredging, so that we could get  
34 that little bit of extra dredging that's needed to have our port fully functional, because we spent

1 about 4 million in the last few years between our own money and Government grants on  
2 enhancing facilities in the port, but we are not getting the trade now. If we could just have it  
3 opened through the small bit of dredging, it would enhance us and we will be generating revenue  
4 for the Council then in tonnage tax. So I was hopeful you might be able to expedite that and take  
5 it seriously as well. It's not just another flippant throw-in by a Councillor at budget time but an  
6 important issue for Arklow Harbour.

7  
8 With regard to coastal protection, we have long been looking for extra funding in Arklow for the  
9 restoration of a beach. We don't actually have a beach. We have rock armour. We are very  
10 pleased we are getting more coastal protection, we got another grant for 70,000 from the  
11 Minister's office for additional rock armour where it was breached two years ago. There is a  
12 possibility and it's in a plan we submitted previously to Government for funding for grinds to  
13 increase the sand again, again to restore sand on the beach at Arklow North. And I think that  
14 should be resurrected again and reapplied for in this current year, and perhaps inter-reg funding  
15 should be looked at in terms of getting funding in regards that which would be the icing on the  
16 cake as regards Arklow would be concerned. We used to have a traditionally lovely sandy beach  
17 on the North beach which we don't have anymore.

18  
19 And finally in regard to Brittas Bay, I have to mention the car park and the management of it. It  
20 may be suiting us as an executive to have it managed the way it is, but it certainly doesn't suit the  
21 tourists and the users. I have to hang my head in shame at the bank holiday weekend in October,  
22 you might have seen it on YouTube, somebody took a video starting at Ardinary and drove all  
23 the way from there to the North car park, and the road was clogged with cars on both sides of the  
24 road, it was hardly room to get by, remember October weather was beautiful this year. There  
25 was hardly room to pass by and they passed the car parks, the car parks were locked up and  
26 empty, and the sky was blue and there were thousands of people looking to get on to the beach  
27 and the road system was clogged up. We are doing something wrong and we have to change that  
28 policy and that's really important. It should be available at weekends, especially when weather is  
29 good, when people want to use the facility. They shouldn't have to park out on the road in the --  
30 they're creating potential traffic flash points and danger points, so we need to get our act together  
31 on that one. And I have to say I support the Sinn Fein motion that hasn't yet been discussed, but  
32 they have had it down since last April or May, and it's one that needs to be addressed for all our  
33 sakes, because we all use that facility.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: All those motions will be discussed on the 7th of December.

1 Cllr BOURKE: Thank you Cathaoirleach.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

3 Cllr BRADY: I agree entirely with what Cllr Bourke said. I know that's from a different  
4 heading, that's from recreation as opposed to the headings that we are actually dealing with, so  
5 hopefully we will get to deal with the motion that has been down dealing with that specific  
6 problem that has been flagged a long, long time. Just a couple of things there just on the  
7 operation of harbours, is it now the case where Wicklow County Council as opposed to the  
8 Municipal Districts is responsible for the control of harbours? Up until now, it had been Town  
9 Councils and that. Because there is a specific problem with the harbour in Bray, not too unlike  
10 the one in Arklow there, where there is an awful lot of silt has built up within the harbour and  
11 there has been strong representation there from users to the old Town Council and indeed to the  
12 Municipal District to try and get the harbour in Bray dredged and therefore it is as a result of the  
13 ongoing flood protection works on the River Dargle.

14

15 Now if it is up to the Municipal District to bring forward a scheme to have the harbour dredged,  
16 the resources within the Municipal District, we all know the discretionary funding is virtually  
17 non-existent, so to see that scheme come forward from the Municipal District, I think  
18 unfortunately will be a pipe dream. Now if Wicklow, this authority has I suppose sole  
19 responsibility, that needs to be put on the agenda to be done. As I said it's having a serious,  
20 serious impact. So maybe it can -- you might be able to give us a little bit of information as to  
21 whether it is feeding into the figures here. If not, when will it be?

22

23 Just in relation to the operation of the dog warden service, and this has been an issue that has  
24 come to the fore over the last number of years, and I think in fairness to my colleague here to my  
25 right, Cllr Snell, he brought it up at a budget meeting four or five years ago when Wicklow had  
26 one of the highest levels of dog kills within the pound, putting dogs down. Thankfully that  
27 figure is down to ten I think this year, it's a huge, huge advance, but there is still problems there  
28 within the pound there. Now it had been hoped that the tender, there would be a tender for the  
29 control of that service. Now unfortunately I think it has been extended with the ISPCA and that  
30 has raised some concerns by dog owners, groups that are lobbying for the rehoming of dogs and  
31 I know it's a broader policy issue, but there is still issues there. So can I just ask the new tender  
32 that has been signed, what is the duration of that for? And at the end of that, will that be  
33 advertised publicly for expressions of interest? Because I know from the experience of other  
34 local authorities, there are plenty of other groups out there that operate on a voluntary basis



1 nearly, and will come in and have done so in other local authorities, and have excellent animal  
2 welfare procedures and policies.

3  
4 Just in relation to miscellaneous services, can I just ask the question there under expenses to  
5 Local Authority members, there is an increase of I think in the region of 20,000 euro on that  
6 heading this year. It's up from what was adopted by the Council of 95,000 and 50 I think the  
7 committed outcome was nearly 89,000 and it's proposed to increase it up to 115,000. Can I ask  
8 what is that about? Who has been lobbying, what Local Authority member, Councillor I would  
9 imagine has been lobbying for an increase of that amount, it's crazy.

10  
11 And just again to go back to and it probably fits in here, miscellaneous services, the question, the  
12 written question I submitted just on the legal expenditure around the decision to drop the appeal  
13 to the Supreme Court in the Deirdre De Burca case, I imagine if it fits in anywhere, it's here, but  
14 again it has been flagged in previous budgets, there is no separate headline there dealing with  
15 legal expenses, so I am not sure as to whether those figures can be given at this point. As to how  
16 much it did cost an individual, I am not sure whether the corporate policy had any hand, act or  
17 part in appealing it to the Supreme Court, it seems to be the ex county Chairman (sic) took that  
18 initiative on. So we need to see at what cost to the taxpayer here in Wicklow. Thank you.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Michael?

20 Cllr BRADY: Sorry, County Manager.

21 DIRECTOR GEANEY: Yeah, on the harbours, on page 91 of the book of estimates, there are --  
22 page 89 and 91, if you go to page 89 first, the figure for 2015 that has been adopted, the they're  
23 much the same, 325 and 342. The breakdown is Arklow Harbour 259, write-offs Arklow  
24 Harbour, 25,000; Bray is 1,000; and others, operations of piers at the harbour is 40,000. That  
25 brings a total of 325. And this year, the figure has been increased by Wicklow Harbour 200,000,  
26 that's a contra item, there is income as well of 200,000 for Wicklow Harbour. Arklow for 2016  
27 is 219, and the write-offs are 25 again. And Bray harbour a figure in there is 5,000 and others  
28 are 53 which brings a total of 502,000. The main difference between the two, say 170,000, is  
29 made up in the main of the cost of Wicklow Harbour, which is 200,000. That's a contra item.

30  
31 And the income that's put in for both harbours on page 91, there is a figure there of 266,000,  
32 under 2016, estimated by the Chief Executive, and it's 90 for Arklow, and 200 for Wicklow.  
33 They're the figures really.

1 Just on the other items that were raised, just to go on to answer him if I can, I'll examine the  
2 Arklow Harbour and come back on that, to dredging out of Arklow Harbour, that can be  
3 examined. And funding for the beach of Arklow Harbour, that would be a large expenditure  
4 item now to put in a grind is not a very cheap item.

5  
6 Brittas Bay car park, query that was raised on that as well. That's at the moment is part of a  
7 motion actually down and we are to come back with a report on that. Basically as well, tenders  
8 are being prepared at present for the Brittas Bay car park. Now it's not just a case of opening the  
9 car park. It also needs management. It was opened on a number of occasions previously and  
10 you have litter and rubbish dumped all over the place and that all has to be taken away, so there  
11 are issues that it's not just the case as I said earlier of opening the gates. It just has to be  
12 managed properly.

13  
14 The dog warden just to say the figure Cllr Brady for 2015 is actually four, the figure given in the  
15 budget is the 2014 figures, the put to sleep figure for 2015 is four. And my understand  
16 something that the tender is there until March of 2017.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just some final questions there. Cllr Fortune.

18 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach. It mightn't be relevant to Michael, but just disposal of  
19 assets for example, the piece of ground that was sold on the Mill Road in Greystones, beside the  
20 rugby club, the income from that, I understand that has been sold for three quarters of a million.  
21 Does that come back into our funding or what happens to it.

22 DIRECTOR LYNCH: That would be capital. This is revenue.

23 Cllr FORTUNE: What happens to it, that funding?

24 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Probably used to depending on whether there was a loan on it, we would  
25 have to pay the loan, it's part of capital, but not part of the revenue budget.

26 Cllr FORTUNE: That's not clear to me.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: It simply goes into the capital account and it's used for capital purposes.  
28 This is a current account.

29 Cllr FORTUNE: I know what this is, yeah.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: So what's not clear?

31 Cllr FORTUNE: The fact that - I know what Lorraine is telling me where it goes, I am just  
32 querying it, the fact that we sell off a piece of land in the district and the bottom line is we don't  
33 have the use of that money or do we or where do we use it.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: We do, but for capital purposes.

1 DIRECTOR LYNCH: In terms, like any piece of land, or any asset that we dispose of, an asset  
2 would be capital, so it's been treated through capital, so it depends whether you could use the  
3 money to fund something of a similar nature, a new asset, or if there was a loan outstanding on it  
4 or a deficit on the account to repay that. I don't know about the particular case in question.

5 Cllr FORTUNE: I am asking about the particular case, I know the ifs and buts, and there might  
6 be a loan and that, if that was three quarters of a million what's been done with it, where is it  
7 going. Can someone come back and answer me?

8 DIRECTOR LYNCH: I'll go and find out and answer.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

10 Cllr MITCHELL: I asked a question which wasn't really answered and that was in relation to the  
11 deficit in the harbours, we got the income and the expenditure with different numbers and things,  
12 what is the deficit on each of the four, of the three harbours which the Council is managing,  
13 that's Arklow, proposing to manage Wicklow and is there a proposal to reduce the deficit of  
14 which seems to me to be 200,000 in Arklow Harbour to reduce it to what we were told it was  
15 when we were taking it over, which is that there wouldn't be any deficit. So did is a very major  
16 change to go from what we were told we were taking it over it wouldn't cost us anything to  
17 costing us 200 grand a year and what are we going to do about it.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Casey.

19 Cllr CASEY: Michael mentioned there about the tender for the Brittas Bay car park and I would  
20 hope that we will have the debate before that tender is finalised because this happened in  
21 Glendalough about ten years ago where the car park was closed there, and part of the tender  
22 process was the maintenance and upkeep of the car park including cleaning the rubbish is part of  
23 the tender process. So a solution to Brittas Bay can be done I believe quite easily if the tender  
24 process is structured correctly to deal with the issues. There is no reason at this stage, it's gone  
25 on too many years why this can't be resolved quickly. At least have that car park open on  
26 Saturdays and Sundays. It's madness.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters.

28 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, again just in relation to Brittas Bay car park. I realised  
29 that when people come they bring rubbish, but they bring the rubbish regardless of whether the  
30 car park is open or not. The rubbish just ends up strewn across the road, if people have access to  
31 the car park, there is some possibility they will actually use the litter bins. At the moment they  
32 have to climb over the fence to get to the bins. If the car park was open, there is some chance  
33 they'd use them. And we did put it down as a Municipal District for a motion, hopefully it will  
34 be got to on 7th of December before the tender documents go out, but it would be a terrible thing

1 if those tender documents go out and are inadequate this year because we never managed to get  
2 to what's actually on the agenda of the ordinary meetings.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady.

4 Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach just a couple of questions that weren't answered in relation to the  
5 increase in the money for the Local Authority members, an increase of 20,000. Also just on the  
6 harbours, I mean I think listening to Michael there, there is an allocation of about 6,000 euro if I  
7 am right for the harbour in Bray, which is pittance really. And it's not going to do anything. I  
8 think it's just managing it or the operation of it. We need to, and you know this Cathaoirleach, I  
9 mean there is huge issues within the harbour area of Bray. It has massive, massive potential  
10 there, by many, many different sporting organisations, sea scouts, etcetera, etcetera. I think an  
11 argument has to be made, whether it needs to be done through the SPC or what, but 6,000 euro  
12 for a prime amenity area such as Bray Harbour is a disgrace really. So I think that needs to be  
13 given serious consideration. I don't see where we are going to pull the money from to put that in  
14 place in this year's budget, but I think proposals need to come through the SPC to see major  
15 investment in the harbour area in Bray, to get it back to what it should be as a prime amenity  
16 area for all users there.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

18 Cllr SNELL: Just clarification on the two questions I asked in regards to the coroner's fees and  
19 expenses, the 95,000, I didn't get an answer. Also in regards to the refunds and irrecoverable  
20 rates, it's 5.1 million up to 4.3 million. Just to elaborate on what the 800,000 or the overall thing  
21 is in general, thanks.

22 CE: Apologies, I missed Michael's submission on the harbours. I think you might recall when  
23 Tom Murphy was talking about the Wicklow Economic Think Tank, he mentioned about  
24 harbour users and I think the whole economic well-being of the county and its sea board will see  
25 some funding directed towards the harbours, including Bray. It's more of a longer term project.  
26 We have the Greystones Harbour. You can see what happens when local authorities didn't invest  
27 in the harbours, but we would never have brought it to the standard that it is today. In the case of  
28 Arklow Harbour, I put my hand up if I said it wasn't going to cost us money. Like it was never a  
29 commercial harbour, so it was always going to cost us money. The only income is from  
30 fishermen. At no stage, I was surprised to see that if we do a little bit of ploughing, that will get  
31 boats in there. I have had no approaches, concrete approaches that there is a commercial output  
32 from Arklow Harbour. It's the next step on the way, because we have spent the guts of 4 million  
33 euro in improving and dredging the harbour. We also dredged the Avoca river to allow what we  
34 saw this year when all the boats in that - instead of lying on their side in the Avoca, were with

1 pontoons that were available for recreational boating. We have also spent money and received  
2 grants to put pontoons within - pontoons within the dock area and we intend to enhance that  
3 area. And the next step would be, if there is a commercial port user, that is willing to bring  
4 commercial shipping and tonnage into the harbour, we will certainly listen to them. Because we  
5 will have a cost, the cost that Wicklow Harbour has, of port security to ensure that we have all  
6 the facilities in Arklow that is required for commercial activity. And I think the comparison will  
7 be just to bring you up-to-date on Wicklow, Michael probably did that as well, we are meeting  
8 tomorrow, I am meeting with the Chairman of Wicklow Harbour company to discuss the options  
9 that are available. There are two options on the available that will be coming back and report to  
10 go the members of the Council, one that the County Council would as they did in the Arklow  
11 situation, take over the harbour, run it directly. Or that we would have still an involvement with  
12 the harbour company, that there would be a joint running of the harbour. So we done our due  
13 diligence. It is a commercial harbour.

14  
15 Some of the Councillors here from Wicklow Town might get plenty - some complaints in  
16 connection with odours from RDF. But it would appear that they're now going to get their EPA  
17 licence to retain that facility to take in RDF and with timber and that, it is a profit making  
18 company at this time, and so we should not see any deficit from that company. But if we need to  
19 improve piers and if we have to do continuous maintenance dredging, there will be a cost and I  
20 think the cost, it will be offset by the economic opportunities that we will see having four  
21 harbours fit for purpose in the county. With a long term view, what we need to invest in them.  
22 And the members have before them funding in that economic area.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine, do you want to answer some of the other questions that were  
24 asked?

25 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Apologies, on the Local Authority members, the increase includes for the  
26 introduction of Minute Pad and the roll out of the organisation of that. Coroners, it's a duty, and a  
27 responsibility, we are legally responsible for under the legislation, that's something that we have  
28 to continue to provide for. In terms of the rates, the rates and the irrecoverable rates, the reason  
29 for the increases, the 800,000 that was taken out of it as part of the changes last year in the  
30 budget, so that 800,000 has to go back in the same as we took out the 100,000 for the tourism  
31 and the community and all of that, we have to put back in the 800,000. Like our write-off for  
32 2014 was 5.3, 5.4 million. So we are aiming to reduce it, it's just a reflection of the change from  
33 last year.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Brady, do you want to come back in.

1 Cllr BRADY: Just two things it there, one in relation to Bray Harbour and I appreciate what the  
2 CEO is saying there, but I think certainly what Bray doesn't want, I don't think there is an  
3 appetite to have a Greystones model imported on Bray. So I think whilst Bray Harbour isn't a  
4 commercial harbour, certainly huge apartment blocks and all that, I don't think - you would be in  
5 favour of that?

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: A marina, absolutely, yeah!

7 Cllr BRADY: That debate has to happen. But I think what Bray should and could be not  
8 long-term, but in the immediate term is a centre of excellence for waterborne activity and I don't  
9 think that would take huge investment, that's more long-term. I think that should be a short-term  
10 goal to put that in place. It wouldn't cost serious amounts of money. There is a serious problem  
11 there now at the moment with - that the harbour needs to be dredged. That is having a serious  
12 impact. The discussion needs to take place. I mean there is other groups there, kayaking and all  
13 of that, that can and should be able to get in there, use that as a base to operate out of, and that  
14 discussion needs to take place. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

15  
16 Just the other thing was the legal expenses for the Supreme Court appeal, with regard Deirdre De  
17 Burca, I am not sure, it probably comes under miscellaneous, whether we can get those now.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Well I think we did say, there is a question from Irene Winters about  
19 legal costs which we said we would discover at the end.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox?

21 Cllr FOX: Thank you Chairman. On the harbour, I mean let's call a spade a spade here, its --  
22 Municipal District got discretionary funding last year, and Councillors in Bray were given the  
23 opportunity of putting money into the harbour, and chose not to, and chose to give it to -- two  
24 did, I apologise, I wasn't one of the two, some of the Councillors now raising the issue here did  
25 not and chose to give it as a community award scheme, so you know, come on.

26 Cllr BRADY: It's not either or.

27 Cllr VANCE: Chairman in regards to this, that's the point I was going to make. I put all my  
28 funding that I was allocated to me in regard to the harbour project, I think you put in a smaller  
29 amount yourself in regard to that. And this is where when you get a very small amount  
30 compared to me Chairman, but anyway! But anyway, this is when you get money people make  
31 choices. And people make choices, then they have to stand over the choices that they  
32 particularly make, and what galls me is when people make choices and then blame everyone else  
33 on it and various things like that. They make choices, that's fine for something they think is best.  
34 There is a major problem down in the harbour and the amount of money that I and you put to it

1 will only go a small way towards maybe helping out particular consultancy reports and various  
2 things like that. There is a major problem. It's great asset. I think everyone would agree in  
3 regard to it. Now if there is money available in regard to discretionary funding and all in this  
4 budget here, then I would invite all the other members as well maybe to put all their money  
5 together and contribute towards it if they think it's such a great project and I am sure they'll get  
6 the appropriate publicity out of that anyway Chairman.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Thornhill.

8 Cllr THORNHILL: I would just like to make a remark in relation to the discretionary money  
9 that we received last year at the Municipal Council. Now we only got a small amount of money.  
10 Now the thing about money, when you get a small amount of money, you can only spread it so  
11 far, and the thing about it, say for example, I did give it to different groups. Now there was one  
12 group that I gave an amount just like I am sure Cllr Brady as well, the Tidy Towns. The thing  
13 about it is this, it's impossible to be everything to everyone. But I think at the end of the day we  
14 should seriously look at and I am sure someone should look at the Bray Harbour and the  
15 advantage of Bray Harbour and I'll just finish off, in this game, you just can't be everything to  
16 everyone. Thank you.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay so just there were two proposals that were made during the -- since  
18 10.30, I think we might just vote on those now, at that stage if anyone wants to make a general  
19 comment about the budget, they can, then we will take a 15 minute break at at this time I'll ask  
20 people to come back with proposals with regard to the budget itself and hopefully we will vote  
21 on that. Okay. So...

22 MS GALLAGHER: The first motion was proposed by Cllr John Brady and seconded by Nicola  
23 Lawless that, "The Minister for the Environment, Alan Kelly, increases the level of funding to  
24 Wicklow County Council to cover the increased spending by the Council in dealing with  
25 homelessness. This is a direct result of the housing crisis." So we will go for a vote on that.

26 Cllr WINTERS: Can I say something in relation to that.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to go Cllr Winters?

28 Cllr WINTERS: Just this morning it was said in the chamber that the Government had reduced  
29 funding to the homeless in County Wicklow by 100,000. I looked it up here and sent off an  
30 email. The response I have got back is that the forum that delivers this, the  
31 Kildare/Meath/Wicklow forum, last year they got 811,000 of a funding. This year they've got  
32 935,000 funding, so there is an actual 15% increase in funding to the forum. Now I don't know  
33 why, or I am not on that forum, I don't know who on the Council is, I don't know why Wicklow  
34 have 100,000 less out of that fund than we had previously, but the actual funding has not been

1 cut. The funding has increased by 15%. Why the funding is cut to County Wicklow is a  
2 question for the forum, not for the Government. Thanks.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: As we said, John Snell and myself will investigate that further, but I mean  
4 is that agreed that, yeah, are we happy with that? Okay, agreed.

5 CE: Can I just add the figures that Cllr Winters has mentioned are correct, and I think it would  
6 be my intention to take up the matter with the Chief Executive in Meath and Kildare to see can  
7 we get a rebalancing of that funding. I think as well when I am talking to Joe Lane, if we have  
8 additional expenditure because of the unforeseen demand, that is the case, that favourable  
9 consideration will be given to augmenting our allocation. So we will follow up on all those  
10 items as well Cathaoirleach.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: The second proposal.

12 MS GALLAGHER: Proposed by Councillor Steven Matthews and seconded by Cllr Thornhill,  
13 "That the income from paid parking be retained by the Municipal Districts where that income is  
14 generated and that the management of parking is administered by each district with the discretion  
15 to reduce or increase charges and extend or introduce areas of paid parking."

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, I take it this won't be necessarily unanimous, so will we go for a  
17 vote on it.

18 Cllr CASEY: What are we voting on, what is the implications of this?

19 Cllr WINTERS: Well there would be.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Lorraine, do you want to come in on the implications of this.

21 DIRECTOR LYNCH: The implications of this, we have you have a net income of 900,000.  
22 Now that's split differently. If you are breaking it down by district, you are talking 500,000 for  
23 Bray, 70 for Arklow, 200 for Wicklow and maybe 85 for Greystones. I don't have the figure in  
24 front of me, but ballpark that's what they are. We are using that for discretionary income, you  
25 are saying. That forms part of the total of 91 million, if that's going to be ring-fenced for  
26 discretionary, I have to take away 900,000 of discretionary income from somewhere else. To the  
27 480 for Municipal Districts, if you are looking at discretionary, you are looking at community  
28 funds, those type of discretionary elements will have to be reduced. It's not an additional 91  
29 million it's part of the amount already. You are taking the existing discretionary funding that's  
30 there, taking it out, which will impact on all districts and will leave Baltinglass with nothing.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

32 Cllr VANCE: Could I just ask should this not be done as part of the overall budget proposal?  
33 Sure anyone could put in any particular thing now at this stage and it's going to have a huge  
34 effect for different areas in regard to the overall budget situation. So should it not be taken in the



1 context of the overall budget proposal?

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would see it more as a policy which has implications to the overall  
3 budget, but it would be kind of -- just let me think about that for a minute, okay yeah.

4 Cllr VANCE: I think it has implications for the budget.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: It does yeah. Cllr Mitchell.

6 Cllr MITCHELL: I think at this stage it's probably far too late for that and really as part of this  
7 one is going to have to say where will the 900,000 come out of? What else are you going to cut  
8 from central expenditure in order to do this? I think it's too late at this stage to do it. Personally,  
9 I wouldn't be adverse to having the net amount that's raised in parking spent in the area or having  
10 some form of accountability on it in the more medium term, but certainly at this stage I wouldn't  
11 agree with this proposal unless somebody is very clear about what they're going to cut.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Kennedy.

13 Cllr KENNEDY: Would this not be the first step of all levies or any monies being raised in a  
14 municipal area staying in that area? If this was to pass here today, let's say the likes of building  
15 levies in the future, would that not mean this would be the first step of holding on to them in that  
16 Municipal area? Sure that would starve the rest of the county?

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters.

18 Cllr WINTERS: Thanks Cathaoirleach, I would have -- I mean I would love to have the revenue  
19 as discretionary revenue in the Wicklow Municipal District for parking, but I realise we as a  
20 town get our streets cleaned, lots of outlying villages don't, we have street lighting, bar the five  
21 ones down on the Port Road that don't work and haven't for two years, but effectively we have  
22 street lighting, access to public transport. There is a lot of things that happen in the urban areas  
23 that give them a better service than some of the rural areas within the county. And it's because  
24 all of those services are there that there is also paid parking in those areas. And if you ring fence  
25 the paid parking money and use it for discretionary funding, then part of that discretionary  
26 funding would have to be spent on street cleaning, street lighting and all of the things that are  
27 provided by being in an urban area. So it's really only robbing Paul to pay Peter, because  
28 effectively that's where the money is going to have to come or the of and that's where it's going  
29 to have to go back to.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Bourke.

31 Cllr BOURKE: Two things there briefly Cathaoirleach, first of all we were actually doing a  
32 review of the paid parking in the county but it seems to have disappeared. I haven't seen sight or  
33 heard about it for months now. And where is that at? Secondly, did Lorraine clarify that  
34 900,000 countywide, is that net income or gross income.

1 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Net.

2 Cllr BOURKE: That's net of all costs, thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Murphy.

4 Cllr MURPHY: It would be very unfair to our little rural country cousins like Baltinglass, I  
5 mean we couldn't see that. But also I mean if it's going to be cut from other places like  
6 community grants, I mean we as councils and Councillors know the importance of community  
7 grants. We have all hosted in the last few months a reception for our municipal Community  
8 Awards. And I mean it's breathtaking to see the work that goes on there in every town and  
9 village. And I mean that -- that's a serious cut and that will have a backlash on providing that  
10 service.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Snell.

12 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, unfortunately I believe it's too late in the day to bring this  
13 to the Chambers. I think it should have been -- and I see the merits in where Cllr Matthews is  
14 coming from, but there is a subcommittee dealing with financial issues within the Chambers and  
15 there is representatives of every party and group in there. Also the Municipal District level it  
16 should have been discussed to weigh up the pros and cons and I for one like Cllr Winters could  
17 be rubbing me hands here thinking that East Wicklow is going to do pretty well out of it,  
18 particularly if we could bring in the car parking in Glendalough and Brittas Bay. But  
19 unfortunately we are all representative of County Wicklow. We have to weigh up the pros and  
20 cons in regards to West Wicklow and I think West Wicklow would be very unfairly treated if  
21 this was to even be considered taken today and I would ask it be withdrawn.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Timmins.

23 Cllr TIMMINS: Yeah thanks Cllr Murphy for your kind comments and Cllr Snell just following  
24 you there. Yeah, this proposal in my view is very, very selective, it just picks one item and looks  
25 at it to say stay there. I mean for instance we covered coasts, we have no coasts in West  
26 Wicklow, and we don't have that expenditure. So you could pick any topic you like and say this  
27 area does better, where do you stop? To pick one area and say well we will change that and  
28 make that local is extremely selective and far too premature at this meeting today?

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fitzgerald.

30 Cllr FITZGERALD: Just when the Municipal District was formed, I was quite clear at that stage  
31 having asked the question that only extra funding when you provide extra parking or increase the  
32 fees in the district could be retained in the district. That was quite clear because I was at a  
33 function and I asked the question and the answer was given by Director or manager of another  
34 county and he was quite clear on it, that only funding that you - extra funding that you get from

1 increased parking or increased parking charges can be retained in the district and that's what I  
2 know it to be and I think this is a bit late in the day coming with this one. That's going to change  
3 everything. If that's the case, a lot of the Local Property Tax is paid in North Wicklow. Maybe  
4 then we should -- maybe 80% of it or 75% of it, we should give that to North Wicklow...

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr Vance.

6 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, the cause of this is the mess that was made in regard to Municipal, the  
7 setting up of Municipal Authorities and the type of functions that they have on it. And it was  
8 never very clear what type of functions were. Now the parking income for Bray generally went  
9 into Bray, it went into a particular fund for town centre activities and various things like that. It  
10 bought the Florentine Centre in Bray and it was used for those types of purposes. Obviously  
11 with the amalgamation, there was no - well I believe no clear function given to Municipal  
12 Authorities in regard to raising their own funds and various things like that. And there really is a  
13 mess at the moment in regard to that. There is no function I am aware of really that the  
14 Municipal Authorities really have that are any good whatsoever. Now I believe there is a review  
15 of parking going on at the moment. And I think maybe the best thing would be for let's have a  
16 look at that review, because my feeling and certainly my experience in regard to budgets are that  
17 okay even if we decided to go through with this, and you gave Bray whatever it is, 6 or 700,000  
18 for it, the result would be Bray would lose 6 or 700,000 in other ways in regard to funding for  
19 roads and various things like that. And I just feel that maybe with the review of parking that's  
20 going on at the moment that the best thing would be to let them - I think Christine Flood is  
21 carrying that out at the moment, to have a look at that and see what can be done and we could  
22 discuss this at a future estate because there are ramifications. You just don't do this and not have  
23 some effect on the rest of the county as well. And we have to be mindful of that as well. So I  
24 think that might be the best way, I go along with what Cllr Snell says there as well, the best thing  
25 would be to have a look at that in the cold light of day and maybe if necessary bring it up next  
26 year with a proposal and various things like that, that would be properly thought out and  
27 properly costed and people in all the areas would know exactly what the situation was and how it  
28 was going to affect their particular area. I think that would be a more measured way of going  
29 about it.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Matthews.

31 Cllr MATTHEWS: I am glad the proposal stimulated that debate anyway and we can see it is  
32 something that needed more discussion. The way it's being done at the moment isn't satisfactory  
33 and I know a lot of the Councillors can see the merit in that proposal and a lot of the Councillors  
34 would have been quite happy to have that income from the parking to spend in their areas. I take

1 the point that people have made it's a bit late in the day for it and maybe this is something I  
2 should have discussed with the Director of Finance or the group a bit more in advance of today.  
3 Would the Councillors be prepared to accept an amendment that include 2017 in that proposal?  
4 And if so I would make that proposal, amendment to that proposal now. So we have a full year  
5 to look at those figures.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Would you mind kind of -- just...

7 Cllr MATTHEWS: Just as the proposal is out there now.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am getting the idea if I am reading people right that that won't fly either.  
9 It would be great if you could have that discussion with the Director of finance to talk about the  
10 implications of it and maybe circulate that and bring it to the parking review and then feed into  
11 the whole process going along through the year, maybe through the SPC.

12 Cllr MATTHEWS: And just to put on the table there are districts that don't have paid parking, it  
13 would give them the opportunity to introduce paid parking if they wanted to benefit from the  
14 incomes.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Would it be okay to just not put it to a vote at the moment and we will  
16 maybe put it on an agenda, and discuss it in more detail and if you believe then there is support  
17 for it, then we could bring it forward, is that okay.

18 Cllr MATTHEWS: That's okay Chairman, I just want to clarify one thing as well that we had  
19 before lunch that in that legislation that Local Government legislation, it does say that the  
20 making of a resolution determined the manner in which fees in respect of parking shall be  
21 disposed of. That is for the Municipal Districts to decide. I can't find it anywhere to say it's only  
22 additional changes, reductions or increases that you get discretion over. It says parking fees. It  
23 doesn't say whether you increase or decrease. If you decrease you lose, if you increase you gain,  
24 it doesn't say that. That was pointed out earlier on, I just want to find out where in the legislation  
25 it says that.

26 CE: Cathaoirleach, it's really Cllr Fitzgerald has reiterated the information that I have gave here  
27 this morning from an independent source and that was always the discussion that we had in the  
28 alignment process where the Town Councils would be done away with, that there would be an  
29 amalgamation of income, but certainly what the members have agreed here is that it's on the  
30 agenda for discussion, and will be on the agenda for discussion in the preparation of, please God,  
31 2017.

32 Cllr MATTHEWS: Can we get clarification that it is...

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Actually yeah.

34 CE: It's as you read, that's in there.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just a couple of questions re legals, do you want to Lorraine just respond  
2 to those or...

3 MS GALLAGHER: I have a question from Cllr Brady and response, I can read that out.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's a specific question. Cllr Winters was a more general question,  
5 wasn't it?

6 Cllr WINTERS: We will hear that response and then see.

7 MS GALLAGHER: The question is, "What is the overall legal bill to Wicklow County Council  
8 for the case realty to go the ethics complaint by Deirdre De Burca in 2004 ...(Reading)...  
9 abandoned the appeal." And the answer is, "The County Council has not paid any costs to the  
10 legal team for Deirdre De Burca as the question of costs was deferred pending the appeals which  
11 should be noted were filed by all parties to the case. The Council's own legal cost were  
12 approximately 39,000 euro. The costs of the High Court case for Deirdre De Burca have not yet  
13 been submitted. The costs will be referred to the Taxing Master for review and this information  
14 will be provided to the elected members when the matter is finalised."

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: And just, do you want to reiterate your question?

16 Cllr WINTERS: It's just I suppose the general thing that I can understand if we take, or if the  
17 officials take a legal case that is ultimately for the benefit of the residents and the rate payers of  
18 County Wicklow. I question how the, I suppose, the challenging of the High Court ruling that  
19 was made in relation to the ethics question raised by Deirdre De Burca, I questioned why we  
20 would have challenged that to the Supreme Court and how that was of any benefit to any  
21 resident or rate payer of County Wicklow, I am very glad that we have obviously stopped and  
22 realised that it's a waste of money, or else we wouldn't have stopped. I just want to know how -  
23 what are the circumstances that arise that the officials can make that kind of a decision and  
24 where do we as members who basically are meant to control the discretionary spend of the  
25 budget, where do we get the input to actually say, look we think this is madness, we only hear  
26 about it after the fact and I want to know if we can put something in place either through the  
27 CPG or however we do it, that we actually get a say in cases that are not standard, non-standard  
28 cases that we actually get an input on them, because I think this has been madness, thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Anybody want to come in?

30 CE: I think the point as Cllr Winters has mentioned it about non-standard cases certainly during  
31 my term sitting in this Chair, it would be my intention to bring such cases to the Corporate  
32 Policy Group to keep them informed. But generally speaking the Chief Executive would deal  
33 with the cases that we are all familiar with, planning cases, housing cases unfortunately, waste  
34 management cases, the normal run of the mill enforcement cases. And there is a statutory

1 obligation on us to defend the Council in cases such as Cllr Brady raised, the Whitestown issue,  
2 that's a case where we were being challenged over our activity and having considered all I have  
3 been through in Whitestown, I feel we have a strong case to defend, and so in that case as Chief  
4 Executive, I took the decision to defend that case, and there is a lot of costs involved I would  
5 imagine in the output from the original court case as well, so we certainly we're going to fight  
6 that.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay...

8 CE: But other people, we make decisions all the time, they can be complicated decisions, people  
9 don't agree, we lose some court cases, we win some court cases, that's the nature of the beast.  
10 And again people appeal against our decisions and we have to decide then at that stage and I do  
11 take legal advice generally speaking if we are going to appeal.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay Cllr Brady you want to come back in there, do you?

13 Cllr BRADY: Just very briefly, I welcome the response there from the CEO. I think it's the  
14 logical thing that the members here through corporate policy or the members here have some  
15 input there, because I think it is critical, it's an embarrassment looking at cases like that going all  
16 the way to Supreme Court. Obviously all the figures aren't in yet and hopefully the members, as  
17 has been stated there, will be circulated with those figures when we know that the final cost. But  
18 I suppose, and this is probably a discussion for another day, but the findings of the High Court  
19 was, they were pretty damning with regard our ethics and that sort of thing and I just hope that  
20 something with regard to that side of the house has been looked at and proper standards and that  
21 sort of thing put in place. But that's probably a discussion for a further day.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

23 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, as someone who raised it earlier in the day in regards to the  
24 legal expenses and the overall, I know it's very hard to quantify in regards to when it comes to  
25 legal fees, because they run into years, so it's very hard to do it on a yearly basis. But is every  
26 Local Authority putting their legal fees under each division, should it not be separate code for  
27 legal fees coming through a law section? Should we not have a separate code for it that we can  
28 actually see what the expenditure is? What liable coming down the tracks. Because I do  
29 understand and I fully understand in regards to planning law enforcement, in regards to cases  
30 will be taken in regards to ethics within the Chambers and so on. But there is cases that we have  
31 all heard about after the event. The public hear about it before we do. And in some cases you  
32 just wonder would a little bit of dialogue resolve the issue. Obviously in the vast majority it  
33 won't. But having said that, I do think the expenditure, it's as if that we don't want the members  
34 to know, we don't want the public to know how much we are spending on legal fees, and as I

1 say, I just feel that it could be more open and transparent, that's all.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

3 Cllr FORTUNE: Sorry, Cllr Snell is making the point there at the end, I just think that we come  
4 into a process like this today and Lorraine tells us we have 91 million and we are dealing with  
5 our current account here, so if we spent 2 million on legal cases, legal fees, that means we have  
6 got 89 million, so what services get cut back in that case, if it rolls over to the following year, we  
7 have less going in. There does need to be a lot more transparency. There should be a system,  
8 there is a finance committee within the structure of the Council, and we should be getting these  
9 proactively rather than reactively. Because happening then is it runs off in ten different  
10 directions because we are only hearing half the stuff about it. So it just needs to be tightened up,  
11 and as the Chief Executive said, that's his intention and that's very encouraging to hear that but it  
12 does need to be massively tightened up.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

14 Cllr VANCE: All we seem to be talking about is legal fees here and legal costs to the Council,  
15 that the Council are involved in. I have never seen legal fees that were actually owed to the  
16 Council, so I don't think anyone ever asked that around the Chamber. Everyone asked what  
17 legal fees the Council pay out. I never heard anyone asking what fees the Council are owed. In  
18 actual fact there must be a very substantial amount of money out there and I would like to see if  
19 we are looking for the fees that the Council have paid out, I would like to see the money that the  
20 Council is owed. And I would like to see how much the Council is owed by whom as well and  
21 the cases that we have actually won and the amount of money that's involved in that as well. So  
22 maybe they are two issues that maybe can come together in the future that will give the  
23 Councillors the type of information that they require, thank you.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Great, thank you.

25 CE: Not to prolong the discussion, but in April I think we did submit to the members details of  
26 the last two years of all legal fees. I can still recall that I owe information to Cllr Brady in  
27 connection with experts that were engaged outside of legal expenses for the Bray fire tragedy. I  
28 have that information, I also have some information with regards to income that we have  
29 received, not the full extent of people that owe us money either. Hopefully by bringing the  
30 non-standard ones and bringing information through the Corporate Policy Group, like if I bring  
31 the 2015 legal fees, there is certainly some legal fees like the ones that are going to come into us  
32 from the De Burca case which mightn't show up in any given year, so there will be a vacuum.  
33 We will look at the format and I would hope by March, we would have the 2015 legal fees, belts  
34 and braces here with the members. We are doing less and less road schemes, so there won't be

1 as complicated. Often we were getting maybe two pages of just the Newtown Ballinabarney  
2 road, which is five years built. We will tidy it up, but the intention is to give information to the  
3 members.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, all right, that's great, thank you very much for that, I think the best  
5 thing to do now would be to take a 15 minute break and then people come back and they can  
6 make their comments about the budgetary process and bring proposals forward. So it's twenty  
7 past four, so we will resume at twenty to five, we will give you twenty minutes.

8  
9 Short Break

10  
11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, slightly over the 20 minutes we said. So Cllr Fitzgerald.

12 Cllr FITZGERALD: Yeah, just obviously we have some proposals to make towards the budget.  
13 We are trying to come up with what's fair and equitable and as a result of the discussions today, I  
14 would - we would be proposing fools: 50,000 euro increase in the disabled persons grant. There  
15 always are difficulties meeting the needs of the people and as I said to the Minister recently, you  
16 don't know in March that you are going to be sick in September, or later on in the year and on  
17 that basis, we propose 50,000 increase there. and the issue of homelessness, we are proposing  
18 50,000 euro increase with the proviso that if homeless fund something redressed by the forum,  
19 then the 50,000 for homelessness be revert today the Municipal District to be added to their  
20 tourism related projects. I understand Cllr Snell said he was going to try and meet the forum or  
21 whatever, and establish what is the situation. We are proposing for the Municipal Districts to get  
22 another, between them get 100,000 euro for public realm projects, such as footpaths and lighting.  
23 The Municipal Districts, number four, get 10,000 each for tourism projects, and lastly, the Cliff  
24 Walk in Bray to Greystones, that there is additional funding there of 50,000. The total amount  
25 there is 300,000, so I would be proposing that as an addendum to the budget.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: What was the public realm?

27 Cllr FITZGERALD: 100,000 between the Municipal Districts, 100,000...

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry. Cllr Brady?

29 Cllr BRADY: Cathaoirleach, I just want to make a general statement initially and I think Cllr  
30 Lawless is going to come in at that stage. I suppose just to finish off by how I started at the  
31 meeting this morning, just thanking the officials, Lorraine and all the staff there in finance, I  
32 know they've put an awful lot of work into this, and I suppose even the chops and changes, even  
33 to get late notification that we are getting 300,000 back, and she had late notice prior to that with  
34 the - I suppose the information that we were getting minus 324,000 in the first place, so I



1 suppose there is a lot of to-ing and fro-ing in it. I suppose our meeting follows on from the  
2 session of the Local Property Tax rate and the general discussion we had around all of that. And  
3 indeed at that stage, I was very critical of the level of funding to this Local Authority and I  
4 compared it to other counties and the general purpose grant in which they get. Donegal for  
5 example gets 22 million in the general purpose grant. Wicklow, we get 6.8 million and there is a  
6 lot of counties in between that. Of course we know that we only retain 80% of the Local  
7 Property Tax here. So in reality what we have had to do here is due to the cuts in the level of  
8 funding to this Local Authority across many areas, we have had to use up 1.9 million of the  
9 increase in the property tax just to maintain our current services. So the only additional spending  
10 is the 600,000 surplus from the increase in the property tax, plus this 300,000 that we are only  
11 getting back this year. I think we are going to be down that next year, once the re-evaluation of  
12 the utility companies kicks in. So I think unfortunately we are going to be back at a similar  
13 situation next year minus the 300,000, and probably whatever other cuts are imposed on the  
14 Local Authority at that point. I don't think it is sustainable for the members here to continuously  
15 go back to the well that is well and truly dry and that is the members of the public in which the  
16 property tax was increased by 15%. And many of those households now are receiving their  
17 increase bills for 2016. Many of those households are either in negative equity or struggling  
18 with their mortgages. So any additional increase on their property tax isn't sustainable and  
19 certainly it's not a sustainable funding model for this or any other Local Authority within the  
20 State. At our previous meeting when we were setting the Local Property Tax, I made a proposal  
21 that we do contact the five TDs here in Wicklow and the Minister for Finance, Minister Noonan  
22 with regard our allocation from the Department, our very, very low allocation from the  
23 Department, and that we put forward firm, solid proposals to increase the allocation that we get  
24 from Central Government, because I firmly believe and the statistics are there to back that up  
25 that we are grossly underfunded and unfortunately we are going to, year on year, continue to be  
26 fighting overly 300,000 out of an overall funding of 91 million. That's what this budget is going  
27 to come down to, where that 300,000 goes. So out of 91 million. And I don't think that's  
28 sustainable whatsoever. So Cathaoirleach, I'll leave it at that, I just maybe would ask the  
29 question as to where that proposal is to the department with regard our overall funding for next  
30 year.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Cllr Lawless.

32 Cllr LAWLESS: Thank you Cathaoirleach, Sinn Fein would like to put forward a proposal for  
33 the 300,000. We would like to see 25,000 go to the DPG for private homeowners. We would  
34 like 75,000 to go to the DPG for Local Authority housing stock. We would also like to provide

1 150,000 to the central heating system again programme, which we done last year. I feel as  
2 landlords, and Local Authority, as Local Authority tenants, it's our responsibility to make sure  
3 our housing stocks are up to proper living conditions. And then we would also like to provide  
4 50,000 to go into the homeless services as well. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, do you have a seconder for that.

6 Cllr BRADY: I'll second it.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan.

8 Cllr BEHAN: Chairman, my understanding then from that particular proposal is that Sinn Fein  
9 intend accepting the increase in the property tax. Well that's exactly what you are doing. And  
10 I'll be voting against any proposal that's made here today, regrettably, I don't like doing it, on the  
11 basis of my strong opposition to that 15% increase. And while people might say it's political and  
12 all the rest of it, I have to say I was contacted by quite a number of people in the last few weeks  
13 who have discovered their property tax has been increased. They didn't realise it. And I had one  
14 very, very sad conversation with one particular woman who is struggle week by week to make  
15 ends meet. And she could not for the life of her understand how, when we had the chance, when  
16 the Government told us we didn't need to actually increase the revenue coming in, and when we  
17 find even at the weekend the Government suddenly finds extra money that last week they said  
18 they didn't have, and we are going to be told in the next few weeks that the economy is getting  
19 even stronger than we were told already. This woman could not understand how we, as public  
20 representatives, on one of the few occasions when we had a chance, actually decided to increase  
21 the levy on her. That's my reason for objecting, and I am not going to be a hypocrite by actually  
22 trying to propose measures for the money that actually is coming through the budget that other  
23 people are going to vote for.

24  
25 At least the people who are voting for the budget, they're making a stand, they have their view, I  
26 respect everybody's view. But I am not going to try and pretend that I am supporting it and  
27 voting against it at the same time. And I am more than surprised that Sinn Fein in particular, are  
28 taking a stance now where they're actually going to accept the principle of a property tax  
29 increase, having proposed only a few weeks ago that they were against it.

30 Cllr BRADY: Let's not pre-empt the vote.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fox.

32 Cllr FOX: Just on behalf of the group that I am a member of, first of all can I thank the staff and  
33 Lorraine in particular for meeting us last week, and taking us through the whole process. It's  
34 always very helpful to get a feel for the figures before you come in here on budget day. We, as

1 you know, did support the property tax being at 100%, we voted against reducing the property  
2 tax by 15%, and it's not a decision we took lightly, because there is no doubt that there are  
3 people out there that will struggle to pay it. But we felt we done it for the greater good. I  
4 certainly wouldn't like to be trying to take two and a half million out of this budget. I think it  
5 would absolutely decimate services. So we made a conscious decision, it wasn't an easy  
6 decision. We do feel the property tax is seriously flawed, in particular the removal of 20% of  
7 what's collected in County Wicklow to be spent in other Local Authority areas, and we have a  
8 Notice of Motion down which hopefully will come up in December to meet the Minister in  
9 relation to retaining the equalisation 20%. That's a significant amount of money that Wicklow  
10 taxpayers pay, that is taken out of Wicklow and given somewhere else. So we have issues with  
11 the property tax in its current form. But as I said, we have made a conscious decision, we didn't  
12 take it lightly, but we made that, and the budget I feel is balanced, and it is something that we  
13 can support. Cllr Fitzgerald has made a proposal on the extra 300,000 which came at the  
14 eleventh hour. We are satisfied with what Cllr Fitzgerald has proposed so we will be supporting  
15 the budget, plus Cllr Fitzgerald's proposals, thank you.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Winters. Thanks Cathaoirleach. Firstly I suppose just a general  
17 comment, I would like to thank Brian, Lorraine and all their staff for the work that has gone into  
18 producing the budget and for trying to make it as clear as possible. It's not very easy to stretch  
19 90 million to service the county with all of the various requirements that we have. I suppose and  
20 I would like the members of the public to understand that 45 million of that budget is tied up in  
21 payroll and a further 35 million in non-discretionary items, so we as the members of the Council  
22 have a say in how ten million of it really is spent is to best service the needs of the county. It's  
23 not perfect, I wish we had more. I remember a couple of years ago at the height of the recession,  
24 we were arguing about 60,000 and how it would be spent. Things have improved a little. Today  
25 we are making provision for playgrounds. We are making provision for some improvements in  
26 the homeless services, for grants for the housing to the disabled, additional library services, and  
27 then we have the economic development of Wicklow, which I suppose will provide long-term  
28 dividends to all our residents and to all our rate payers. So I think given the circumstances of  
29 where we are and where we have come from, this is not a bad budget at all and I would like to  
30 commend Brian and Lorraine for their work, thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune.

32 Cllr FORTUNE: Thanks Cathaoirleach, first of all, can I thank Lorraine and Brian and  
33 everybody associated with putting everything together. We have had a long, long busy day. I  
34 am in a kind of a peculiar position here just because we don't operate a whip in our group. So I'll

1 say what I have to say and the rest of the group can, mightn't agree with me, but I think the way  
2 the suggestion has been made, if there is extra money to break it down across the various  
3 categories, I think that's fantastic and I would support that kind of approach. But I have a  
4 problem. It's quite similar to Cllr Behan's and when we talked about the property tax the last  
5 time, I voted against the increase in the property tax. So I can't be a hypocrite either, because  
6 while we are saying in one hand we are going to give money out, in the other hand we have  
7 already taken it from the people as well so, the net thing is we are just playing around and also I  
8 am kind of - I find some of these exercises that happen within the Chamber, because of the way  
9 the Council is controlled, a little bit cynical. Because it was broadly known to all and sundry  
10 that one of the parties within the Chamber had been told by their hierarchy that they were not to  
11 support the budget because of what was being done with rates. And obviously then there was a  
12 quick change in that over the weekend to try and make sure that didn't become an issue. So I  
13 really find the exercise terribly, terribly cynical.

14  
15 I find the way we do our business, and I know I am seen as a bit of a maverick by certain people  
16 because of what I do and what I say, but I have to be fair to myself, I have to be honest with  
17 myself, and really, I can't be kind of contradicting what I said in previous months, so I don't  
18 support what's been going on with the property tax. People are hurting, I am getting people -  
19 people can't afford to pay. I spoke to someone earlier on today about the fact, things like rent  
20 allowance, people can't afford to go into their houses, because we are not, the system is not  
21 helping them and we play these little games then and we feed out these things, look at what we  
22 are doing and we are not doing anything in reality. So I personally won't be supporting the  
23 budget and I have been consistent on that. And I want to be fair to the rest of my group, that's  
24 just my personal view, and as I said at the outset, we don't operate a whip so, any member of the  
25 rest of the group is entitled to have their own view, how they do it. If there is extra money,  
26 great, give it the way you are doing it but in principle I don't agree with the way things are being  
27 done here.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vance.

29 Cllr VANCE: Thank you Chairman. Like other Councillors, I would like to thank the finance  
30 staff, Lorraine herself, and her staff, she would know she doesn't do it all on her own, there is an  
31 awful lot of people who put in an awful lot of effort on you will all our behalves, and the  
32 communication is an example really, the communication that existed between the finance  
33 department and Local Authority members within the last few weeks in regards to the lead-up to  
34 the budget, that has resulted in a reasonably well communicated budget and all the questions

1 were answered and there was availability of the officials in regard to this.

2  
3 Now I have respect for anyone that votes against the property tax, and various things like that. I  
4 think that's fine. I don't have a problem with that. My problem is when people vote against  
5 property tax and then try and spend the money that other people have allocated to it. That's what  
6 I have a problem with. The reason we have this budget and let's face it, I think it's a reasonable  
7 budget, is because 22 members of the Council voted for two and a half million extra over and  
8 above because we didn't have the NPPR money this year like we had last year.

9  
10 And I remember, Cllr Doran would have remembered it as well, when I came on the Council  
11 first, Cllr Behan would have well remembered it as well, in the 80s when I came on the Council  
12 first, we hadn't got any money for anything and the fact of the matter was we were cutting  
13 services all over the police. As a public rep I can tell you, it's not a nice place to be irrespective  
14 of what you are in any particular party, because every party and every person that's elected to  
15 this Council wants to do well for their community. They want to do the best they can.

16  
17 We might have different agendas here and there, but effectively every member that's elected  
18 wants to do well for their community and do the best they can. And cutting services and not  
19 really - is not really one of them as far as I was concerned. That taught me a lesson in the 80s in  
20 regards to not having any money to provide basic services, or cutting basic services to the people  
21 we represent. And the most people that thought like me had a choice to make, do we cut the  
22 budget by two and a half million and cut all these services, or do we continue with these services  
23 and take the hit? And whereas the people -- I made that decision and I am prepared to take the  
24 hit. People that didn't make that decision, I have respect for, but they can't be expected to come  
25 and want to claim credit and make proposals for the two and a half million, and at the same time  
26 go around distributing leaflets and literature telling everyone what great people they were  
27 because they voted for 15% and everyone else voted against them as well. So in this regard, I  
28 think the budget that we have before us is a reasonable budget, it's well thought out. It  
29 distributes money where I think there is the greatest need in society and I would like to thank a  
30 lot of the members that have agreed with this, that it does distribute the money in the areas where  
31 we feel it's in most need. And I would like to commend it to all the members, thank you.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless.

33 Cllr LAWLESS: Thank you Cathaoirleach, I just kind of want to respond back there to Cllr  
34 Vance. I am not actually putting forward a proposal to spend the 2.5 million. It was the extra

1 300,000 that materialised over the weekend from the global valuation, the refund that we are  
2 putting forward a proposal. We still stand as a party for the reduction for the 15%. We never  
3 said we were definitely voted for the budget here today. So I just want to make that very clear: I  
4 am not putting forward suggestions to spend the 2.5 million. I want to make that very, very  
5 clear. It's just the 300,000, a bit like the NPPR money that appeared last year that wasn't in the  
6 budget and then all of a sudden, it was in the budget and every single Councillor here more or  
7 less in the groups put forward a proposal for that, whether they voted for the budget or not last  
8 year. I am only putting forward the proposals for the 300,000, thank you.

9 Cllr VANCE: Chairman this is a budget of 91 million, not 300,000.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Snell.

11 Cllr SNELL: Thanks Cathaoirleach, again previous speakers said that people around the  
12 Chambers here are acting like great people. Well believe me, I am sitting here many years and I  
13 don't class anyone in this chambers as great. Far from it. Very fair and decent people, but I  
14 haven't met a great person in here yet in regards of public representatives. But the 300,000 that's  
15 been put forward here, we have put forward for 100,000 to the DPGs, 150,000 central heating  
16 and 500 for homeless services. I have my own mind Cathaoirleach and I certainly will vote  
17 whatever way I want if it come to this. But unfortunately, people are mixing up the vote that  
18 happened here a couple of weeks ago in regards to the Local Property Tax. That vote is gone.  
19 Today we are voting on a budget, whether we believe that 91 million is being fairly distributed  
20 between all sectors, and unfortunately I couldn't in all consciousness say that the 300,000 that  
21 suddenly was found over the weekend is better spent by Wicklow County Council to put into the  
22 Cliff Walk, 50,000 be put into a Cliff Walk in Bray and Greystones? Another 50,000 into  
23 Municipal Districts, 10,000 each for tourism when tourism has had a 20,000 increase. I just find  
24 it baffling how members can sit around here week on week, month on month, year on year, and  
25 sing how disheartened they are in regards of what's happening in our public services such as  
26 housing, and this 300,000 wasn't known about until this morning. And now all of a sudden, the  
27 Cliff Walk seems to need money. The SPC responsible for the Cliff Walk found 30,000 only  
28 less than two months ago, 6,000 was distributed to each Municipal District. Now to find 30,000  
29 late in the day this year, I am sure they can find 30,000 next year to put into the Cliff Walk. I  
30 think that it's a disgrace to suggest that we should put 50,000 of this and it is only the crumbs  
31 from the table, it is a 91 million budget but bear in mind 12 million of that comes from our  
32 housing stock of which only 20% is retained within the housing section. I have no problem, I'll  
33 support what I believe is fair and right, I just feel that what's being proposed here is not fair. I  
34 couldn't stand over 50,000 going into a Cliff Walk as I have said. And I just feel it's sad that we

1 have spent the whole day here and really we could have stayed at home because we have no say  
2 or shape on this budget whatsoever. Thanks Cathaoirleach.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, there is nobody else showing to speak, so just from my own point  
4 of view, I would like to echo I think what everybody universally has said around the table which  
5 is the thanks for the hard work and the dedication shown by Lorraine Lynch and the staff in  
6 finance, Breda McCarthy, Debbie Crombie, Derek Keys and I would have in the past over the  
7 years, I think like most people, felt there was a degree of smoke and mirrors. I was actually  
8 looking for that in the budget line to see where we pay for the smoke and mirrors in Wicklow  
9 County Council, but I have to say I honestly believe the level of transparency that has actually  
10 been shown this year and the fact that any question asked has been answered, even over the  
11 weekend that excel spreadsheet you sent out, going through every single line has brought a  
12 reassuring level of transparency to the Council. And I think even on the questions around the  
13 legal bills and the like, I am seeing a sea change and I think it's something that I really do value  
14 and I appreciate from everybody so thanks a million for running those workshops too and  
15 making yourself available at the weekend to take phone calls, to take emails and to respond to  
16 those things. I know some people have this view about the public sector that they don't do that,  
17 but they certainly do. And I have found people in this County Council to be fantastic in terms of  
18 that. So I think that's something that's worth noting too.

19  
20 I suppose when it comes down to it, we are talking about - actually between the proposals made  
21 by Sinn Fein and the proposals made by Pat Fitzgerald and supported by independents and the  
22 like, there is very little difference when you are talking about a 91 million budget, it's down to  
23 fractions, I mean there is an agreement on homelessness 50K, the DPG, I mean because of the  
24 2.5 million, I think there is now 150 in the budget anyway for DPG, so this is about raising it and  
25 the difference there is whether you do it by 50 or 100. And then the Municipal District, money  
26 back to the districts to make their own decisions about that. I take the points made. I am not a  
27 fan of the way the Municipal Districts work. I think it's set up in the wrong way and I back Cllr  
28 Behan who has asked everybody and encouraged people to fill out the questionnaire and make  
29 their opinions count. We really need to do that and tell the Government if we don't agree with  
30 the way it's structured at the moment that it needs to change and I think it does need to change  
31 because hopefully we are all passionate about Local Government and Local Government  
32 working well for the people. Honestly, the decision and I respect people in what decisions they  
33 make but I believe while there may be some people who find it very difficult to pay the increase  
34 in the property tax, I think the vast majority of people actually can pay that and I think they

1 actually are willing to pay it because they want to see services in their local area. And I think  
2 that's probably one of - finally because this whole frustration we have had in that we are asking  
3 people to pay property tax and then not really feeling that we are delivering anything to them.  
4 That's probably the big message that's actually coming out of this budget is that I actually feel  
5 for the first time that we are starting to deliver stuff to the people of Wicklow so that they can  
6 actually get a public realm that they deserve, they can get footpaths they deserve, roads they  
7 deserve, they can get playgrounds that their kids can play on safely.

8  
9 And in the housing section that we are actually dealing with housing and I have been on to Joe, I  
10 just think Joe needs a PR agent to actually start PRing some of the stuff that's actually happening  
11 in housing because there is a great story happening and somebody needs to tell that story and  
12 feel loud and proud about what's actually happening. I think the libraries, the parks, the tourism  
13 and the economic development, I think it is really fantastic, and not to forget that rates rebate,  
14 because I know everybody agreed with this equalisation of the rates and I think it's a decision we  
15 are going to have to make as to the time line we use for that, but this idea for the first time ever  
16 that we are giving a rates rebate, so in effect nobody has to pay more rates and we are being  
17 much more professional about this, we are saying let's put people on to DD, they're on DD for  
18 most other things, so why not for the Council and spread those payments in a reasonable way  
19 over the years but it's a matter of actually getting the money in so we can then deliver back to the  
20 people. So from the point of view, again thank you for the budget, I know win of the things that  
21 surprises me all the time is people talking about parties and all that, and isn't it awful. I think  
22 Cllr Fortune, my understanding is you were a member of the Labour Party and you were part of  
23 a pact which actually saw you take the Chair, so I mean at the ends of the day, that's the way  
24 things work sometimes.

25 Cllr FORTUNE: If you want to have a debate about that, I have all night.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not having a debate.

27 Cllr VANCE: A very good vice Chairman.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: From that point of view.

29 Cllr FORTUNE: It just shows Chairman how cynical this Chamber is and how cynical the  
30 whole operation is and the way we are lying to the people of Wicklow and coddling them up to  
31 eyes. We got 300,000 overnight that wasn't going to be there at all only because Fianna Fail  
32 were going to vote against the budget as a dictum from the Director of elections.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: I don't know what I have said to disappoint you.

34 Cllr FORTUNE: If you want to bring up a point I'll debate it back with you, you are not going to



1 get away with a glib comment. If you want to make a remark, be prepared to discuss it with me.  
2 It's not...

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's not a glib comment.

4 Cllr FITZGERALD: We got no dictum from anyone. I'll vote whatever way I feel like. I won't  
5 be bound by dictats from anyone. So I think that's wrong what you are saying there Cllr Fortune.

6 Cllr FORTUNE: It was in the media.

7 Cllr FITZGERALD: Which paper?

8 Cllr FORTUNE: Your own paper.

9 Cllr FITZGERALD: Can I just ask a question, the position on rates equalisation, is that part of  
10 the budget process or a separate vote?

11 DIRECTOR LYNCH: It can be taken together.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think we should do it after the budget and then we can if we want deal  
13 with the vacancy and whether or not we give 100% rebate there. I think the sensible thing is to  
14 have a vote now on the two proposals that have been put forward and at that stage then we will  
15 move on to the -- decide the length of time, the rates and the vacancy rate. Okay.

16 Cllr VANCE: Is there two proposals Chairman?

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: There is two proposals, yeah.

18 Cllr VANCE: I thought there was only one.

19 Cllr MITCHELL: Let's vote on the budget.

20 Cllr VANCE: I thought Sinn Fein proposed how the 300,000 was being spent, I didn't think they  
21 were proposing the budget with the 300,000.

22 Cllr LAWLESS: We are not. We are doing the same as what Pat Fitzgerald, he put forward his  
23 proposal for 300,000.

24 Cllr FITZGERALD: As an addendum to the budget, that's exactly what I said. There.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just to clarify that then, Pat you are saying the budget as is with the  
26 distribution of the 300,000.

27 Cllr FITZGERALD: My proposal to allocate the 300,000.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's the vote for the budget as in the draft document plus the 300,000  
29 with the distribution you are talking about.

30 Cllr FITZGERALD: Yeah.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: And Sinn Fein.

32 Cllr SNELL: We were just talking about the proposal for the 300,000, that was to be voted on  
33 first. That's what all the members would have been talking about outside.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's a proposal as to how you see the budget...

1 Cllr SNELL: If we take for example, there might be members here who would see Sinn Fein  
2 have 100,000 for DPGs as opposed to what Cllr Fitzgerald is saying 50,000 for DPGs. They  
3 might want to vote for the budget and they might want to vote against 50,000 as opposed to  
4 100,000. There is people here would feel passionate about DPGs and 100,000 being spent on it  
5 as opposed to Fianna Fáil's recommendation of only spending 50. So are you not going to take  
6 the 300,000 separately?

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, it was actually a vote - so you propose what you believe the budget  
8 should be for the Council. So the Council had put forward the draft budget and Cllr Fitzgerald is  
9 saying they're accepting the draft budget with the 300 being separated out, as he has proposed.  
10 My understanding was that you were actually saying the draft budget with the 300,000 as...

11 Cllr SNELL: If there is other members who would have an issue of 50,000 going to the Cliff  
12 Walk, I am sure there is people in other districts who don't give one iota.

13 Cllr FITZGERALD: Then they can vote against it.

14 Cllr SNELL: Then they're voting against the budget.

15 Cllr VANCE: Chairman you have one proposal.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Hold on Cllr Vance, I want to check, do I have a proposal as in the  
17 budget plus your breakdown of the 300,000?

18 Cllr LAWLESS: You were told it was separate. There was no mention of it...

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: It's not separate. It's as is. Honestly, it is the way...

20 Cllr BOURKE: It has to be taken together Chairman. It's always done that way.

21 Cllr VANCE: Chairman, there is one proposal.

22 Cllr SNELL: I would like to propose the budget with that 300,000 in it as was outlined by  
23 Councillor...

24 Cllr BEHAN: Then it should go on the record then that Sinn Fein are proposing the increase in  
25 15%.

26 Cllr SNELL: It's not rocket science Councillor.

27 Cllr BRADY: That vote was taken over there.

28 Cllr SNELL: He is over there, take out a big ad in the paper and put in what you want. Take out  
29 another full page ad.

30 Cllr BEHAN: 50% increase and you proposed nothing on 15%, two weeks ago! Three weeks  
31 ago.

32 Cllr SNELL: With your crocodile tears, worried about homelessness.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless then, this replaces your original, is that okay, so Cllr Snell,  
34 you are putting forward this and do I have a seconder for that?

1 Cllr SNELL: I can only propose it.

2 Cllr LAWLESS: I'll second it.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lawless has seconded that.

4 Cllr DORAN: Chairman when they're all cooled down a bit, I want to thank Wicklow County  
5 Council for all the help you gave us to win the Pride of Place, especially the two - Michael  
6 Nicholson and Jackie Carroll, and for yourself Chairman for, not Chairman, manager for coming  
7 down to Ennis. It was the best night we have had for a long time. Some people didn't get home  
8 until three o'clock in the morning, but I went home...

9 CE: That's the last time I'll tell you anything!

10 Cllr DORAN: I don't want to be taking the credit for it, our manager down there, Sister Mary  
11 Crosbie is the person who does the most work.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Well done, I mentioned it earlier, but congratulations. (APPLAUSE)

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so I think we will go for a vote, so do you want to...

14 MS GALLAGHER: As proposed by Cllr Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Murphy. You don't  
15 want me to read that out again, everybody is happy with the 300,000? Okay.

16

17 (A vote was taken)

18

19 MS GALLAGHER: That's 21 for, nine against and two not present.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much members. The next item we need to deal with is  
21 the rates.

22 DIRECTOR LYNCH: The rates harmonisation, last year it was agreed it would be 72.04 and it's  
23 the timeframe for bringing the four authorities to the one rate. It's included to bring it over five  
24 years with 2015 being year one, 2016 is the first year of a change, and what it means is an  
25 increase for Arklow and Wicklow, the former Town Council areas of 3%, for Bray Town  
26 Council, 2% and a decrease for the Wicklow County Council, former Wicklow County Council  
27 area of 2%, that would be 55% of the rate base would be getting a decrease. This is outside  
28 anybody on the rates incentive scheme or anything like that. That's just the proposal that's there.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: The alternative to that if somebody wanted to propose something else.

30 DIRECTOR LYNCH: You could push it out another year or push it back.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: And the implications would be...

32 DIRECTOR LYNCH: About ten grand, give or take. To the budget it would be about ten grand  
33 but the implications for individual rate payers, it's minor, you are talking about instead of 3%,  
34 you are talking 2.75%, in the scheme of it, it would be minor. If they avail of the rates incentive

1 scheme, they'll get a reduction there.

2 Cllr FITZGERALD: In the Arklow Municipal District, that change benefits 1018 people. It's an  
3 increase for 608 and for those in the rural areas, it's 1018 who fall in within the figure of naught  
4 to 10,000. So last year counts as one year, is that right?

5 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Year one. 2015 sorry, year one.

6 Cllr FITZGERALD: It's about 2.9% increase for those in the Arklow Town area, is it?

7 DIRECTOR LYNCH: About that, yeah.

8 Cllr FITZGERALD: It is yeah. The rate incentive should balance it off if people are able to  
9 pay.

10 DIRECTOR LYNCH: It will give them more, give them back.

11 Cllr FITZGERALD: We can put that out further if we want.

12 DIRECTOR LYNCH: We can change it again next year.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Will we propose to leave it as is, that's saying that this is, 2015 is year  
14 one, and that it will do the equalisation over four years?

15 Cllr FOX: I propose that.

16 Cllr WINTERS: I'll second that.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that agreed? Agreed, okay.

18 DIRECTOR LYNCH: One last thing, the rates vacancy, this will allow 100% vacancy for any -  
19 they get a refund of their rates if they pay it, there is the option to decide this per district, to  
20 reduce it from 100,000 down to nil. We propose at retaining it at 100% for 2016.

21 Cllr FITZGERALD: I propose that.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Does that have to be proposed and seconded per district or just...

23 DIRECTOR LYNCH: If you can do it all over...

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: If nobody says no. Irene.

25 Cllr WINTERS: Just to say that at the moment I don't think there is been a sufficient recovery to  
26 allow full occupancy of premises, so I think we should vote with Lorraine and leave it at the  
27 100%.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Brady, do you want to come in on this.

29 Cllr BRADY: No Cathaoirleach, it was just on the point I made earlier on about the rent arrears,  
30 to try and get those figures from you Lorraine.

31 DIRECTOR LYNCH: I'll send them on.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Hold it, so Cllr Fitzgerald, you proposed 100%?

33 Cllr FITZGERALD: Yeah.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: And seconded by Cllr Fox, is that agreed? Agreed, okay, just before...

1 Ms LYNCH: One thing, I just want to I want to thank the members for all their help and  
2 communication throughout, but also I want to thank Rita, Debbie and Derek and the people in  
3 finance but as well the people in all the directorates, they put the work into the budget and  
4 budget figures and the fights I had with them.

5 MS GALLAGHER: If I could have a proposer and seconder for the CPG meetings up to the 5th  
6 of October, they've all been circulated to the elected members.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Ruttle are you proposing it?

8 Cllr RUTTLE: Yeah.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: And seconded by John Snell. Members thank you very much, it's been a  
10 long day, thank you very much and we will see you here on the 7th of December. Cheers.

11

12 Meeting concluded at 5.30pm

13



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