

**MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW ON MONDAY 6th
FEBRUARY 2017, COMMENCING 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

COUNCILLOR P. FITZGERALD, CATHAOIRLEACH, COUNCILLORS T. ANNESLEY, J. BEHAN, V. BLAKE, S. BOURKE, T.CULLEN, S. CULLEN, P. DORAN, G. DUNNE, T. FORTUNE, C. FOX, M. KAVANAGH, P KENNEDY, N. LAWLESS, S. MATTHEWS, M. MCDONALD, G. McLOUGHLIN, D. MITCHELL, M. MURPHY, O. O'BRIEN, M. O CONNOR, G. O'NEILL, J. RUTTLE, J. RYAN, J. SNELL, B. THORNHILL, E. TIMMINS, P. VANCE, J. WHITMORE AND I. WINTERS.

APOLOGIES:

COUNCILLORS D. NOLAN AND G. WALSH.

IN ATTENDANCE:

**MR. B. DOYLE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MR. S. QUIRKE, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. T. MURPHY, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. D. O'BRIEN, DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MR. M. GEANEY, A/DIRECTOR OF SERVICES
MS. L. GALLAGHER, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR
MR. D. MARNANE, A/SENIOR ENGINEER
MS. D. CROMIE, A/ HEAD OF FINANCE
MR. D. KEYES, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
MR. L. FITZPATRICK, HEAD OF IT
MS. S. O'BRIEN, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
MS. F. KEOGH, SENIOR PLANNER
MS. G. O'NEILL, ASSISTANT STAFF OFFICER
MS. S. WALSH, SENIOR PLANNER
MR. T. GREGAN, AUDIT COMMITTEE
MR. N. GERAGHTY, AUDIT COMMITTEE
MS. M. SAVAGE, AUDIT COMMITTEE
MS. K. BOYLE, TECHNICAL SUPPORT OFFICER**

At the outset Cllr. G. O Neill referred to the Wicklow Times being freely available in the lobby of Wicklow County Council. He asked for it to be put on record that he was unhappy with a number of articles contained therein. In response the Cathaoirleach suggested that this matter be raised with the protocol committee.

Votes of Sympathy

Elected Members passed a vote of sympathy to the families of the late Mr. James Myler, Mrs. Mary Fanning, Mrs. Mona Halvey and Mrs Patricia Byrne. A minutes silence was observed for the deceased.

Suspension of Standing Orders

Wind Farm Group Aughrim: Cllr. S. Bourke requested a suspension of standing orders to discuss ongoing issues in relation to the wind farm at Aughrim. The Cathaoirleach advised that he would be asking that this matter be discussed at the March meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. P. Kennedy and it was agreed to have a presentation on this matter at the March meeting. Cllr. S. Bourke withdrew the request for suspension of standing orders.

Coastal Erosion at Arklow: Cllr. S. Bourke requested a suspension of standing orders to discuss coastal erosion at Arklow. It was noted that this matter was to be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Arklow Municipal District.

Rent cap in the Greystones Area: Cllr. N. Lawless requested a suspension of standing orders to discuss the rent cap recently announced by the Minister and that the Greystones District had failed to come under this rental zone having regard to the high rental market in the area. This was seconded by Cllr. M. McDonald and it was agreed to suspend standing orders at 4.30 p.m. to discuss same.

ITEM NO. 1

To confirm and sign minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 5th December 2016

It was proposed by Cllr. N. Lawless, seconded by Cllr. G. Dunne and agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday, 5th December 2016 as circulated

ITEM NO. 2

To confirm and sign minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday, 9th January 2017.

It was proposed by Cllr. S. Cullen, seconded by Cllr. G. Dunne and agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday, 9th January 2017 as circulated.

ITEM NO. 3

To consider the disposal of the Fee Simple Interest comprised in Folio No. 2461L – Co. Wicklow being 17 Kilmagig, Avoca, Co Wicklow to Patrick and Breda Kinsella, 17 Kilmagig, Avoca, Co Wicklow

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Kennedy, seconded by Cllr. M. Murphy and agreed to dispose of the Fee Simple Interest comprised in Folio No. 2461L – Co. Wicklow being 17 Kilmagig, Avoca, Co Wicklow to Patrick and Breda Kinsella, 17 Kilmagig, Avoca, Co Wicklow as circulated.

ITEM NO. 4

To consider Section 85 agreement with Kildare County Council to facilitate the management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on Roads.

Letter dated the 31st of January, 2017 from Ms. Allyson Minion, Administrative Officer, Transportation and Roads Infrastructure Department, with enclosure; '*Information on Transport Infrastructure Ireland's programme for the management of Invasive Alien Plant Species on national roads*', was circulated to the elected members.

Elected members asked why Kildare County Council was to take the lead under the Section 85 agreement. In response Mr. S. Quirke, DOS, explained the rationale for the decision.

WICKLOW County Council at a Council meeting on the _____ 2017 resolved pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 that they would enter into an agreement with Kildare County Council to authorise Kildare County Council to perform the powers, duties and functions of WICKLOW County Council relating to:-

(i) management of IAPS recorded within the boundaries of national roads in the administrative area of WICKLOW County Council, in accordance with IAPS Call-off Contract;

(ii) Survey of IAPS occurrences within the boundaries of regional roads in the administrative area of WICKLOW County Council, in accordance with IAPS Call-off Contract

He further advised that :

- A Section 85 agreement is logical as both the national and regional roads run through both local authority areas.
- There is a separate national road design office in Kildare separately resourced with staff.
- Kildare County Council will deal with the procurement
- There is some €50,000 in the budget which will be dealt with by the Council locally
- A section 85 agreement does not hand over power to Kildare County Council but will enable Kildare to provide the service to Wicklow County Council
- The N11 is not part of the Section 85 agreement and the Hogweed issue in Bray will be dealt with by Wicklow County Council

It was proposed by Cllr. V. Blake, seconded by Cllr. G. Ruttle and agreed that the Council enter into a section 85 agreement with Kildare County Council to facilitate the management of Invasive Alien Plant species on Roads, as outlined in report dated the 31st of January, 2017, circulated to the elected members. Having regard to the concerns raised by the elected members it was considered that there should be further engagement between Wicklow County Council and Kildare County Council and that the members receive a presentation at full Council meeting. However, at the conclusion of the discussion it was agreed that in the first instance the presentation by made to the Baltinglass Municipal District covering for example, areas to be surveyed, the results of the survey and how it is to be actioned etc.

ITEM NO. 5

To receive End of Year Report 2016 from the Wicklow County Council Audit Committee (In attendance presenting to the Council: Mr. T. Gregan, Chairman of the WCC Audit Committee and committee members Mr. Noel Geraghty and Ms. Mary Savage)

Mr. T. Gregan, Chairman of the Committee presented the end of year report, 2016 to the elected members as follows:-

6th February 2017

To the Cathaoirleach and each Member of the Wicklow County Council

**RE: WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE - ANNUAL
PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 31/12/2016**

Dear Councillor,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address the Council on the activities of the Wicklow County Council Audit Committee for the twelve month period up to 31st December 2016.

It's not quite a year since we presented to you the Members, our Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2015. In previous years, this was done at the April Council meeting.

However, in our quest for greater efficiency, we have decided to surprise you with an earlier visit this year.

The Wicklow County Council Audit Committee was initially established in 2007 under Section V of the Local Government (Business Improvement Districts) Act 2005. Following the May 2014 local elections, the Audit Committee was re-established. The membership of the committee now comprises:

- Mr. Tom Gregan, Chairman
- Mr. Noel Geraghty, Vice Chairman
- Ms. Mary Savage
- Cllr. Edward Timmins
- Cllr. Gerry Walsh (who replaced Deputy Pat Casey during 2016)

The Committee is supported and assisted by Ms. D. Cromie, A/Head of Finance, Mr. D. Keyes and Mr. T. Murphy.

Since our establishment, we have been holding formal meetings between 5 and 6 times per annum. In addition, during 2016 the Audit Committee arranged to meet with individual members of the Management Team in an effort to identify the key challenges facing each Directorate. These meetings have proved to be very useful in that it allows us to hear at first hand, the views of each Head of Function in relation to matters of concern to him/her etc. This in turn helps to inform us in and focus our thinking in the context of the annual audit planning process.

The functions of the Audit Committee are prescribed in Section 59 of the Local Government Act 2014 and include:

- To review the financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the Local Authority
- To foster the development of best practice in the performance by the Local Authority of its internal audit function
- To review any audited financial statement, Auditor's Report or Auditor's Special Report in relation to the Local Authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its Chief Executive in response to such a statement or report and report its findings to the Authority
- To assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the Local Authorities performance of its functions
- To review systems that are operated by the Local Authority for the management of risks
- To review the findings and recommendations of the National Oversight & Audit Committee (NOAC) and the response of the Chief Executive to these and take further action as appropriate.

INTERNAL AUDIT ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS

During 2016 Capita Business Services Limited were engaged by Wicklow County Council to support the staff of the Internal Audit Unit. The Committee wishes to record its appreciation of the professional expertise brought to the process by Capita and to acknowledge the benefit to the Audit Committee and the Council by their input.

The following audits were undertaken during the course of 2016. All audits are assigned an "Assurance Rating" which is an objective assessment of the control environment operating

in the area under review. Assurance ratings and their significance are categorised under four headings as follows

Substantial – There is a robust system of risk management, control and governance which should ensure that objectives are fully achieved

Satisfactory – There is an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control. Any residual risk should not significantly impact on the achievement of objectives

Limited – There is an inadequate and/or ineffective system of governance, risk management and control in place

Unacceptable – The system of governance, risk management and control has failed or there is a real and substantial risk that the system will fail to meet its objectives

1. Compliance with the Financial Procedures Manual

The purpose of this review was to examine record and evaluate the systems of internal financial control established by management. The review focussed on assessing the internal financial controls in place for Purchasing, Procurement, Accounts Payable and Travel & Subsistence. The objective was to ensure that the Council has implemented a robust and effective control framework in accordance with best practice guidance and to ensure that the procedures manual accurately reflects these controls.

The overall assurance classification rating of this review was “Satisfactory” which indicates that there is an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control.

2. Review of Fixed Assets

The purpose of this review was to assess the overarching control objectives in respect of the systems operating in this area, namely

- To ensure that fixed assets are recorded on a complete and accurate basis
- To ensure that fixed asset acquisitions and disposals are approved appropriately and recorded accurately
- To ensure that any adjustments to the value of fixed assets are calculated accurately
- To ensure that fixed assets are safeguarded by adequate and effective physical security arrangements

The overall assurance classification rating of this review was “Limited”.

A number of management responses are being introduced to improve this categorisation. These include

- Development of a Fixed Asset Policy & Procedure Manual
- Further categorisation of the Fixed Asset Register

- Consideration of tagging of portable IT type assets
- Physical verification procedures
- Regular updating of Financial Management System

3. Review of Debtors

The objective of this review was to assess the following areas

- Policies and Procedures
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Accuracy of Accounting
- Adequacy of bad debt provision
- Debt Management

The overall assurance classification rating of this review was “Limited”. Again a number of management responses are being introduced to improve this categorisation. These include

- Further development of the operating procedures
- Development of standardised documentation
- More detailed record keeping of debt management activity

The Audit Committee continues to closely monitor progress in relation to the collection of Development Contributions. The timely collection of outstanding amounts ensures the provision of funding for essential services.

4. Bank Reconciliation

The aim of this review was to assess the following areas

- The Bank Reconciliation Process
- Segregation of duties
- Timeliness of completion of the Bank Reconciliation Process
- Adequacy of the audit trail
- Training and future resourcing

The overall assurance classification rating of this review was “Satisfactory” which indicates that there is an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control in operation.

5. Review of VAT Compliance

The purpose of this review was to examine the Council’s compliance with VAT regulations and to ensure

- That appropriate procedures are in place for processing and compiling VAT returns
- That VAT returns are calculated accurately and submitted to the Revenue Commissioners in a timely manner
- That the Council’s accounting records are complete and accurate with regard to VAT

The overall assurance classification rating of this review was “Satisfactory” which indicates that there is an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control in operation.

The following audit report has been received and is awaiting management response

6. Review of Gateway Labour Activation Scheme

The objectives of this review are to establish

- If appropriate records are maintained
- If approved time returns are appropriately certified and completed on an accurate and timely basis
- If the required reporting protocols are properly implemented

Again the overall assurance classification rating of this review was “Satisfactory” which indicates that there is an adequate and effective system of governance, risk management and control in operation.

Field work for the following audits was undertaken in late 2016 and reports on these areas are currently being drafted.

7. Review of Community Grants Scheme

The purpose of the review is to examine record and evaluate the systems of internal control and to make recommendations where this is deemed necessary and appropriate. The review will address risks related to the completeness, accuracy, recording and regularity of the Council’s expenditure under the Scheme.

8. Information & Communications Technology / Business Continuity

The objective of this audit is to review the following control objectives

- To ensure that roles and responsibilities within the ICT Sections are clearly allocated and appropriately resourced
- To ensure that the technical systems and the physical environment are fit for purpose
 - To ensure that IT Security is robust in preventing unauthorised access to systems and data
 - To ensure that systems and data are stored effectively and appropriately backed up
 - To ensure adequate contingency arrangements for disaster recovery and business continuity

ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN

Work on the Annual Audit Plan is progressing. The plan is being prepared in consultation with the Chief Executive, Heads of Function and the forthcoming assignments will reflect the current focus on the need to achieve further efficiencies and savings etc. The list of assignments completed will be included in further reports to the Council.

PROCUREMENT

You will recall that each year, as part of our presentation to you, we highlight the importance of pursuing good procurement practices. This has been the recurring theme of the Government's programme for the civil and public service and there has been a significant amount of work carried out in this area at national and regional level in recent years.

At our December meeting, Ms. Fiona Flynn, Procurement Officer, made a comprehensive presentation to the committee on developments in the procurement area. We very much welcome the progress being made at national and local level and we will of course continue to highlight the importance of good procurement practices.

MEETING WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDITOR

We were delighted to welcome Mr. Maurice O'Neill, Local Government Auditor, to our December meeting. During his address, Mr. O'Neill outlined the main elements of the Statutory Auditor's Report for the year ended 31/12/2015. This meeting also allowed the Audit Committee the opportunity to exchange views with the Local Government Auditor on a wide range of issues.

CONCLUSION

We would like to place on record our thanks to the Internal Audit Unit for their support and assistance over the last twelve months. We would also like to thank Mr. Maurice O'Neill, Local Government Auditor for his support and assistance.

We, the Audit Committee, will continue to work with all parties to ensure that progress continues to be made in the broad area of Internal Audit. We believe that our role is more important than ever, given the challenging economic environment in which we are operating.

On behalf of the Audit Committee, I would like to extend our appreciation to the Members of the County Council, to the Chief Executive, Mr. Bryan Doyle and to the staff of the Internal Audit Unit. I would also like to assure you that we will continue to work with all parties to promote good accounting practices, ensure better and more informed decision making and to improve the focus on value for money throughout the organisation.

Yours sincerely,

**MR. TOM GREGAN,
CHAIRMAN,
Wicklow County Council Audit Committee**

At the conclusion of the presentation the elected members made the following contributions and expressed their views which were responded to by the Committee and the Executive.

- They expressed the appreciation of the Council to the members of the Committee and to the Audit staff of Wicklow County Council for their work during the year.

- Reference made to the recent incident in Meath County Council with regard to the transfer of funds and sought assurances that proper measures were in place to ensure that this could not happen in Wicklow County Council.
- Query as to the current position with regard to the Gateway scheme?
- Is Wicklow County Council getting the best value for money from the Community Grants Scheme, and it may be time to review the processes without making it onerous on small community groups.
- Are the Council's assets documented?
- Disappointing that the overall assurance classification of the review of debtors described as 'limited'.

ITEM NO. 6

To receive presentation on Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)(deferred from Council meeting of 9th January 2017)

Ms. G. O'Neill, Housing Department, presented to the Elected Members in relation to the HAP Programme.

Update on the Housing Assistance Payment -HAP

Introduction to HAP

- What is HAP?
- Who is Eligible for HAP?
- HAP & Housing Policy (HAP Legislation)
- T&Cs for Tenants & Landlords
- Challenges, Milestones & Targets
-

What is HAP?

- New form of **Social Housing Support**
- Replaces Rent Supplement for **households with long term need**
- Housing authority **responsible for all households** where housing need determined
- Short term cases stay as Rent Supplement
- HAP is still a Pilot scheme but...
- Household **sources their own accommodation** on the basis of the HAP rent limits
- Rent is **paid directly to landlord** by the local authority on behalf of the tenant but the local authority is not a party to the tenancy
- Once housed through HAP-**housing needs are met**
- Household can take up **full time work** (+30 hours per/week)

What is HAP now?

- Tenants 14,000 households housed by HAP
- Landlords More than 9,500 different landlords
Including 100s of letting agents
- Local Authorities More than half the country's LAs in HAP
One central hub - Limerick

HAP- Eligibility?

Any household that is **qualified for social housing support** is eligible for HAP

Four main groups:

1. **New Social Housing Applicants** who need housing support

2. **Existing households on housing list** who may present to the local authority seeking HAP
3. **Rent supplement recipients changing tenancies.** DSP have agreed to approve a new RS tenancy for these households for an interim period
4. **Long Term Rent Supplement recipients** – referred from DSP and to be transferred to HAP on phased and agreed basis

Policy Objectives

- **Integrated Housing Supports** – all through the local authority
- Facilitates “**activation**” – return to full time work without losing Housing Support
- Improve **quality of accommodation** – inspection of HAP properties by local authorities
- Support **better regulation** of rented sector
- Better management of rental **payments**

Policy Context - Housing Need

- In 2013 the total housing need was 89,872
- Of that, 42,109 (47%) households in receipt of rent supplement in private rented accommodation

Policy Context: Rent Supplement numbers 2011-2015

County	2011	2012	2013	2014	June 2015
Dublin	34,423	32,584	29,541	26,453	25,169
Cork	10,732	9,878	9,020	8,273	7,625
Kildare	4,447	4,338	4,135	3,698	3,569
Galway	4,615	4,134	3,983	3,591	3,476
Wexford	4,102	3,700	3,179	2,700	2,495
Limerick	3,833	3,323	2,984	2,461	1,934
Louth	2,734	2,549	2,422	2,211	1,854
Wicklow	2,719	2,495	2,381	2,130	2,049
Tipperary	2,609	2,199	2,094	1,961	1,914
Donegal	2,977	2,411	2,047	1,812	1,651
Meath	2,723	2,143	1,941	1,726	1,619
Kerry	2,278	2,037	1,888	1,736	1,659
Mayo	2,928	2,435	1,900	1,619	1,606
Westmeath	1,671	1,592	1,588	1,533	1,484
Waterford	2,098	1,773	1,556	1,443	1,238
Clare	1,961	1,722	1,547	1,336	1,286
Kilkenny	1,619	1,365	1,210	1,011	745
Carlow	1,440	1,239	1,108	1,086	1,070
Offaly	1,349	1,240	1,124	1,041	961
Laois	1,178	1,097	1,085	1,008	988
Roscommon	1,275	997	802	687	665

Longford	623	511	507	476	421
Sligo	698	591	542	451	486
Cavan	843	519	455	414	419
Monaghan	488	438	395	352	306
Leitrim	440	374	354	324	327
Total	96,803	87,684	79,788	71,533	67,016

HAP Impacts – Activation

Comparison of the Rent Contribution paid by a Single Adult over 26 under Rent Supplement versus HAP

No. of hours worked on minimum wage	Rent contribution under Rent Supplement	Rent contribution under HAP - SDCC	Rent contribution under HAP - Limerick City
0 hours	€32	€19.80	€28.00
10 hours	€32	€26.82	€35.00
20 hours	€56.15	€30.32	€42.50
25 hours*	€30	€22.62	€29.50
40 hours	Pay full rent	€35.60	€49.00
* Primary benefit stopped			

HAP as flexible policy response

- Provides **greater housing support compared to Rent Supplement**
- Other LA accommodation is an option through **transfer list**
- Social Housing Support but with the **flexibility** of the private rental market
- **Expands choice** to areas where little/no social housing
- Expands delivery for **single person households** and other groups not well served by Social Housing Stock
- Allows **sharing** of accommodation

HAP- Process efficiency

- The importance of Limerick!
- Limerick City and County Council manage Hap Transactions for the Tenant, LA, and landlord

Comparison between Rent Supplement and HAP

RS

- Tenant sources own accommodation
- Tenant pays landlord
- Maximum of 29 working hours
- Withdrawal rate of supplement
- May be on the Housing List

HAP

- Tenant sources own accommodation
- Local authority pays landlord
- Tenant pays differential rent (income based rent)
- Can work full-time
- Housing need is met – may be placed on WCC Transfer List

Changes to Rent Supplement

- Once HAP has commenced in an area, the eligibility for RS changes
- If you're qualified for social housing support you probably won't qualify for Rent Supplement – DSP will refer household to the local authority for HAP
- Main criteria for RS post HAP
- Must have been living in private rented accommodation for at least **6 months** within the last year and been able to afford rent at the beginning of the tenancy
- Or have been in receipt of RS at any time over the previous **12 months**

Ministerial Policy Direction – Transfer List Option

- Directs local authorities to ensure that HAP recipients are **offered a place on the authorities transfer list** who wish to transfer to other forms of social housing support
- For those HAP recipients who come directly off the waiting list, they **maintain their priority on the transfer list**

Terms & Conditions – Tenant

- Must source suitable property **within HAP rent caps** (*generally equivalent to Rent Supplement limits, but not always*)
- **Must pay differential rent** to the local authority. Where recipient is in receipt of social welfare payments through the post office, differential rent is paid via Household Budget scheme
- Must remain in the property for a period of 2 yrs. (*certain exceptional circumstances provided*)
- Must not engage in **anti-social behaviour**
- **Terms & Conditions - Landlord Tenancy must be a tenancy "in good faith" (Section 39(2)(e) of the 2014 Act). Registration of tenancy with the PRTB. Landlord must provide proof of ownership of property to local authority**
- Property must **comply with the standards for rental accommodation**. Under HAP the local authority is obliged to inspect properties within 8 months of the first payment to the landlord
- **Landlord must be tax compliant**. SSC will seek tax clearance immediately. Revenue restrictions on payments to landlord that exceed €10,000 in 12 month period without tax clearance.
-

Challenges of HAP – Landlord/Agent

- Tax Compliance
- Proof of Ownership

- Private Rental inspections
- Paid in arrears/not in advance

Tenant - Landlord Relationship

- **Tenancy is between the Landlord and the Tenant.** The local authority has no role in managing the tenancy.
- Tenancy covered by the **Residential Tenancies Act 2004**. Security of tenure the same as private sector tenancies.
- **No contractual relationship** between the local authority and the landlord

Challenges for HAP in Wicklow

- **High local market rents in some areas of Wicklow**
- **Lack of private rented stock**
- Increased **private rental inspections** for LAs
- Managing **Transfer list** & Allocations
- **Inter LA movement**
- **+RS transfers**
-

BENEFITS OF HAP

- HAP is being introduced to provide a more integrated system of housing supports and aims to:
Allow all social housing supports to be accessed through one body the local authority
- HAP allows recipients to take up full-time employment, while still receiving housing support
- HAP will help to regulate the private rental sector and improve standards of accommodation
- HAP recipients will be able to avail of other social housing supports and options, if they so choose It is intended that where a HAP recipient applies for a transfer immediately after entering HAP, the transfer list would reflect the time the recipient previously spent on the waiting list. The HAP recipient would therefore be placed on the transfer list on no less favourable terms than if they had remained on the waiting list.

HAP – Milestones & Targets

2014

- ✓ **Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014** passed in July
- ✓ Introduction of the Limerick Shared Service Centre
- ✓ **Wave 1 : 7 LAs**
- ✓ Major pillar of **Social Housing Strategy**
- ✓ **485 Households supported at end 2014**

2015

- ✓ **Wave 2: 12 more LAs**
- ✓ **Homeless HAP Pilot Scheme**
- ✓ HAP Business Case Reviewed
- ✓ **5,680 households supported at end 2015**

2016

- ✓ Long-term delivery model of HAP Scheme confirmed
- ✓ Review and increase of HAP rent limits and discretion provided to all LAs
- ✓ **14,000 households with 9,500 HAP landlords**
- Wave 3: 9 more LAs by years end.**
- Key Delivery role in Rebuilding Ireland. Target of 12,000 additional by end 2016**

2017

- Wave 4: HAP rolled out in Final Three Dublin LAs (Full roll out)**
- Target of 15,000 Additional by end 2017

Staff of the Housing Department, Mr. Declan Marnane, A/Senior Engineer, Ms. Siobhan O'Brien, Administrative Officer and Ms. Grainne O'Neill, Assistant Staff Officer, HAP, responded in detail to the queries raised by the elected members in relation to the scheme.

ITEM NO. 7

To receive report of Des O'Brien, Director of Services, Planning and Development, dated 31st January 2017, re: Development Contributions Scheme (former Bray Town Council) September 2013

Report dated 31st of January, 2017 of Des O'Brien, DOS, Planning and Development, along with the former Bray Town Council Development Contribution Scheme was circulated to the elected members.

Re: Development Contribution Scheme (Former Bray Town Council) September 2013

Dear Councillor,

As you are aware, separate Contribution Schemes were in place in the Town Councils of Bray, Arklow and Wicklow. Following the amalgamation, the Members of Wicklow County Council adopted a new Contribution Scheme on 5th October 2015.

This Contribution Scheme included all projects which had previously been listed in the County Council and Town Council Schemes.

With regard to Water Services, any outstanding balances transferred to Irish Water. Any Water Services Contributions levied and paid presently will be forwarded to Irish Water.

As at 31st December 2016, a credit balance of approximately €6.8m is shown against the Bray Contribution Scheme (Class 1 – Roads, Transportation and Car Parking/ Class 3 – Community and Recreational Amenity). This comprises cash received, invoices raised and accounting adjustments. Each of these elements will need to be examined in greater detail and further work is required to establish the accuracy and the precise amount available to allocate towards these projects. (List of Projects attached)

Because of the changed financial environment of local authority finances, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has issued Circular letters with regard to how local authorities conduct their financial affairs. The Department Circular Fin 01/2015 reminds local authorities that they are required to “strictly adhere to the stipulations of Circulars Fin 03/2009, 03/2010 and 13/2012 in terms of ensuring balance revenue and capital accounts and a neutral GGB position”. To achieve this, the Circular further states that “to achieve GGB neutrality in 2015, new loan financing and the use of built-up resources (both of which have a negative impact on the GGB) have to be taken into account”. These Circulars are still valid in 2017 and any expenditure has to be sanctioned by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

If the County Council is to consider expenditure in this regard, there is a requirement to identify and prioritise infrastructural projects and prepare a report to seek specific approval for works. The extension of the Herbert Road Car Park to support parking in the Town Centre

and the proposals to develop the Florentine Centre are a priority. A report seeking specific approval for this project is being prepared for submission to the Department.

I trust the above is the information that is required in this particular instance. The Members will recall that this request for information was made at the Budget meeting of Wicklow County Council. A similar exercise will be undertaken for both Wickow Town Council and Arklow Town Council schemes by the relevant Directors of Service.

I am attaching herewith the following:

- Relevant Circular – FIN 01/2015
- Bray Town Council Contribution Scheme

Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,

Des O'Brien,
Director of Services,
Planning and Development – 31st January, 2017

Development Contributions - Proposed Capital Expenditure		
	Estimated Cost	Dev Contributions
Class 1 - Roads, Transportation and Car Parking		5,727,289
Dargle Footbridges	1,070,000	
Bray Cycle Network	710,000	
Transport Interchange	165,000	
Killarney / Church Rd Jct	860,000	
Kilbride Lane Improvement	525,000	
Herbert Rd Footpath to N11 Overbridge	135,000	
Killarney Road Improvement	560,000	
Quinsboro Rd Shared Space	375,000	
Seapoint Road Widening	720,000	
Vevay Hill Widening	50,000	
Greystones Road Widening from Newcourt to Briarwood	250,000	
Town Centre Traffic Management Works - Wayfinding	150,000	
Primary Health Care Centre Car Parking Contribution	30,000	
Extension of car park at Herbert Road	3,500,000	
	9,100,000	
Class 3 - Community & Recreational Amenity		1,025,841
Skateboard Amenity	150,000	
Refurb of Toilet Block Seafront	80,000	
Refurb Victorian Shelters	120,000	
Greenways throughout Bray Masterplan	60,000	
Dargle River Walk Amenity Works	185,000	
Improvements to North Esplanade	200,000	
Provision of Seatbacks	85,000	
Fixed Seating for Mermaid Arts Centre	72,000	
Springfield Cemetery Urn Wall	75,000	
	1,027,000	
Overall Totals:	10,127,000	6,753,130

Mr. Des O'Brien, DOS advised that the report circulated includes the amount of contributions in the Bray MD account and that the report was similar to the three-year capital spending plan. He advised that a lot of items had not been reached upon and that he was happy for the elected members to be involved in prioritising the spend in accordance with the legislative guidelines.

Elected members made the following contributions:

- Important for the elected members to see how much money is in the development contribution accounts as priorities may have changed
- The figures for former Town Councils of Arklow, Wicklow were expected.
- Reference made to the €7m in the Bray account and proposal put forward that some of the levies should be spent on repairing collapsed roadways within housing estates, road surfacing, provision of lights etc. Flexibility requested in this area.
- Query as to the cost of the Wicklow Port Access and Town Relief Road

- Towns cannot keep expanding without the appropriate infrastructure

Des O'Brien advised that it was his understanding that the Bray situation was only to be discussed and that the other figures while in the AFS, were also reported on in the recent past and same can be given to the members. He also advised that the Council carried out a complete review of the scheme in 2015 and had consolidated the former town council schemes into the county at large schemes. He said that the development contributions could only be spent on projects that facilitated the development in respect of which the development is paying for it. He said that the resurfacing of roads in housing estates would not be in accordance with the legislation and would not facilitate the developments that had contributed.

In conclusion it was noted that the Bray situation would be discussed again at a Bray MD meeting.

The Cathaoirleach advised that he was taking Items 9, 10, 11 and 12 before reverting to Item 8. This was agreed.

ITEM NO. 9

To consider a replacement nominee to the L.C.D.C. for Cllr. N. Lawless (second 2.5 year period shared with Cllr. M. Kavanagh)

It was proposed by Cllr. N. Lawless, seconded by Cllr. M. O'Connor and agreed that Cllr. M. McDonald be the replacement nominee to the L.C.D.C. for Cllr. N. Lawless

ITEM NO. 10

To consider a replacement nominee for Cllr. S. Bourke to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

It was proposed by Cllr. G. McLoughlin, seconded by Cllr. V. Blake and agreed that Cllr. D. Mitchell be the replacement nominee to the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly for Cllr. S. Bourke

ITEM NO. 11

To receive update on Elected Members Fundraising Gala Event in aid of The Wicklow Hospice (Friday 7th April 2017)

Ms. L. Gallagher updated the elected members in relation to the event:-

- The Event was successfully launched in the Parkview Hotel on Thursday evening 26th January with press release and photo op.
- 6 Tickets have been reserved per elected member and TD
- Committee has agreed that a photo op of each of the five municipal districts presenting individual cheques for €10,000 will take place before the Council meeting on Monday the 3rd of April, 2017. Members to note same in the diary.
- The event will commence with a drinks reception at 7.15 p.m., followed by gala dinner, raffle, charity auction, music by The Whipperwills and guest entertainment.
- The Wicklow Hospice Foundation would like their sincere appreciation to the Wicklow County Councillor be noted.

ITEM NO. 12

To consider Management Report – January 2017

Monthly management report dated the 2nd of February, 2017 as circulated was noted.

ITEM NO. 8

To discuss the implications to County Wicklow of the proposed cuts to bus services by Bus Eireann

The elected members discussed the impact of the proposed cuts to bus services by Bus Eireann to County Wicklow and expressed their concern as to the impact these cuts would have on members of the public dependant on the service particularly those in rural areas.

Following discussion on the matter it was proposed by Cllr. M. McDonald, seconded by Cllr. P. Fitzgerald and agreed to adopt the following motion and forward same to the Minister and Wicklow County's 5 TDs.

'That the elected members of Wicklow County Council call on Minister Shane Ross to intervene in the Bus Eireann situation and commit to resolving all issues including the retention of bus passes for those who are entitled to them. That the members commit their support for the retention and enhancement of the Bus Eireann Expressway bus service, its provision of vital service between rural and urban areas, its economic and social benefits and the protection of the rights of Bus Eireann and Expressway workers and those people who depend on these services.'

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Cllr. N. Lawless, seconded by Cllr. M. McDonald and agreed by the elected members, requested a suspension of standing orders to discuss the rent cap of 4% which was announced by the Minister for Housing, Planning Community and Local Government recently and how the District of Greystones had failed to come under the rent zone, considering its very high rental market. Following a general discussion on the impact this decision would have on existing and future tenancies, it was agreed that the Council write to the Department and request that a review of this legislation be carried out to close off any loopholes in this area.

ITEM 13

Correspondence

- 1. Reporting of political donations by elected members:** L. Gallagher reminded the members that they had been circulated with correspondence from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government by the Ethics Registrar on the acceptance and reporting of political donations and that the deadline for the reporting of same is 31st of January, 2017.
- 2. Elected members annual declarations:** L. Gallagher reminded the members that they had been circulated with letter dated the 9th of January, 2017 from the Department of Housing Planning, Community and Local Government, notice requiring submission of annual declaration form, prescribed annual declaration form in both Irish and English, code of conduct for Councillors and copy of circular LG 2/2015 notes on Part 15 of the Local Government Act, by the Ethics Registrar, and that the deadline for submission of completed forms to the Ethics Registrar is Tuesday 28th February, 2017.

3. **Changes in the PRSI treatment of Elected members of Local Authorities:** L. Gallagher advised that the members had been circulated with Circular Letter LG 02/2017 dated the 25th January in relation to the PRSI treatment of Elected members of Local Authorities.
4. **Expenses incurred by Elected Members:** L. Gallagher advised that the members had been circulated with Circular Letter LG 01/2017 in relation to Expenses incurred by Elected Members.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

**CLLR. PAT FITZGERALD
CATHAOIRLEACH
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MS. LORRAINE GALLAGHER
SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER/
MEETINGS ADMINISTRATOR**