

SPECIAL MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

HELD AT WICKLOW COUNTY BUILDINGS, WICKLOW TOWN

ON MONDAY, 15TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2018 AT 7:00 P.M.

Gwen Malone Stenography  
Services certify the  
following to be a true  
and accurate transcript  
of the stenographic  
notes in the above-named  
action.

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GWEN MALONE STENOGRAPHY

1           THE MEETING COMMENCED ON MONDAY, 15TH DAY OF  
2           OCTOBER, 2018 AS FOLLOWS:

3

4           CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, could I have your attention  
5           please? Thank you for your attendance. This meeting       19:05  
6           was called specifically in regard to discuss the RSES.  
7           If you remember a couple of weeks ago, Cllr. Timmins  
8           asked me to put it on the agenda and I gave an  
9           indication then that if the Draft Plan was out that we  
10          would have a meeting last Monday but obviously the      19:05  
11          Draft Plan wasn't out so I cancelled, obviously, that  
12          meeting and proposed that we go ahead today. The  
13          reason you haven't got the information before you is  
14          that I was told that this was a private document and  
15          that it wasn't for public distribution. Only four       19:06  
16          Members and the Manager has it, but I still decided to  
17          go ahead with the meeting and the one reason for this  
18          is that we are due to have - by "we" I mean the Members  
19          of the Regional Assembly are having a meeting on Friday  
20          and that effectively, a decision could be taken and I'm   19:06  
21          saying could be taken at that meeting to go for public  
22          consultation on this plan. I was unhappy about voting  
23          to go out for public consultation on the plan that 28  
24          Members of the Council hadn't seen it or didn't have a  
25          rough idea of what it is about.                                   19:06

26

27           This plan is 210 or 211 pages and I can tell you now if  
28          you have problems sleeping at night now it would be  
29          worth a read. It is hard reading, to say the least.

1           But I took out a lot of what I felt were the important  
2           issues in regard to this and I'm going to go through  
3           them today. I'm going to open it up to the floor as  
4           well today and I'm going to try to give, between myself  
5           and the four Members of the Regional Assembly,  
6           cllr. Cullen, Winters, Mitchell and myself and between  
7           us and between the Executive up here that we'll answer  
8           as many questions as we possibly can.

19:07

9  
10          I just want to give you a flavour of what has happened  
11          in the meantime from the time we had that meeting  
12          because there has been changes to the original draft  
13          prior to this.

19:07

14  
15          Just to give people an update on how it started. It  
16          started with a launch in February 2017, the National  
17          Planning Framework was launched in February 2017. And  
18          it was presented -- there was a Draft Plan presented to  
19          Wicklow County Council in November 2017 and Wicklow  
20          County Council made submissions on 10th November in  
21          2017 and the National Planning Framework was published  
22          on 15th February 2018.

19:07

23  
24          There was key elements in it: 50% of all new  
25          population and employment was in the five cities, as  
26          defined by the Census District Office; 40% of all new  
27          housing in the built up parts in the cities, towns and  
28          villages, and brownfield sites and 50% in cities and  
29          30% in other towns. Anyway, the east and midlands

19:08

1 regional population growth was proposed at between  
2 490,000 and 540,000 and the employment growth was plus  
3 320,000. Now, the National Planning Road Map was  
4 published in July, National Planning Framework in July  
5 2018 and this is a very significant element of the 19:08  
6 planning process because this contained the population  
7 figures for the County. And this is the key element of  
8 the National Planning Framework and it's what most  
9 people are focusing on is the element in that. In that  
10 they were talking about a population of 155- to 157,000 19:09  
11 in 2026 and up to 2031 the population of 164,000. And  
12 that was going to against the County Development Plan  
13 of 178,000 and 185,000 by 2031. I'll get to that now  
14 in a couple of minutes in regard to that.

15 19:09  
16 The Amended Planning Act in August 2018 requires the  
17 regional economic and spatial strategy, when it is  
18 adopted, that within 26 weeks of that, the County  
19 Development Plan must be varied or reviewed to  
20 incorporate the decisions made in the National Planning 19:09  
21 Framework and the RSES as well.

22  
23 Now, people that mightn't know the Regional Assembly,  
24 that wouldn't be familiar with it, they're a 37-member  
25 group. Meets once a month in Dublin City Hall. During  
26 the consultation process there was a lot of working  
27 groups in it and there was 11 sessions between January  
28 and June 2018 and there was area meetings as well,  
29 there's three areas in the assembly, the eastern area,

1 the midland area and the Dublin are as well. we're  
2 obviously on the eastern area as well. And there was a  
3 working draft that was produced in 2018 and the  
4 Assembly meeting met on 5th October. we had been  
5 asking, up to 5th October we weren't getting any  
6 information from the Department in regard to specifics.  
7 The specifics were population growth in the  
8 Metropolitan Area. How did the figures come about?  
9 Were they CSO figures? Were they ESRI figures? There  
10 was a lot of discussion and a lot of information that  
11 was withheld, in our opinion, by the Department from  
12 this and we requested that officials from the  
13 Department would come and address the meeting on 5th  
14 October, which they did and they clarified, quite  
15 significantly, a lot of the questions that we asked at  
16 that particular time.

17

18 Now just to move on a bit from that and I don't want to  
19 bore people with figures and that, but in our County  
20 Development Plan, up to 2031 we had the amount of units  
21 we had to build as 35,000 units. In the National  
22 Planning Framework the recommendation for that period  
23 of time was 25,000 units. So in this pre-draft that we  
24 go - and this was the cause of a lot of consternation  
25 among people in the Council here that knew about this -  
26 there was actually 10,000 of a drop that obviously  
27 would have required significant down-zoning of 10,000  
28 houses by 2031. Now, there was a massive campaign  
29 carried out by Members of Wicklow County Council, and

1 other counties as well that were suffering the same  
2 thing. There were similar problems in Meath and  
3 Kildare and lesser ones in Louth as well. There was a  
4 fairly strong campaign carried out and on 5th October  
5 there was clarification given that it was something  
6 that we were working for, for a long time is that in  
7 regard to, to contain -- our attitude to the  
8 Metropolitan Area was that if Bray was going to be in  
9 the Metropolitan Area and Greystones, that effectively  
10 the figures for the growth in the Bray area should be 19:12  
11 contained in the Metropolitan Area. Effectively that  
12 was a separate area within the plan. And up until that  
13 date we were told that these figures would be contained  
14 in the County Plan, there would be no movement at all  
15 on that. And we got significant movement in regard to 19:12  
16 that, which effectively means that Bray now, the Bray  
17 growth figures is going to be contained in the  
18 Metropolitan Area, which means that that 7,000 out of 19:13  
19 the 10,000 figure, there's only 3,000 left in regard to  
20 this. Now, that is contained in the new draft, as we  
21 see it, but effectively you have to copper fasten that  
22 on Friday at the meeting in regard to that on Friday.  
23  
24 But the key element in this: Bray was always going to  
25 be grow at that type of rate and Bray has got 19:13  
26 significant, in the sense that it is the number, it is  
27 one of the growth towns in the Metropolitan Area, along  
28 with Maynooth and Swords, which means that a  
29 significant amount of infrastructural development,

1 planning, will go into those three towns to contain the  
2 growth as well. So we're talking about land use, we're  
3 talking about transport and all that type of  
4 infrastructure will be geared towards those three towns  
5 in the Metropolitan Area.

19:14

6  
7 One of the main problems in the plan, as I say, a  
8 number of weeks ago, before this meeting in October was  
9 that we were told that Wicklow Town, despite having  
10 100 million of infrastructure built into it, was only  
11 going to be allowed to grow to 17,000, whereas we in  
12 our Development Plan had it at 25,000, which would have  
13 meant between household sizes and various things like  
14 that, between 4- and 8,000 units would have to be  
15 deleted out of Wicklow Town. We fought that very  
16 significantly in regard to, it made no sense to us in a  
17 housing crisis where you had a situation where you were  
18 going to be forced into down-zoning in a housing crisis  
19 and particularly when Wicklow Town had all the  
20 infrastructure built in, 100 million of infrastructure  
21 built in. I think it made no sense to anybody and it  
22 was fought very hard and it was conceded by the  
23 Department last Friday that in actual fact they said,  
24 no, that the figures would be contained in the  
25 Metropolitan Area, which this eased an awful lot of the  
26 pressure, as we know, in regard to the County Plan. It  
27 still left 3,000 out there. And we also got guarantees  
28 from the Department that there would be absolutely no  
29 pressure on us to down-zone in any shape or form

19:14

19:15

19:15

19:15

1 throughout the County.  
2

3 I also got from them as well, I was concerned about  
4 Arklow, because Arklow, I felt hadn't got the proper  
5 designation in the Regional Plan, the reason being  
6 obviously because the infrastructure is deficient in  
7 Arklow but it's on its way and it will be delivered  
8 within a couple of years and that I felt that that  
9 would be a desirable area obviously for growth as well.  
10 They agreed with that and they said that they would not 19:16  
11 be restricting any towns that are ready and able to  
12 develop quickly, that there would be no restrictions in  
13 that. But in Wicklow Town now there's no restriction  
14 there so there's no figure there in regard to Wicklow  
15 Town and obviously the Bray situation helped that 19:16  
16 enormously.

17  
18 Now, there's a number of -- just to go on, just to let  
19 you know there's other small towns that are mentioned  
20 in this, 5,000 to 1,500 and they are Newtown, 19:16  
21 Baltinglass, Enniskerry, Kilcoole and Rathdrum and the  
22 settlements plus 1,500 Ashford, Aughrim, Carnew,  
23 Dunlavin, Tinahely, Avoca, Donard, Kilmacanogue  
24 Roundwood, Shillelagh, Newcastle as well.

25  
26 Could I just stress as well, for Members here that are,  
27 obviously there's a lot of interest in rural areas and  
28 rural housing and that. Rural housing really doesn't  
29 come into this. This is generally in the small towns

1 and villages because that will be contained in the  
2 County Development Plan and the County Development Plan  
3 will designate the numbers in regard to that and how  
4 that is operated. It doesn't get that prescriptive in  
5 regard to rural towns and one-off housing, and stuff  
6 like that.

19:17

7  
8 Also, there is deficiencies in it as well that I've  
9 identified as well and one of them is really that the  
10 only road scheme that's listed for Wicklow would be the  
11 N11 and that would from Loughlinstown to Kilmacanogue  
12 and I think we should be fighting for that to go to  
13 Coyne's Cross. I think that's the long-term version of  
14 that, but certainly from my point of view that that's  
15 what we should be doing as well.

19:17

19:18

16  
17 There's absolutely no mention of what I think is a  
18 strategic road from Dublin to Rosslare. If people  
19 would remember the Euro Route used to be always from  
20 Belfast down to Rosslare. For some reason or other, in  
21 the National Planning Framework that road from Dublin  
22 to Rosslare was taken out and just the one that was  
23 left in, which was called an economic corridor which  
24 was Dublin to Belfast, which included the towns of  
25 Drogheda and Dundalk as economic corridors. So that  
26 effect, I think is a major, major one in it. And given  
27 that we have Brexit coming up as well, and effectively  
28 if it is a bad Brexit like some people think,  
29 effectively I think Rosslare will be the one area that

1 you'll going straight into Europe from, you wouldn't be  
2 going from Belfast. So to me it makes sense that that  
3 should be included in it as well.

4

5 There's no mention of the N81 either which I think most 19:19  
6 people agree needs attention. There's no inclusion of  
7 any regional roads scheme in Wicklow.

8

9 Now, there is a reference to the continuation of DART  
10 services to Greystones but there's no indication of any 19:19  
11 improvement and there's no mention of the improved rail  
12 services south of Greystones as well. I know  
13 Cllr. Mitchell will probably be talking about this.  
14 And there's a reference to new park-and-ride in  
15 Greystones, they have a park-and-ride there so I don't 19:19  
16 know what that reference is in regard to that.

17

18 But there's other issues that I think in this as well  
19 that need to be brought up and talked of today is that  
20 they haven't addressed in this plan the extant planning 19:19  
21 permission. That's planning permissions that have  
22 already been granted and that's something that I think  
23 we, as a Council, we don't know exactly the figure,  
24 it's probably 3- or 4,000 in the figure that have  
25 already planning permission existing out there and they 19:20  
26 seem to be wanting to count them in the overall  
27 figures. And my reason for this is that they shouldn't  
28 be, they should be external to that and effectively if  
29 that came in, if that came in and we could get that,

1 then effectively that would mean that we were working  
2 on the County Development Plan figures so we'd be back  
3 to square one. So it would be very acceptable from our  
4 particular point of view.

5 19:20

6 In regard to, also the film industry I don't think gets  
7 the mention that it should and I think they're talking  
8 about clustered development in that regard to bringing  
9 different areas together, businesses together and I  
10 think we should make a strong case in regard to a film 19:20  
11 cluster obviously between Ashford and Bray in regard to  
12 that. There was an element early on in the draft that  
13 was absolutely downgrading film in Wicklow and that was  
14 fought extremely hard and certainly there was a type of  
15 reference in it that would have meant that they were 19:21  
16 gearing the film towards Limerick rather than Wicklow.  
17 As we all know, Wicklow has been for the last 50 years  
18 the premier filmmaking county in the country.  
19

20 There's very little about offshore wind in it as well 19:21  
21 and greenways. There is greenways mentioned in it but  
22 there's no greenways in regard to Wicklow mentioned in  
23 this as well.  
24

25 Also, in regard to the Fassaroe development, they have 19:21  
26 the Fassaroe development down as medium term and that  
27 is something that we in Bray would not agree with, that  
28 we want that in phase one because we made specifically  
29 in the Development Plan that 50% of the housing in the

1 Fassaroe area would go into the first phase and  
2 certainly from that point of view I think certainly I  
3 would be fighting that on Friday.

4

5 Also, I think the economic zone they have in 19:22  
6 Greystones, the IDA land in Greystones which is going  
7 to be designated, along with Bray, as being a growth  
8 centre in the Metropolitan Area, Greystones as part of  
9 that cluster is going to be designated as a zone, a  
10 special economic zone in regard to that. 19:22

11

12 So really there's lots more in it really. You could 19:22  
13 talk about this for hours on end but they're the key  
14 issues as far as I'm concerned. We can obviously  
15 answer any questions here that anyone wants to put, if 19:22  
16 we can to do so.

17

18 The system now that's operating this is that this will 19:22  
19 come up on Friday. The Committee will either decide or  
20 not decide to let it out to public consultation. Then 19:22  
21 it will go out, like the normal planning process, it  
22 will go out for a number of weeks to public  
23 consultation. In that time I intend bringing back and  
24 the planners here will make, will obviously go through  
25 each and every line of that in regard to Wicklow and we 19:23  
26 will make a submission in regard to the plan down for  
27 -- and it will be after Christmas, I think, again that  
28 will be handled as well. And any changes then, like a  
29 normal planning process, any other changes major would

1 have to go out for other public consultation. So it's  
2 going to be coming close, as I see it, to the election  
3 next year before this could be decided, given that  
4 everything would go fairly smoothly in regard to this.

5 19:23

6 Now, there is consternation in some counties in regard  
7 to what's happened. It hasn't been a smooth process,  
8 to say the least. It's been very badly handled and I  
9 must say mostly from the Department that they could  
10 have brought it up at a much earlier stage, in my 19:23  
11 opinion, than what they have done. We are here now at  
12 this stage now and it seems to be all systems go. I  
13 think everyone's keen on trying to get agreement in  
14 regard to letting this go out to public consultation.

15 19:24

16 I'm going to let it out to members now. Cllr. Fox.  
17 CLLR. FOX: Thank you, Chairman. First of all can I  
18 thank you for having the meeting. As you said, you  
19 feel that the process has been handled poorly by the  
20 Department. It absolutely has been handled dreadfully 19:24  
21 by the Department. To keep local Councillors in the  
22 dark is an absolute disgrace. I mean only for you  
23 coming today to give us these proposals, I mean we're  
24 here, we're going to talk on this subject, we have  
25 nothing in front of us apart from what you have told  
26 us. I mean the lack of transparency is absolutely  
27 dreadful.

28

29 Just to follow on from what you have said, I mean

1 there's obviously huge concerns, particularly, first of  
2 all, in the settlements and the difference in the  
3 population targets in our own County Development Plan  
4 and what has been suggested in this National Planning  
5 Framework. I know the time scales of the Development  
6 Plan and the National Planning Framework are slightly  
7 different but there are tens of thousands in the  
8 difference. The first figures you gave, there was 23-  
9 to 28,000 of a difference in the County Development  
10 Plan and the National Planning Framework. So it is  
11 imperative that, I suppose, you and the other regional  
12 members would insist that no de-zoning is not just a  
13 commitment but it is stitched into the text because I'm  
14 not a big fan of gentleman's agreement and verbal  
15 agreements and verbal commitments. The plan is the  
16 plan and the plan will be interpreted by different  
17 planners in different local authority areas so it is  
18 absolutely imperative that if there is to be no  
19 de-zoning that that is stitched into the text.

20

21 My first question, I suppose, is: will this document  
22 require us to reopen a whole County Development Plan  
23 process? Have a rethink or a new look at our core  
24 strategy and the whole Planning Sections within our  
25 Development Plan?

26

27 You say one-off housing is not significantly addressed  
28 in the plan, however, I have huge concerns from what  
29 media reports have circulated in relation to the plan

1 and its impact on one-off housing. I feel if what has  
2 been stated in the media is correct and the creation of  
3 shadow areas from large settlements, it will have a  
4 huge impact on one-off planning in County Wicklow. As  
5 I say, I have huge concerns already about the direction 19:27  
6 that one-off housing has taken and this will be the  
7 final nail in the coffin for one-off houses in County  
8 Wicklow. And I, for one, feel that the brakes have to  
9 be put on any policy that takes away from local  
10 democracy. For me the document that should be relevant 19:27  
11 for one-off rural housing is the County Development  
12 Plan because that is the plan that Councillors around  
13 this Chamber feed into and that is local democracy at  
14 work, and we should be deciding on one-off planning  
15 permissions based on our own County Development Plan. 19:28  
16 This is an attempt to cut local councillors out of the  
17 whole system and it is wrong and certainly I would have  
18 huge concerns about it. Thank you, Chairman.  
19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr. Ruttle.  
20 CLLR. RUTTLE: Yes, Cathaoirleach, again, thank you 19:28  
21 very much for calling a meeting and for organising all  
22 this for us. It's very difficult on you in the absence  
23 of any documentation which you want to present what the  
24 findings are so far and where you think we're going. I  
25 suppose I have to say, it represents a bad performance  
26 by the Department again at an inopportune time. You  
27 get the feeling that the Councillors are still at the  
28 wrong end of the business in this. I have to say it  
29 sounds very official and maybe and expert-led in a

1 certain way. We're relying greatly on the four  
2 representatives we have from this Chamber to go forward  
3 I think your meeting is Friday, is it?

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah.

5 CLLR. RUTTLE: To get things back on track. And 19:29  
6 basically like, in the time of a national housing  
7 crisis we need more houses not less and a huge impact  
8 on that. We certainly don't want to start de-zoning  
9 land at a time when people are crying out for it.

10 19:29  
11 Like my colleague here, on the issue of the one-off  
12 rural houses, I'm very suspicious again, there's an  
13 element on the loose probably in the Department, they  
14 don't want us out there at all, that we're not needed  
15 out there and that it will lead to a situation where in 19:29  
16 the end any house that comes on the market in the rural  
17 area, all you have to do is kill planning off for a few  
18 years, any housing with a premium price, it is  
19 unbuyable, it's unpurchasable and it completely defeats  
20 the situation where young people can go forward and 19:30  
21 build upon their own land or in their own locality. By  
22 and large the rural people and the farming people have  
23 been the custodians of this land in this County for  
24 hundreds of years and by and large we have done a good  
25 job of it. I worry, sometimes, when I see a situation  
26 like this, how long more can we continue to be  
27 appreciated in that?

28  
29 It also disturbs me, there's no mention of the N81 at

1 all. If you're going to strike balance in Wicklow,  
2 there's the N11 on the east coast and there's the Euro  
3 Route which is an overarching issue of the N11, but  
4 there's also the N81 in West Wicklow which is hugely  
5 important and very important to people from a social  
6 point of view, from a business point of view, from a  
7 safety point of view and we would need to see that back  
8 in there.

9

10 There's another major project at Blessington and I 19:30  
11 don't know whether it's mentioned at all and that's the  
12 Blessington greenway project. That is not just an  
13 issue for County Wicklow, it's an issue for many, many  
14 -- the whole of Leinster, you might say, it's the  
15 finest, longest proposal for a walkway/greenway 19:30  
16 anywhere in Ireland with the most amazing background.  
17 I was on the proposed route myself at the end of last  
18 week and what we have on offer there as against what we  
19 had, say, at the time some of us went to the walkway in  
20 central England, we have the backdrop of a mountain, 19:31  
21 we've a lake, we've aspects of view. We have something  
22 that's very good for the environment, well organised  
23 and where we have the agreement of the one landowner  
24 we're only dealing with, I would love to see that  
25 mentioned as a major, as a major issue in a strategy  
26 like that. And I would ask you, all of you, to press  
27 those two issues, the development of the N81 and the  
28 recognition of the significant regional importance of  
29 the proposed Blessington greenway. Thank you,

1 Cathaoirleach.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr. Whitmore. I'll take  
3 a group of questions and then I'll go to Sorcha, the  
4 relevant officials and the CE and Sean Quirke up here  
5 and then I'll move on again. There's a good few people 19:31  
6 who want to come in on this. Cllr. Whitmore.

7 CLLR. WHITMORE: Similar to Cllr. Ruttle and Fox I'm  
8 really concerned about this process and it seems to  
9 have already started in a very, very, you know, sort of  
10 secretive manner and the fact that Councillors have not 19:32  
11 been involved, other than the four reps, you know,  
12 we're not getting any information here so it's very  
13 difficult to have a conversation in the absence and in  
14 a vacuum of information and that does greatly concern  
15 me, particularly as it will have such an impact on the 19:32  
16 County going forward.

17  
18 I would like to thank, I see Pat Casey is there today  
19 and I would like to thank him for going along I can't  
20 see any of the other TDs here. 19:32

21 FROM THE FLOOR: John Brady.

22 CLLR. WHITMORE: Okay. Thanks to John Brady as well.  
23 It is -- this is a hugely important issue and I think  
24 we're going to need our TDs behind us on this and  
25 making sure that Wicklow is being represented correctly 19:32  
26 and that the process is being operated correctly.

27  
28 Just in relation to the County Development Plan  
29 process, did you say that it was a 26-week period was

1 being given? Even statutorily is that giving us enough  
2 time? Because I know there's quite significant --  
3 CATHAOI RLEACH: within 26 weeks.

4 CLLR. WHITMORE: I think public consultation is ten  
5 weeks.

6 CATHAOI RLEACH: You start the process within 26 weeks.  
7 It doesn't mean you have to have completed in 26 weeks.

8 CLLR. WHITMORE: It's not completed. Okay. That deals  
9 with that because I think the pressure that it would  
10 put on the Council is going to be huge.

11 CATHAOI RLEACH: It couldn't happen in that time.

12 CLLR. WHITMORE: But even within the 26 weeks, I mean  
13 to actually restart that process again and all on the  
14 knock-on effects and the pressure that it would put on,  
15 that would be quite significant.

16  
17 Primarily the concern is really about the lack of  
18 information that has been given to Councillors here  
19 today.

20 CATHAOI RLEACH: Okay. Cllr. Winters.

21 CLLR. WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I suppose I'd  
22 like to start by thanking Cllr. Vance for the work that  
23 he has put in into trying to help make sure that  
24 Wicklow doesn't come out the wrong side of this  
25 process. I'd also like to thank Sorcha and Sean Quirke  
26 and Frank for the work that they've put in also in  
27 highlighting the possible pitfalls in the document.

28  
29 If we go on Friday and we're presented this document

1 and it's 210 pages and it's going to be a correction of  
2 what was a truly inaccurate document at the meeting I  
3 went to in September, once we put it out for public  
4 consultation it is like the County Development Plan:  
5 we have accepted the draft copy. So then it's only  
6 going to be tinkering and amendments. So I haven't  
7 seen the 210 pages of this amended, I know you say we  
8 have access to it, but I didn't receive it.

19:34

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: You haven't got it?

10 CLLR. WINTERS: No. I haven't seen it. So I would  
11 actually be really interested to know what our own  
12 Planning Department think of the changes that are  
13 proposed and what possible pitfalls they would see from  
14 the amended plans so that we can go on Friday and put  
15 the best case forward for Wicklow and for people who  
16 aren't familiar with the process, some of the figures  
17 that were in the original plan, not just for Wicklow  
18 but for other counties, were ridiculous. Like they  
19 were saying that Naas could grow to, I think it was  
20 90,000, there's over 90,000 people there already. So  
21 basically that was it, they should just not build  
22 another house until 2030. I mean it was mad stuff,  
23 absolutely mad stuff and it wasn't for the want of the  
24 planning departments of all of the local authorities  
25 that were involved giving them information because  
26 Wicklow did and Louth, Meath, all of the local  
27 authorities' planning departments were sending in  
28 submissions. And basically the Department were either  
29 sidelining them or not reading them or using

19:35

19:35

19:35

19:35

1 alternative figures so whereas we based our County  
2 Development Plan on the CSO, they seemed to be using  
3 figures that came from the ESRI and they were just at  
4 total variance with each other. Unless it's changed  
5 remarkably between what I saw in September and what's 19:36  
6 going to be here on Friday, I can't see it going out on  
7 public display for a long time. But I would be  
8 interested to hear what Sorcha thinks the possible  
9 pitfalls would be. Thanks.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: cllr. Mitchell.

11 CLLR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Having been 19:36  
12 at all of the meetings of this body and representing  
13 the Council, it's certainly disturbing how this has  
14 arisen. I think one has to look at this, so far as the  
15 civil servants are concerned, this is a national plan 19:36  
16 for the population of whole the country. You also, on  
17 this body, Wicklow is but one of nearly ten counties, I  
18 think, many of which are bigger than County Wicklow.  
19 So we're only but a small group in the four Wicklow  
20 Councillors. But the similar issues to Wicklow occur 19:37  
21 in Kildare and Meath, all of way have taken enormous  
22 growth. Now, a huge reason, a huge thing behind this  
23 National Plan and this document is that they want to  
24 fit an awful lot more people into Central Dublin - and  
25 certainly I think at least twice the amount of people 19:37  
26 should live between the canals in Dublin than do at the  
27 moment. They have many more times than that in  
28 Copenhagen, I think it's nearly five times as many live  
29 in that area. That is a good concept and that is what

1           they're trying to achieve. However, the first draft,  
2           as the Cathaoirleach said, would mean something like  
3           10,000 or so houses, as I read it, might have to be  
4           de-zoned in Wicklow, which during the seriousness of  
5           the housing shortages makes no sense. Now, when       19:38  
6           questioned the officials from the Department seemed to  
7           suggest that maybe the Planning Department here made a  
8           mistake in suggesting that. I don't think that's the  
9           case at all. I think however these figures were  
10          derived - by the ERSI I'm told - it just didn't seem to   19:38  
11          make sense in terms of the details of the towns being  
12          clear.

13  
14          However they have changed. The meeting when the senior  
15          officials from the Department of the environment came   19:38  
16          along, they have said that there is scope for some  
17          growth in the wider Metro Area, subject to agreement,  
18          this could further add to Kildare, Wicklow and Meath  
19          population on account of that. Now, in Wicklow, nearly  
20          40%, 45% of the County is covered by the Metro Area.   19:39  
21          The growth which is envisaged in Bray is around 4 ,000  
22          homes. Greystones is basically hardly listed at all in  
23          this document. The growth there could have been around  
24          2,000 or so. So there's around about 6- or 7,000 could  
25          be taken out and used. That still leaves a problem       19:39  
26          with Wicklow Town where the money has been spent  
27          putting in the roads system at considerable expense and  
28          a sewage system and those houses are not being built  
29          and that seems a rather nonsensical thing to do. So I

1 would have concern about that.

2

3 However, I do also have a concern about the growth of  
4 Greystones at the moment. Since the census about a  
5 thousand houses have been built or are being built  
6 which means that Greystones is catching up with the  
7 population of Bray and the infrastructure to support  
8 that, apart from the sewage works, has not been built  
9 in. The roads which were planned in 1989 have not been  
10 built. There are no jobs, even though we thought we 19:39  
11 had a legal agreement with some of the developments, it  
12 turns out that that agreement was invalid. There seems  
13 no way of refusing planning permission because we have  
14 the lowest job ratio, the lowest number of people  
15 working in any town in Wicklow within the town and  
16 possibly of any town in Leinster and there's no extra  
17 maintenance money to cater for all of those extra  
18 people which have come since the census. 19:40

19

20 So I am not in favour - and this would probably be a 19:40  
21 later subject - of any significant expansion of  
22 Greystones than what is there at the moment because the  
23 Council, or whoever is responsible, is not prepared to  
24 upgrade the infrastructure in a timely way.

25

26 Also, the recent changes to the railway system have  
27 provided the worst service to Greystones and to  
28 Wicklow, south of Bray and the further plan for the  
29 railway is to provide an even worse service in the more

1 distant future. So that is a considerable problem.  
2

3 So we need also to get the change to point out the fact  
4 that there should be an improved rail service for  
5 Greystones and South Wicklow.

19:41

6  
7 Also, the park-and-ride I think is an issue about  
8 expanding the present park-and-ride and that is a  
9 concept worth mentioning. I believe those things need  
10 to be done.

19:41

11  
12 I would certainly appreciate assistance from the  
13 Planning Department here about how the current  
14 document, as distinct from the previous document,  
15 relates to the figures and, also, how in discussion we  
16 could raise amendments to this plan on Friday, or  
17 before Friday. But it is very difficult in a group so  
18 wide to get one's amendment actually through, unless we  
19 really get together with people in Meath and Naas. I  
20 mention Naas because apparently the planning  
21 permissions in Naas actually far exceed the stated  
22 population in the document, so they would have to tell  
23 people to leave Naas if they are to meet the targets.

19:42

24  
25 It is a very complex document. It is very difficult to  
26 get it amended. Cllr. Vance has certainly been very  
27 strong in assisting at these meetings that these public  
28 servants will change it. They have changed it somewhat  
29 and I'm concerned it's not enough.

1 CATHAOI RLEACH: cllr. Timmins, could I apologise to  
2 you. cllr. Timmins, you would well know from being up  
3 here, the screen that gives the rotation on it, I  
4 believe you were one of the first of it but the side of  
5 the screen with the rotation is not working so --

19:43

6 CLLR. TIMMINS: I forgive you on this occasion.

7 CATHAOI RLEACH: I apologise for you in that I should  
8 have let you in a lot earlier.

9 CLLR. TIMMINS: Thanks. First of all, thanks very much  
10 for holding this meeting I really appreciate it and  
11 thanks as well for your help and your efforts to  
12 support Wicklow in getting its fair share of this  
13 document and recognising this document.

19:43

14  
15 I just really have a few simple questions: First of  
16 all, when would we actually get a copy of that Draft  
17 Plan that you're talking about? Would we get a copy of  
18 it this week or before Friday?

19:43

19 CATHAOI RLEACH: No, you can't get it before Friday. It  
20 will be after Friday when the Regional Assembly members  
21 have discussed it. And I'm absolutely disgusted that  
22 two Members here today still haven't received that but  
23 I'll make sure in the morning that that will be sent  
24 out to you.

19:43

25 CLLR. TIMMINS: In terms of amendments, you will be  
26 voting when to put it on public display. Can the  
27 population numbers be changed after Friday? Could we  
28 just establish that?

19:44

29 CATHAOI RLEACH: Yeah. To my knowledge we may or may

1 not be voting to allow the plan to go out on Friday. I  
2 have a feeling, but I'm not exactly sure, I don't think  
3 there will be a vote to put it out on public display  
4 because I think there would be a lot more work to be  
5 done. There might be amendments brought forward that  
6 they'd have to address and maybe come back with a  
7 further meeting. But I'm only saying what I think  
8 might happen.

19:44

9 CLLR. TIMMINS: Another question: will it come back  
10 from the Dáil to be ratified or does it have to be  
11 ratified by yourselves?

19:44

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Well, before the Dáil?

13 CLLR. TIMMINS: Yeah.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm not aware. No, it's the  
15 responsibility of the Regional Assembly in regard to  
16 this now. It's gone through the Dáil and it has been  
17 approved, the actual planning framework has been  
18 approved by the Dáil. So to my knowledge it won't.  
19 There's ongoing discussions in regard to the  
20 Sub-Committee and the Dáil that is chaired by

19:44

21 Pat Casey, Deputy Casey. He's very much involved in  
22 this as well and has been in contact all the time with  
23 regard to that and Pat has been very helpful in regard  
24 to getting the changes as well on that. He's on that  
25 Committee as well but it's the Regional Assembly that  
26 approve it. That's their responsibility. It's been  
27 handed down in the National Planning Framework in  
28 regard to that.

19:45

29 CLLR. TIMMINS: A couple of other points. The key

thing is that the population guidelines on this document mirrors our Development Plan because this Development Plan, as we know, a lot of work was put in here, we were all happy with it here two years ago and for this document to come along and supercede it and undermine it I think would be horrendous. Again, as Cllr. Fox and other Councillors have said, this undermines our democracy here.

19:45

Another thing I'm very concerned about as well is the rural planning, because only today I was reading an An Bord Pleanála report on refusal in rural and in west Wicklow and it quoted national documents and didn't -- it more or less took more cognisance of the national documents than the County Development Plan and it talked about areas being under urban pressure, this is even in rural West Wicklow. I'd be very concerned that this document could be used by An Bord Pleanála to overrule our County Development Plan where planning has been granted to planning permissions on the basis of our County Development Plan and then this document then is quoted by An Bord Pleanála, or whatever, to actually refuse the planning permission. So I do have a deep concern that it could be used in that respect.

19:46

So I would ask that that point be addressed by the Members on Friday that is there stuff in here that is going to undermine our Development Plan or what sections of it cover rural planning and what exactly

19·46

1 are they saying about rural planning? I know my  
2 colleague here beside me, Cllr. Shay Cullen, has issues  
3 on that as well that came up here before. That's  
4 something that is of concern, again, not only in terms  
5 of population of villages, towns, large towns, small  
6 towns, small villages, that our County Development Plan  
7 has been hugely undermined by this document and  
8 additionally that the rural planning, in a much more  
9 subtle way, will be undermined and used to stop people  
10 from getting rural planning permission.

19:47

11  
12 Finally, then just to say the lack of mentioning of the  
13 N81 is really disappointing as well. It's a major  
14 artery out of Dublin. It hasn't been developed. No  
15 investment has been put into it over the last many  
16 decades while all the other arteries have been. It is  
17 extraordinary that it hasn't been mentioned, especially  
18 in light of the fact that everyone knows the N7 is  
19 overburdened at the moment. It's practically half shut  
20 down for the next two years, I think December 2020,  
21 more and more people are actually using the N81 as a  
22 result of that. It is a good extra access out of the  
23 city to take the pressure out of the busiest road in  
24 the country, the N7, and that that road hasn't even  
25 been recognised in this document is really short  
26 sighted and I really wonder where people are coming  
27 from. Thank you.

19:48

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Snell and then Cllr. McLoughlin.  
29 CLLR. SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Again, like

1 previous speakers, I want to commend you for holding a  
2 meeting there tonight. In my opinion potentially it  
3 has an unmitigating disaster for the people of County  
4 Wicklow in regards to the future of not just housing  
5 units, but you touched on an awful lot in regards to 19:48  
6 the IDA lands, our travel infrastructure. But an awful  
7 lot of work went into our County Development Plan here  
8 and particularly our housing strategy and a lot of it  
9 was based on the housing yield of zoned land and also  
10 service land. I just feel from Shillelagh to Bray and 19:49  
11 from Blessington to Wicklow Town, you know, everybody  
12 is going to be affected here and I hope that the four  
13 Members - and I assume they are - are all singing off  
14 one the one hymn sheet here for County Wicklow and I  
15 commend them for the work that they've put in. As I 19:49  
16 say, it certainly was an awful lot worse than it could  
17 have been by getting Bray into the Metropolitan Area  
18 and securing the 7,000 units within the Metropolitan  
19 numbers. I commend the four Members here for their  
20 vision and obviously for fighting that good fight. But 19:49  
21 I'd like to point out that if 3,000 units are proposed  
22 and after Friday that you don't get your way, 3,000  
23 units, I certainly won't be supporting the de-zoning of  
24 even one unit let alone 3,000 units and I think that  
25 every member here would share those sentiments. 19:50  
26  
27 I hope to God that common sense prevails in regards to  
28 the Assembly and your meeting of the 37 Members. Could  
29 I get a breakdown, at some stage, in regards to the

1 make up of the 37 Members? I assume that because we  
2 have four Members perhaps Louth, Meath and Kildare will  
3 also have the same type of numbers?

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: No. Roughly Meath and Kildare would  
5 have -- because we have a ministerial, I think  
6 Government appointment, Cllr. Winters we have an extra  
7 one on that, Dublin City Council have very similarly,  
8 each of the Counties. So in actual fact it doesn't go  
9 by population because Dublin City Council would have  
10 way more than anybody else, it goes by just the amount  
11 of members. I can't go through the whole breakdown but  
12 there's 12 local authorities; four Dublin and nine  
13 counties involved so you can work the figures out from  
14 that.

19:50

15 CLLR. SNELL: I hope, Cathaoirleach, that you and your  
16 fellow colleagues here in the Chamber are able to get  
17 common sense into the other local authorities out there  
18 because I believe that everything is geared towards  
19 Dublin and the Greater Dublin Area and unfortunately it  
20 seems to be at the expense of all the neighbouring  
21 counties.

19:51

22  
23 In regards to the road network, and I know  
24 Cllr. Mitchell would be an advocate of fighting for  
25 better road services in and out of this County, and  
26 that obviously includes the M50 and the M11, but I'd  
27 ask the question in regards to the N81 and as we all  
28 know, the N81 is a very important infrastructure for  
29 West Wicklow, and all the way down to South Wicklow,

19:51

1 had the Members an opportunity to discuss that, the  
2 four Members and make that case previously before this  
3 document? And, again, like yourself, Cathaoirleach, I  
4 would be very concerned that, you know, a number of  
5 Members don't have the documents before this very, very 19:52  
6 important meeting on Friday. I think it's unacceptable  
7 that they would get the document at this late stage  
8 that has such a vast amount of information in it. But,  
9 once again, I can't let it go without commending you  
10 for holding this meeting. I feared coming in here not 19:52  
11 having anything in front of us that perhaps, you know,  
12 what were we going to have, what were we going to  
13 discuss? You have outlined in regards to the huge  
14 importance of what's been going on. This is a lot of  
15 work that none of us would have known about in this 19:53  
16 Chamber.

17

18 In regards to the Dáil Members, perhaps it might be  
19 appropriate if we could, with your acceptance, perhaps  
20 TD Pat Casey could outline his involvement in this? 19:53  
21 You said he was involved at a huge stage of this  
22 document because, it's the first that I've heard about  
23 a lot of information that's in this, I think it's  
24 hugely important. It's not political. This is for the  
25 greater good of the people of the County Wicklow and I  
26 don't care what party, or none, but if people know and  
27 have more information perhaps this is the place that it  
28 should be shared. And once again, I just want to  
29 commend the four Members. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just in regard to Deputy Casey, he told  
2 me that he only could be here for a brief period of  
3 time but I talk to him on a regular basis in regard to  
4 free flow of information in regard to that and he has  
5 done significant work in regard to this.

19:54

6 Cllr. Matthews.

7 CLLR. MATTHEWS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, thanks for  
8 calling the meeting. I was looking through the  
9 evidence baseline that was presented that would have  
10 informed that and you can see that Wicklow is pretty  
11 average in a lot of regards. Which is good news. It's  
12 good to be average in this case, it means we're not an  
13 outlier. We don't have severe difficulties to deal  
14 with.

19:54

15 Two things that stood out in the evidence baseline, one  
16 of them I don't see how it's going to be addressed in  
17 the RSES, but they do state that childcare in Wicklow  
18 is the second highest in the State. It is using the  
19 evidence baseline, I don't know if it's anywhere in the  
20 document, but I'd be interested to know how that might  
21 be addressed in the document.

19:54

22  
23 The second thing that we have got to look at in Wicklow  
24 and this is the serious issue that we face is the jobs  
25 ratio. If you look at the figures: There's 58,000  
26 people resident in Wicklow that work; 32,000 of those  
27 work in Wicklow but 26,000 leave the County every day  
28 to go to work and that's why the N11 is gridlocked and

19:54

1 lack of investment in public transport is not helping  
2 that.

3

4 In terms of the process, the process seems to be  
5 criticised by a number of people here. I don't really 19:55  
6 have a huge problem with the process that was followed  
7 here, it's quite similar to the County Development Plan  
8 process in that there was an issues paper, there was a  
9 public consultation. The evidence, the baseline  
10 evidence, the CSO figures, that's what informs a lot of 19:55  
11 the Draft Plan. Remember, our Draft Plan is done by  
12 our planners. It's not done by us. We're presented  
13 with a Draft Plan and then we vote on it. So we've  
14 elected three representatives from here and  
15 Cllr. Winters and I trust you guys to go in there, as 19:55  
16 our elected reps. We're elected, we elected you, you  
17 go in there and you fight the case for us.

18

19 So I don't think the process has to be too criticised.  
20 while I would criticise the planning, over the years, 19:55  
21 there's nobody can dispute this, there's been too much  
22 political interference with planning and that's one of  
23 the reasons we have poor planning in this country. I'd  
24 like to see less political interference in planning and  
25 more evidence-based planning because that will get us 19:56  
26 out of the hole that we're in.

27

28 Cathaoirleach, you said we're going to be back to  
29 square one here: No change. I'm sure every county is

1 looking for that. If you look at the National Plan,  
2 the growth in the east was to be restricted and there  
3 was to be massive growth in Cork, Galway and the West.  
4 So they probably welcomed that but no doubt they're  
5 fighting to retain what was promised to them in their 19:56  
6 Development Plan. So those two assemblies are going to  
7 fight for that. So if everybody comes back with no  
8 change, back to square one that's not good enough. The  
9 planning in this country has let us down. We have too  
10 much urban sprawl. We have congestion. We have a loss 19:56  
11 of productivity. We have a lack of efficiency. And we  
12 have a dysfunctional transport system because of that  
13 because it can't address how we've built.

14

15 Unfortunately in planning there has to be some 19:57  
16 unpalatable decisions taken and short-term they will be  
17 painful for people, but in the long-term it's that will  
18 accrue from that. At some stage people are going to  
19 have take the difficult decisions in planning for the  
20 long-term.

21

22 I mentioned when the EMRA officials came in here, that  
23 climate change was covered in about two paragraphs. I  
24 haven't heard it referred to by anybody here. If  
25 planning can do anything it should be to address the 19:57  
26 issue that we have on carbon emissions and transport is  
27 one of them and how we build our houses is the other  
28 one.

29

1 I don't think it's good enough for us all to go back to  
2 square one. I think there does need to be some changes  
3 to that. I look forward to seeing the Draft Plan.  
4 Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Before I go to Cllr. McLoughlin, 19:57  
6 Cllr. Matthews, I did mention it. Through every  
7 programme is the paragraphs on climate changes. It's  
8 very significant in this plan but I couldn't, because  
9 it was just a brief synopsis of what was in it, but  
10 climate change is very significant. Cllr. McLoughlin. 19:58

11 CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I have to  
12 say congratulations to you and the team for coming  
13 together tonight. But I do think that it is quite  
14 appalling that we have nothing in front of us. I  
15 understand completely that you are excluded from doing 19:58  
16 so and I have faith in the four people around the  
17 table, but when we have a situation that two of them  
18 haven't even got a copy of the Draft Plan what does  
19 that say? In fact we're talking about what we think we  
20 heard you say about five minutes ago. Even if we had a  
21 synopsis of that in front of us it might be easier to  
22 get clarity.

23  
24 Just a couple of questions I have. If we are to be  
25 reduced by 10,000 and 7,000 of those have gone into, 19:58  
26 first of all you mentioned Bray and Greystones.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, it'll be Bray, not Greystones.  
28 CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: Greystones is now excluded so now  
29 that leaves us with 3,000.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's correct.

2 CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: And then you look at Wicklow Town  
3 and all the infrastructure that's gone into that and  
4 then we realise that is a bit mad so Wicklow should be  
5 left alone. So where does that leave the rest of us? 19:59

6 If Wicklow were to be left alone they would have 8,000,  
7 so we'd be left with another -- I'm sorry if I'm  
8 pausing on figures here, but we'd could be left with  
9 then another 5,000 that we have to get rid of somewhere  
10 else. I just feel it would have been really helpful if 19:59  
11 we even knew, at this meeting today, because you're  
12 going in on Friday representing us and it's not clear  
13 and it's not clear to anybody.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: I'll try and get an answer for that.

15 CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: I would like an answer. I do think 19:59  
16 the Regional Assembly, when people are made  
17 representatives from a Council people put up their hand  
18 they say I'd like to do it, right? I think for a  
19 democratic process they have to be afforded the right  
20 to come back to the Council to discuss their findings 19:59  
21 of what they're learning. We never hear about this  
22 from one end of the year to another, until something  
23 like this comes up. All we hear from any of the  
24 representatives, including yourself, what happens at  
25 these Regional Assembly meetings. So I think from that 20:00  
26 perspective it is really poor but I am really concerned  
27 of what exact the proposal is because I'm here tonight  
28 but you're going on Friday and I still have no clue,  
29 except for the fact that 7,000 is going to be fine for

1 Bray and other than that we don't know. Thank you.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Cllr. Walsh.

3 CLLR. WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Again, like other

4 Members, I would like to thank you for calling the

5 meeting here this evening. Only for that we wouldn't 20:00

6 have known what the situation is.

7

8 Again, like other Members I want to comment on the lack

9 of transparency. It's most disappointing and it's just

10 not on that we're here this evening with nothing in 20:00

11 front of us.

12

13 The plan itself, Cathaoirleach, to put it mildly, it

14 lacks, or it is supposed to be ambitious but you have

15 to question the strategy. In terms of the number of

16 houses it is proposing to build, you know, the 20:00

17 timeframe and strategy involved in same. Where are the

18 skill sets? Where are we going to build these houses?

19 Not everybody wants to live in the centre of Dublin.

20 20:01

21 You mentioned, we accepted it is at variance with the

22 County Development Plan. We have figures there, it's

23 already been mentioned, 10,000. The fact that Bray is

24 included in the Metropolitan Area I think that is

25 accounting for 7,000. Points have already been made by 20:01

26 Members so where are the extra 3,000 going to be made

27 up? Wicklow Town you say 17,000 instead of 25,000?

28 We're at a variance of 10- there, despite the

29 100 million infrastructure spend there.

1 Just to get back to Greystones, in particular and the  
2 growth there. we have seen, I think Cllr. Mitchell  
3 referred to 1,000 new houses have been delivered in  
4 recent times and there's another thousand to 1,500 in  
5 the pipeline. The infrastructure has to be addressed. 20:01  
6 We mentioned there is reference to the N11 road scheme,  
7 the CO might just bring us up-to-date there. Is that  
8 at a design stage to bring it to Coyne's Cross?  
9

10 Traffic problems in the morning. Transport issues in 20:02  
11 general are really at a stage where it just needs to be  
12 addressed. It has been exacerbated recently by  
13 population growth. Issues with the DART. You  
14 mentioned Greystones there. You said there is  
15 reference to a park-and-ride and yet there is no  
16 reference to the rail or DART services. 20:02  
17

18 People's quality of life is affected here by traffic  
19 jams. People are leaving earlier and earlier in the  
20 morning to get to work. Theres issues at the Southern 20:02  
21 Cross roundabout. There's issues at Blacklion in  
22 Greystones and it's become so frustrating and that's  
23 not to mention what's happening on the N11. So there's  
24 a lot to be worked on, a lot to be figured out.  
25

26 Again, there's no reference to film. we should be  
27 putting more emphasis on the film industry, greenways,  
28 offshore wind, stuff like that. And of course the IDA  
29 lands in Greystones is a key one there, as you say,

1           that's a special economic zone. If we got something up  
2           and running there then we're looking at reversing the  
3           commute straightaway. The skill sets are there. I  
4           know there's a survey being carried out shortly in  
5           relation to commuters so that should tell us a lot.

20:03

6

7           Again, the plan itself displays a lack of understanding  
8           that the role of infrastructure generally and transport  
9           connectivity in particular. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

10          CATHAOIRLEACH: cllr. Bourke, then cllr. Cullen.

20:03

11

12          CLLR. BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. First of all,  
13          thank you very much for taking the time and trouble.  
14          We owe you a great debt for the efforts that you put  
15          into reading that document in detail and presenting to  
16          us.

20:03

17

18          You mentioned the special economic zone there in  
19          Greystones, which is great to see coming along. You  
20          didn't mention, it may be in the planning but you  
21          didn't mention the thousands of people that get into  
22          the cars at 5:30 in the morning, say, from Gorey,  
23          Tinahely, Aughrim, Arklow and Wicklow to travel the N11  
24          to find employment in Dublin and I think more needs to  
25          be done to relocate businesses south of the County,  
26          down to Wicklow and Arklow to create conditions for  
27          employment to reverse the commute, as cllr. Walsh just  
28          mentioned there so people can have a better quality of  
29          life. The quality of life for people who have to do  
              that every morning must be dreadful and the impact it

20:03

20:03

1 has on their family and children. It's shocking and I  
2 think that we really should definitely leave some  
3 legacy for future generations and address that and deal  
4 with it very strongly in this plan, if it can be done  
5 at all possible. You would be doing our community a  
6 great service.

20:04

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr. Fortune.

8 CLLR. FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for  
9 calling the meeting I think it's very, very important.  
10 I must say this is just more the same from the point of  
11 view Councillors, I would agree with a number of  
12 Cllr. Fox's opening remarks. The whole process is a  
13 real serious issue with this. It's great that you  
14 called the meeting and all that, but we're here with  
15 two hands tied behind our backs. There'll be a  
16 document or something produced after Friday and we  
17 still won't have had any input into it. There's too  
18 much of that going on.

20:04

20:05

19  
20 If I can sidetrack for a second. Even the whole  
21 BusConnect programme that's going on, there's serious  
22 questions whether that will happen the way it has been  
23 outlined and in the timeframe. We are get a whole lot  
24 of what I would call smoke and mirrors about  
25 everything. The question I would have is: What impact  
26 is this going to have for, for example, where I am in  
27 the Greystones District and I'm saying the district not  
28 just Greystones Town. I'd like to know what the impact  
29 is on that?

20:05

20:05

1 Obviously we have two of our TDs here tonight and  
2 that's great and thanks to Pat and John for turning up  
3 but the whole five of them should be here, maybe the  
4 Minister might be very, very busy and couldn't be here  
5 but the other TDs should be here.

20:06

6  
7 Have the TDs been involved, for example, to date in any  
8 part of the process and if they have what has their  
9 input been for that?

20:06

10  
11 Cllr. Mitchell talks about all the time the traffic on  
12 the N11 and if you look at the numbers moving out of  
13 the County, the whole thing is a disaster. So to say  
14 that Wicklow, you know, not to be dramatic, it could be  
15 potentially shut down depending on how this thing is  
16 ratified around the table at the Regional Assembly. My  
17 bottom line on this is that we're all public  
18 representatives, all elected democratically. We should  
19 be involved in this. I mean, that's not a slight on  
20 the four Members we have representing us on the  
21 authority at all, but the whole way the thing works is  
22 madness. I won't get into this but we have a mad  
23 situation going on in my own village at the moment,  
24 through the same kind of criteria, the same kind of  
25 carry on, this pretence that we're going to do things  
26 quicker and better. And we're talking about 2040, for  
27 crying out loud we haven't even got a five-year plan,  
28 not alone a 15/20-year plan. It's just ridiculous.

20:06

20:06

20:07

29

1 To me it's the whole process, it's the kind of lack of  
2 respect for us as public representatives and it's  
3 happening more and more. It's happening in housing.  
4 It's happening, as I say, with all aspects of  
5 Government. And in actual fact what should be  
6 happening is we should be getting our Districts more  
7 focused, and we should be getting more power into the  
8 Districts and we should be running it from that base.  
9 I would certainly like to know does anyone know, for  
10 example, or any of our four representative who are on  
11 the authority know what the likely impact is for the  
12 Greystones District?.  
13 CATHAOIRLEACH: All right, cllr. Shay Cullen.  
14 CLLR. SHAY CULLEN: Thank you. First of all, Chairman,  
15 thank you, you put a lot of work into this and it's  
16 obvious from your comments earlier that you spent a lot  
17 of time trying to deal with this process. I suppose  
18 like earlier speakers, for me the lack of information  
19 that we have, but also the lack of input into the  
20 process I think is regrettable from my point of view.  
21 As cllr. Fortune has just said, I think we should have  
22 had, as public representatives, a bigger input into the  
23 whole process and not be, you know, scrambling at the  
24 last minute to try and see what we can decide that will  
25 improve the situation.  
26  
27 I suppose I would have serious concerns, as other  
28 speakers have, over the whole rural planning situation.  
29 I think in an earlier suggestion or draft the whole

1 area of the social and economic need in a rural area  
2 was causing a lot of concern. I suppose I want to make  
3 sure that that has been addressed because at one stage  
4 they were taking out the social need to live or get  
5 planning permission in a rural area, that you would  
6 only have to have an economic need and that certainly  
7 would rule out a vast number of rural applicants when  
8 it comes to rural planning.

20:09

9

10 To bring that a stage further, I feel that there is  
11 more and more barriers being put on rural planning  
12 applications and it really is down to interpretation  
13 and it's a very frustrating process for Councillors and  
14 applicants alike. So I certainly would like to see  
15 that whole area of rural planning being taken more  
16 seriously because I think there's a lot of, a lot of  
17 issues there that are simmering away and that we need  
18 to deal with them.

20:09

19

20 with regard to Wicklow Town. I'm trying to work out  
21 the rationale of why they would suggest a growth  
22 population of 17,000 when we would have had 25,000 in  
23 our County Development Plan? Considering the  
24 infrastructure spend that we have in Wicklow Town it  
25 just doesn't make sense. It seems like they have just  
26 plucked the figure of 17,000 out of the sky but like,  
27 you know, again, I would like to know where did they  
28 come with the 17,000? They seem to have rode back on  
29 that and agreed to 25-. why would they come back with

20:09

20:10

1           17- when we had 25- and the infrastructure in place?

2

3           The deficit of 3,000 units, that seems to be the figure  
4           now we're down to 3,000, I mean how do we achieve that  
5           without de-zoning land? I certainly am against any  
6           de-zoning of anyone's land, but, again, I'm just not  
7           clear on how you can achieve this without de-zoning  
8           land. So it's something I think we should be fighting  
9           for at least parity that, you know, we stick with the  
10          guideline that is we have in our County Development  
11          Plan.

12

13          I suppose areas along the N11, Newtownmountkennedy,  
14          Ashford, where do those villages come into play? We're  
15          currently working on a new Town Development Plan.

16          Again, a lot of uncertainty around that. A lot of  
17          planning permission that has already been granted in  
18          Newtown. I certainly wouldn't want to see that in  
19          jeopardy. In actual fact with the services that we  
20          have in Newtown it's somewhere where we should be  
21          possibly increasing our population area.

22

23          The whole area, as we mentioned, is the transport  
24          situation, particularly the rail service improvement  
25          for Wicklow Town. I'm not sure what the position is  
26          with that?

27

28          I know greenways were mentioned briefly but we're  
29          looking at a greenway from Greystones to Wicklow and I

1 would like to see if there's any reference made to  
2 that?

3

4 But I suppose just to come to an end, Chairman, I  
5 suppose my personal view on this is I don't believe  
6 there has been enough thought put into the whole  
7 process. I think there's a lot more work can be done  
8 and I'd like us, as Councillors, to have a bigger input  
9 into the future on this. Thank you.

20:11

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: cllr. Dunne.

20:12

11 CLLR. DUNNE: Thank you, Chairman. First of all,  
12 Chairman, again thanks for all of your hard work that  
13 you put in this and also the Regional Assembly members.  
14 I know personally that you've put a tremendous lot of  
15 work in this, as your presentation this evening has  
16 said.

20:12

17  
18 Just, I suppose, you know, I just can't believe the  
19 process the way it's took place. We seem to be in the  
20 dark about knowing figures about the numbers, how the  
21 process went ahead and tonight is probably the first  
22 time we had this opportunity to listen to you to tell  
23 us how it went. But, you know, most of the Members  
24 around here are finding it difficult to come to terms  
25 with what has happened.

20:12

26  
27 Just, I have a very straightforward question really:  
28 You know, if we have to put out the County Development  
29 Plan again for public display, you know, in Wicklow and

1 Greystones like the Wicklow and Rathnew Environs Plan  
2 probably should be up and running at this stage and we  
3 should be making presentations to the planners now at  
4 this stage but, you know, we can't because of this  
5 plan. I just want to know when do they envisage this 20:13  
6 plan, the Wicklow Rathnew Environs plan going ahead?  
7 There's local elections in May or June so will it go  
8 ahead before then or will it be after that? Obviously  
9 people are coming to us wondering what's going on and  
10 we can't tell them. Maybe I could get that question 20:13  
11 answered? Thank you, Chairman. Thank you.  
12 CATHAOIRLEACH: cllr. Oliver O'Brien.  
13 CLLR. OLIVER O'BRIEN: Go raibh míle maith agat,  
14 Cathaoirleach. My question basically would be how  
15 credible this plan is? It's 2031 and I'd say there a 20:13  
16 lot of people out there that could be very cynical  
17 about this plan. They'd say we don't have a credible  
18 plan for sorting the present housing crisis out at the  
19 moment. Is it just something paper, basically  
20 speaking, with vision and stuff that's all in this 20:14  
21 plan? Is it just a plan over plans? I mean when you  
22 put a plan in place you surely have to move it with all  
23 the force that will result in the implementation of  
24 this plan? That's my major concern. I also have a  
25 concern that cllr. Fox mentioned there about the local 20:14  
26 democracy and taking the dynamics out of local  
27 democracy when everything has been imposed there from  
28 central idea. As you can see, there are major, major,  
29 major, major faults, in particular in relation to rural

1 development, and maybe that indicates that the  
2 over-centralisation of the plan has serious problems  
3 because of that because we're not relying anymore on  
4 local democracy to develop. That's my concern and I  
5 wonder is that concern shared by anybody on the top  
6 table.

20:14

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's grand. Thank you.  
8 Cllr. Kavanagh.

9 CLLR. KAVANAGH: Thank you, Chairman, and thanks for  
10 holding the meeting. I just want to make one or two  
11 meetings. Basically the one thing that strikes me  
12 about this whole process is how haphazard it is. It's  
13 is almost like there are designers out there who want  
14 to make a suit to fit the country but they have some  
15 tailor working from one design and some tailor working  
16 from another design and at the end of the day they're  
17 hoping that it's all going to marry up and it's all  
18 going to fit. The problem is that we're working with  
19 two completely different sets of plans.

20:15

20 Now how can that happen? What is the point of the  
21 County Development Plan if it's going to be rushed all  
22 over? Like when I started here, what two-and-a-half  
23 years ago, the County Development Plan was the thing  
24 that everyone was working on. There was a huge amount  
25 of work that went into it. It went backwards and  
26 forwards, changes, meetings, we had special meetings,  
27 we had everything and eventually came up with something  
28 that everybody was happy with. Do these planners not  
29

20:15

1 speak to other planners? Or is that a kind of  
2 outlandish suggestion? Surely at the end of the day  
3 we're looking at the future of this country? We can't  
4 have different sets of figures and different sets of  
5 statistics and different plans with one group taking  
6 precedence over another. None of this makes any sense  
7 to me. It's almost like the lunatics are gone mad in  
8 the asylum. There's nobody in control here.

20:16

9

10 So the other comment I would make is that if we're  
11 unhappy then I would imagine that Councillors in other  
12 counties are also unhappy. I'd imagine if their County  
13 Development Plans are being ridden over and with new  
14 figures being drafted in, I would imagine they would be  
15 very unhappy as well. I'd say that the Wicklow reps  
16 will get a lot of support at the meeting on Friday.  
17 They won't be going solo on this.

20:16

20:17

18

19 with regard to the actual meeting, I don't know what  
20 the mechanics of the meeting are on Friday, but can  
21 people just agree that they're not going to vote to  
22 adopt this plan on Friday? In other words, without any  
23 time, without any reference to all these Councillors  
24 here and in the other counties, I assume as well, can  
25 people just say: Look it, this is just not all marrying  
26 up together, we need more time. We need more input.  
27 We need to go back to our Councillors, we need to see  
28 what they want because they're the ones who came up  
29 with the County Development Plan and suddenly we have

1           these two plans and they're completely at odds with  
2           each other. How can they suddenly decide that a  
3           population growth is going to drop from 25,000 to  
4           17,000? Like has somebody got a crystal ball there  
5           that they're looking into and has decided that, you  
6           know, they're going to, they know how things are going  
7           to be in 2040? It's just plucking figures out of the  
8           air.

9           CATHAOIRLEACH: okay. Thank you. Cllr. Kennedy.  
10          CLLR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. First of  
11          all, I agree with everything that has been said around  
12          the table over a lot of the things, especially the  
13          rural planning. But I have three questions,  
14          Cathaoirleach, that I'd like to ask: what would be the  
15          effects be on Arklow where €30 million has been spent  
16          on a waste water plant? That's question number one.  
17          what will the effects be on the likes of Rathdrum and  
18          towns of similar size on the County? That's my second  
19          question. And my third question would be: You  
20          mentioned the year 2031 earlier on in your opening  
21          presentation, so what will the financial effects be on  
22          the County over the next 12 years and how will the  
23          shortfall be addressed and what services will be cut  
24          because we'd have a shortfall in funding. That's going  
25          to have a knock-on effect right around the County. I'm  
26          just wondering in terms of finance what will it be over  
27          the next 12 years. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.  
28          CATHAOIRLEACH: There's allegedly a massive amount of  
29          funding to back up this National Planning Framework but

1 I'll get more answers on that. Cllr. Dermot O'Brien,  
2 and then Cllr. Cullen and then we'll go to the top  
3 table there to see if we can get some answers.  
4 CLLR. DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks a mil, Cathaoirleach,  
5 thanks again for hosting the meeting. I'm fascinated,  
6 if you will indulge a newbie who is sitting here,  
7 fascinated looking at these processes and wondering  
8 when I see the County Development Plan and the  
9 collective imagination of the people in this room and  
10 in this building and those around the County, the 20:19  
11 collective will, the collective expertise presents a  
12 plan that we're accountable for, that has integrity  
13 written all the way through it. And I'm fascinated  
14 that we have to send four people from Wicklow somewhere  
15 else to battle for its survival and its integrity. So 20:20  
16 I'm wondering who are we battling with? You know, on  
17 Friday who is -- where are the counterproposals coming  
18 from that say Wicklow should be this, against the  
19 people from Wicklow who are saying: This is our vision  
20 for Wicklow. And who's informing the counterproposals? 20:20  
21 we have expertise within this building that informs all  
22 the work that's proposed. I wonder who the experts are  
23 on the other side that have counterproposals and I'm  
24 fascinated to hear what our experts think about that.  
25 I'm really wondering, you know, where do you draw the 20:20  
26 line between when we go out to face the public and we  
27 are talking about the vision for Wicklow and we have to  
28 explain and be accountable for the fact that it's being  
29 changed by outside forces. Thanks.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr. Cullen and  
2 then the last man, Cllr. O'Neill after that.  
3 Cllr. Cullen.

4 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Chairman, first of all, like  
5 Cllr. Winters I didn't receive the document so  
6 hopefully tomorrow I might get it so I'm restricted.  
7

8 Chairman, I think it's wrong to suggest that the  
9 Members didn't bring this back to the Council. This  
10 has been discussed here in this Council Chamber at  
11 least three times in the last year and it certainly has  
12 been discussed at the Planning SPC at virtually every  
13 meeting, in detail. So it's wrong to say that this  
14 wasn't brought back to people. I don't know.  
15

16 CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: we don't get any reports from it.  
17 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: The other thing is, Chairman, I  
18 want to thank Sean Quirke and Sorcha Walsh for the  
19 advice they have given us on this. It has been very  
informative advice and very good advice.

20 Chairman, we have done our best, yourself and the  
21 Wicklow Members, all the Wicklow Members have done our  
22 best with the limitations of our numbers, it's a very  
23 big body and we have put very strongly the case for  
24 Wicklow and for maintaining the Wicklow Development  
25 Plan and the zoning figures contained therein. We have  
26 acted in unison there both at the planning committees  
27 and at the general body. So we have been putting the  
28 case for Wicklow very, very strongly with one voice and  
29

1 I think that has to be said.

2

3 The issues are involved, there seems to me to be three  
4 counties really in the front line in this, this is  
5 Kildare, Wicklow and Meath and perhaps parts of  
6 County Louth. And I mean I think I have been speaking  
7 to colleagues from those counties and I think what -- I  
8 think the door would be open, perhaps, that we would  
9 have a joint meeting of those local authorities, maybe  
10 we could hold it at the Naas County Council buildings  
11 there and bring together the Councillors there from  
12 those three our four front line counties and the TDs  
13 from those counties which would be 22 or 23 TDs, it  
14 would be a very strong lobby group to protect interests  
15 of the residents of those counties. I would formally  
16 propose that we would write to those local authorities  
17 to seek such a joint meeting going forward to see can  
18 we come together with a united front and that will be a  
19 very, very strong unitary bloc. Because ultimately I  
20 think this will come down to the Dáil Deputies and how  
21 many people are in it. If we have a bloc of 22 or 23  
22 Dáil Deputies from those four constituencies, because  
23 there's two constituencies in County Meath and I think  
24 they would have a significant say-so. I would propose  
25 that we would look to have a joint meeting with those  
26 four front line authorities that are most affected by  
27 this. I think we will get, if that would be agreed  
28 to -- I suspect it would e agreed to.

29

1           The other thing is, Chairman, nobody wants to see the  
2 de-zoning of lands. I think Cllr. Fox is quite correct  
3 in his concerns about one-off housing because it's like  
4 a pint of mil, if you fill up a pint of milk, you can't  
5 put any more milk in that bottle and that's it, it's  
6 finite and population is finite and you're restricted  
7 to that.

8

9           Someone mentioned, I think it was Cllr. Kavanagh there  
10 about these population controls and it reminds me of  
11 the Chinese Government one child per house policy.  
12 That's effectively what this is being proposing, that  
13 each household will be restricted to the amount of  
14 children effectively that it will. Because if you say  
15 you have to control the population, and people say,  
16 well, actually I want to have as many children and I  
17 can't but how do does the Government enforce a one  
18 child per house policy? I mean that's effectively what  
19 we're being asked to do.

20           CLLR. RUTTLE: It's very difficult. I accept that.           20:25

21           CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: It is very difficult. If you put  
22 a population cap on a county, it's the first time, this  
23 is unique as a proposal that a Government body or  
24 department is proposing the restriction of the  
25 population growth. The way China has done it is the  
26 one child policy.           20:25

27           CLLR. RUTTLE: They're reversing that, too.

28           CATHAOIRLEACH: Come on. Come on now. Come on now.  
29           We're just getting to the end now. We have to be

1 serious about this.

2 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Hold on, Chairman. The omission  
3 from the N81 in this document is very, very concerning  
4 but, as I said, earlier as at previous meetings,  
5 perhaps the Department, Mr. Ross, when he was making 20:26  
6 this decision to downgrade not to upgrade the N81, he  
7 knew about this document and what the figures were  
8 coming out that the population in these areas were  
9 going to be restricted and we're not going to be  
10 needing this road. So perhaps that informed the making 20:26  
11 of this decision.

12

13 Chairman, I just have a concern about rural policy, but  
14 probably it won't be voted on Friday. There may be a  
15 deferral. But I think in that period, Chairman, that 20:26  
16 we really need to get our act together with regards to  
17 liaising with and forming an alliance with the other  
18 four counties that are affected, particularly the three  
19 and bring in, and I think the TDs should work on this  
20 as well to get these together and that's where we 20:26  
21 should show our united front in a major bloc. But this  
22 is far from over and we're still at the preliminary  
23 stages, to some extent, and there's still a lot of  
24 fight and a lot of campaigning. But the fact that  
25 these changes have been made -- 20:27

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Very significant.

27 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: -- that shows the effectiveness  
28 that the Wicklow Members have had, that our voice has  
29 been heard, to an extent. We're not satisfied to the

1 extent but we will keep fighting. But I think we do  
2 need some coordination with other Councils. Thank you,  
3 Chairman.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: cllr. O'Neill and then I'll go to the  
5 top table here.

20:27

6 CLLR. O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for  
7 organising tonight's meeting. I will be brief. I just  
8 wonder exactly what our input, our four reps' input  
9 into the Regional Assembly is? At the outset we said  
10 the one-off housing isn't part of this, you know, so  
11 I'm just wondering how hard our reps -- I know on the  
12 Planning SPC that I've argued all along here that  
13 one-off housing is an issue that I deal with quite a  
14 lot. I just wonder what effort has been put in to get  
15 the powers to be to listen to it?

20:27

20:28

16  
17 The other issue, on the N81, we all received an e-mail  
18 this morning following a question we put to the TII. I  
19 proposed a letter would be written to the TII here at  
20 the September meeting and the TII in response this  
21 morning, which we all got a copy of, said there would  
22 be no sense in meeting the Members of Wicklow County  
23 Council because the N81 is not part of the National  
24 Plan. So, again, I just wonder, you know, what  
25 argument we have put to the National Assembly to have  
26 these on the tar. Go raibh maith agat.

20:28

20:28

27 CLLR. TOMMY CULLEN: Chairman, just a point of  
28 correction. As you know yourself, Chairman and  
29 cllr. Winters, at every meeting of EMRA we have been

1 raising the issue of one-off housing and the N81. So  
2 rest assured --

3 CLLR. O'NEILL: You yourself you haven't gone too far  
4 with it, Cllr. Number 24.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think there's general agreement that 20:29  
6 there's a huge amount of rural Councillors on EMRA and  
7 they bring it up all the time. It's a huge issue in  
8 the rural areas. Throughout that, not alone in Wicklow  
9 but obviously the other counties as well.

10  
11 Before I bring in Sorcha that she answers a few of the 20:29  
12 queries in regard to that, could I just say, I'll say  
13 it again: I have been informed from an official that  
14 there will be written confirmation that there will be  
15 no de-zoning in regard to this. I've told them time  
16 and time again from my point of view is that I will not  
17 vote for de-zoning in any shape or form in regard to  
18 it. And I believe that will be confirmed before the  
19 meeting on Friday in regard to that.

20  
21 Just before I bring in Sorcha, like a number of people 20:30  
22 have referred to it and I want to refer to it as well,  
23 this has been a long drawn out process and there's been  
24 a huge amount of meetings involved in it as well. I  
25 have attended every single one of them and really I  
26 couldn't do it without the information that I got from  
27 the Planning Section here. It was unbelievable the  
28 information and how thorough it was and how confident I  
29 was in the figures that I was given in regard to that

1 to allow us to go and fight our particular corner in  
2 regard to this. I'll just say from my point of view it  
3 was tremendous and I want to thank Sorcha and the  
4 Department there for their help in regard to this  
5 because we wouldn't have got the concession that we got 20:30  
6 without that type of back up type material that we had  
7 in regard to that.

8

9 Could I just say that it wasn't only in Wicklow but 20:30  
10 there was a number of planners that were involved in  
11 the other counties as well and they're still involved  
12 as well, that have been given their Councillors the  
13 information in regard to it. Be know ourselves that  
14 we're not planners and we have to rely on good  
15 up-to-date information and we have to be confident 20:31  
16 about delivering that as well and I think I was very  
17 confident about that with the confirmation, with the  
18 information I got from Sorcha. Sorcha, can you come in  
19 there and then anything Sorcha misses it will be handed  
20 to the top table. She won't miss very much, I can tell 20:31  
21 you.

22 MS. WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I'm not sure  
23 where to start there. I might come in at the beginning  
24 just to talk to you about the process a little bit.

25

26 Since 1999 we've had a framework of planning emanating 20:31  
27 from the national level down to the regional level down  
28 to the County level. We've had a National Spatial  
29 Strategy in 2002, but before that we had Strategic

1 Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area which  
2 were in 1999. And so we are in a cycle for nearly 20  
3 years now of having national plans and regional plans  
4 change out of sync with our County Development Plan.  
5 As a plan changes, we do have to amend our County 20:32  
6 Development Plan. But in the past it has been the case  
7 that if a higher order plan changed there was no  
8 particular pressure to amend your plan straightaway,  
9 you just amended along the same cycle that you were  
10 following anyway, your six-year cycle. So you could 20:32  
11 have a County Plan that was maybe four years out of  
12 sync, say, with a Regional Plan if it got adopted  
13 around the same time, which happened quite often. So  
14 we've always had to deal with this problem that we've  
15 sometimes had to play catch up and that our figures 20:32  
16 might have been different from new figures that have  
17 come from up above. In fairness to you, the Members,  
18 you've always dealt with that very well. You've always  
19 accepted it. You've tried to input into the processes  
20 that were above you in any way that you could. If any 20:32  
21 new figures and policies came from above, you talked  
22 them through and you implemented them into County  
23 Development Plans. It was all done reasonably  
24 painlessly. I can't even remember an occasion where it  
25 caused a huge problem. 20:33

26

27 This is just another example of this. I don't think we  
28 need to blow it all out of proportion. We have a new  
29 National Planning Framework and we're going to have a

1 new Regional Plan and we will be amending our County  
2 Development Plan and we will go through the stages in  
3 the process and have lots of conversations about it and  
4 workshops and working groups and SPCs, and so on, and  
5 we'll come out the other end and wonder what the fuss 20:33  
6 was. But at the same time we just need to make sure we  
7 protect our assets when we have the opportunity to do  
8 so.

9

10 So you have already made a submission to the Regional 20:33  
11 Plan that was earlier on this year so there has been  
12 presentations by both myself and the regional team to  
13 you here, and when the plan is adopted as a draft, you  
14 will get another presentation, perhaps from myself and  
15 perhaps from the regional team, and you will need make  
16 further submissions before this is adopted. If there  
17 are amendments, again, you'll get an opportunity to  
18 make submissions there.

19

20 I suppose the new thing that's different is the 20:33  
21 Planning Act was amended in August this year and as  
22 Cllr. Whitmore was referring to, within 26 weeks of the  
23 adoption of a new Regional Plan we have to start the  
24 process of either varying or reviewing our County  
25 Development Plan. And all Councils will have to do 20:34  
26 that. So now all the County Development Plans will be  
27 aligned and running along the same timeline so that  
28 when there's a new Regional Plan in seven years' time  
29 from now, we'll all go through the same process again

1 and it will be nested one following the other. So that  
2 is a big change that actually officials from this  
3 Council have been lobbying the Department hard for a  
4 number of years and finally we see that.

5 20:34

6 The Act requires that we either vary or review our  
7 County Development Plan. Now, as all of you know, we'd  
8 be, it will be 2020 when we will, in the normal course  
9 of events, have to start the review of our 2016  
10 Development Plan because it happens at year four. It's 20:34  
11 likely that we will recommend to you that you start the  
12 process at the end of 2019, within six months of the  
13 adoption of the Regional Plan, rather than varying a  
14 plan that within one year you then have to review  
15 again. So we will have to do a new core strategy. If 20:35  
16 there are new population figures to integrate into the  
17 plan, we'll have to do all of that, but we'll do that  
18 as a Council and we'll work our way through that.  
19

20 So that's the process that's going to come about and 20:35  
21 but look, it's timely that you are involved in the  
22 Regional Plan so that we don't face any insurmountable  
23 problems later on.

24  
25 Just in terms of the nest of planning and the plans 20:35  
26 that are above us. There's two things going on here  
27 which is the National Planning Framework and the  
28 Regional Plan and I suppose they've overlapped and  
29 that's probably causing a bit of confusion. The

1           National Planning Framework was made by the Government  
2           in February this year and then in July this year they  
3           published a ministerial addendum to that, which was  
4           population figures. Now, the higher level population  
5           figures were already in the February document but the       20:35  
6           July document included the County population figures.  
7           So the Regional Team and the Regional Assembly can't  
8           look behind those figures. They're adopted figures and  
9           they can't change those figures. It's not within their  
10          gift to do that. They have to prepare a regional plan      20:36  
11          that is consistent with the National Plan. A question  
12          was raised: Can we change these County figures?  
13          They're not up for change, they're the policy of the  
14          Government that have been set now. So the Regional  
15          Authority and Regional Team have to work with those      20:36  
16          figures and move through them and try to develop a  
17          regional plan based around those figures.  
18  
19          The same goes for rural housing. There's nothing in  
20          the Regional Plan about rural housing because the       20:36  
21          Regional Plan doesn't have a gift to bring in any  
22          policies with regard to Regional Plan. The Government  
23          policy on rural housing is as set out in the National  
24          Planning Framework and the Ministerial Guidelines that  
25          already exist on rural housing. So if the Regional      20:36  
26          Plan includes any chapter or paragraph on rural  
27          housing, all it could do would be to restate what's in  
28          the National Planning Framework, which is already  
29          adopted. So there's no scope for bringing in tighter

1 or looser controls, or any different types of controls  
2 in the Regional Plan compared to the National Plan  
3 because that has already been adopted. It would  
4 probably be just as easy for the Regional Team to  
5 exclude any reference to rural housing, if they wish,  
6 because they have no role in setting rural housing  
7 policy.  
8

9 I just want to flag that for you. I know it's a very  
10 important issue in County Wicklow but I suppose it's  
11 important we don't get sidetracked with issues that the  
12 Regional Plan can't address at all. 20:37

13

14 I suppose going back then I'll just address one of them  
15 which is the population figures which is what I suppose  
16 a lot of people have hit on. 20:37

17

18 The National Planning Framework gave Wicklow County a  
19 target population figure and that's 164,000 for 2031.  
20 So those of you that know your County Development Plan  
21 very well will know that our current target for 2028 -  
22 so three years short of that - is 178,000. So this is  
23 people not houses. So that's a difference in 14,000  
24 people. The idea behind this is the National Planning  
25 Framework are trying to change the trajectory or  
26 pattern of population growth round the country so that  
27 we can refocus on our cities. And by focusing  
28 population growth in the cities what goes hand-in-hand  
29 in that is a slow-down, not an elimination of growth 20:38

1 but a slow-down of growth in other counties,  
2 particularly counties surrounding the cities because  
3 they see this is causing a problem in our cities and  
4 we've got sprawl, we've got commuting problems, we've  
5 got congestion. So if we refocus on our cities what  
6 goes hand-in-hand with that is a slow-down in growth.  
7 As Cllr. Cullen correctly pointed out, the Counties  
8 that are being hit in our area particularly are  
9 Wicklow, Kildare and Meath. But the same is probably  
10 happening around the other cities in the other regions. 20:38

11

12 So they want us to go on a different path growth, so it  
13 is to slow down our rate of growth. It looked earlier  
14 this summer when we got those figures that that was  
15 going to result in a very, very significant reduction 20:39

16 in our housing growth target. This 164,000 compared to  
17 the 178,000. So it would be a reduction in our housing  
18 over the next ten to fifteen years, so a slow-down by  
19 about 30%. Now, through the meetings and the  
20 negotiations and discussions that our representatives 20:39

21 on the Regional Assembly have had - and they've got  
22 been working very hard on this - they have got  
23 agreement from the Department and from the Regional  
24 Team that the population growth in Bray will come out  
25 of a different pot. It won't come out of the County  
26 Wicklow growth pot. It will essentially come out of  
27 the Dublin City pot, which is the Metropolitan Area  
28 pot. So it would mean that our housing growth  
29 slow-down in Wicklow would be more in the order of 10%

1           rather than 30%. So that's to put it in a bit of  
2           context, the concession, I suppose, they've managed to  
3           negotiate. Again, that was something that if that  
4           proceeds we'd have to integrate into our County  
5           Development Plan. Now, that does not necessarily       20:40  
6           equate to de-zoning, it's a reduction in housing growth  
7           target and how that is dealt with would be a matter for  
8           you in your County Development Plan, but there will be  
9           principles that you will have to apply in reaching  
10          that. Now whether that comes to fruition or not we      20:40  
11          have to wait and see because the process, we have to  
12          follow through the process. But that's the kind of  
13          level that we're talking about changing from a 30%  
14          reduction now to a 10% reduction. Those of you that      20:40  
15          have read the NPF, you know that's the kind of route  
16          they want us to go down.  
17  
18          Again, earlier this summer a figure emerged for Wicklow  
19          Town which was around 17,000 and our current population  
20          in Wicklow Town is around 14,000, whereas our growth      20:40  
21          target was 24,000. The source of this figure, I think  
22          somebody asked where did this come from? It's a  
23          principle in the NPF that unless a town is a very, very  
24          strong town with lots and lots employment, full  
25          infrastructure, loads of schools, loads of playing      20:41  
26          pitches, has everything ready to go, you shouldn't be  
27          growing a town by more than 30%. If you can't tick all  
28          those boxes, 30% is the kind of growth rate you should  
29          be planning. So that's where the 17,000 came from.

1 That raised a lot of concern because of the amount of  
2 money that had been invested in infrastructure in  
3 Wicklow. It might still have some deficiencies but a  
4 lot of the deficiencies have been dealt with by this  
5 investment, so it was felt that it was a waste of  
6 resources and a waste of this investment.

20:41

7  
8 The latest version of the Regional Plan that figure,  
9 that target, that cap, whatever you want to call it,  
10 for Wicklow is gone. There's no reference to it at  
11 all. However, those principles that a town should have  
12 all it needs to grow are still there, they're still  
13 embedded in the National Planning Framework, but it  
14 will be for you to tease out in the County Development  
15 Plan process. And the same will go for all the other  
16 towns, somebody has mentioned Cllr. Cullen mentioned  
17 Newtown, Ashford and so on. They'll have to put be  
18 through the same test to actually look at, well, is it  
19 right that this town should grow by 200% or should it  
20 only be 50%? we have to look very carefully at our  
21 decisions about how a town should grow. I'm sure  
22 there's some of you representing towns that you'd like  
23 to see more growth and there's probably plenty of you  
24 representing towns that would like to see less growth.  
25 So there's probably a bit of give and take there and  
26 again that will be for the County Development Plan to  
27 resolve in the future.

20:41

20:42

20:42

20:42

28  
29 They're the main issues that I think I can hit on. I

1                   might pass you over to Sean and see does he have  
2 anything else. Thank you all.

3                   MR. QUIRKE: Not sure I can follow that, most of the  
4 big issues have been dealt with there. I'd like to pay  
5 tribute to the Cathaoirleach who has put an awful lot      20:42  
6 of work into preparing his issue paper there and I have  
7 no doubt that it will be well represented with himself  
8 and our other three Members on Friday.

9  
10                  I think the important thing from our point of view and      20:43  
11 what took the pressure off us from August was the  
12 removal of the Bray growth into the mass area. Now,  
13 from what we've seen so far I think it's very important  
14 that this is nailed down that it's clear and  
15 unambiguous that we're not going back to the National      20:43  
16 Planning Framework to see what does that mean and so  
17 on. So that will take the pressure off for the rest of  
18 the County.

19  
20                  The other thing, which we are advised will come forward      20:43  
21 is there will be no down zoning required and again that  
22 takes a lot of pressure off yourselves, off ourselves  
23 and allows, will allow the County to develop in the way  
24 that it should.

25  
26                  The list that the Chairman gave you at the end there of      20:43  
27 the items which we'd like to see included I think will  
28 be important as well and if we can get those in we are,  
29 they are -- you are four Members out of 37 so it will

1 need a little bit of co-operation from other Members  
2 but I think there are other counties in the same  
3 position and I know Cllr. Mitchell, you, it has been  
4 said that an assessment was made when the original  
5 figures came out but if it was a mistaken assessment it 20:44  
6 was made in Meath, it was made in Louth, it was made in  
7 Kildare. So I don't think that's the case. Everybody  
8 was of the same opinion in that regard.

9

10 Look it, there are individual issues that have been 20:44  
11 mentioned. The RSES isn't going to end up as a  
12 shopping list which you have to have everything written  
13 on, but there are some big items that we do want in  
14 there such as the M11/N11 corridor down to Rosslare;'  
15 the big greenway in the west; the N81 and so on. I 20:44  
16 think if we should get those in there we should be a  
17 lot more comfortable with our position after Friday or  
18 whatever date it turns out to be. Okay.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: The Chief Executive.

20 MR. CURRAN: Cathaoirleach, I would just like to thank 20:45  
21 the Cathaoirleach in particular and the other Members  
22 because he was directly influential in that change for  
23 the population for Bray to go into the Dublin area.  
24 That made a big reference. He was also fairly  
25 influential, I think, in removing that target of 17,000 20:45  
26 from Wicklow, which would have a huge affect on  
27 development and also in relation to Fassaroe and to the  
28 Bray Golf Course lands, that they were given priority.

29

1       If I was to say the priorities for Friday, I think one  
2       is the clarification on 20% in Bray. That's important  
3       because there are some caveats in the plan but we can't  
4       have any caveats. And the issue of no de-zoning and  
5       extant permissions, if we just get clarity on that.

20:45

6

7       The N81 definitely needs to go in there. I know it's  
8       not in the National Planning Framework but if we get it  
9       in there.

20:45

10

20:46

11       Fassaroe Phase 1 needs to go to short-term. I think  
12       that might be an error and we need to change that. The  
13       film cluster is very important to Wicklow so that needs  
14       to be in there. Blessington greenway definitely. It  
15       means greenways but it doesn't mention Blessington  
16       which I think is very unfair.

20:46

17

18       The Belfast to Rosslare route. They're going from  
19       Belfast to Dublin but it needs to go right the way down  
20       to Rosslare. It would have an impact on Wicklow. And  
21       the improved rail service. So that's six or seven  
22       items that I think we should put in on Friday. Thank  
23       you.

20:46

24

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr. Mitchell.

25

20:46

26

27

28

29

CLLR. MITCHELL: Thank you. I just have a query about  
what was said there. My understanding was the growth  
of the Metropolitan Area of this County would be taken  
off potentially what had been the County Dublin figure  
and that it wasn't just Bray, but it's also Greystones.

1 CATHAOI RLEACH: No.

2 CLLR. MITCHELL: That's what the slide said. The slide

3 said the Metropolitan Area would be included. The

4 difference is significant. If you look at the

5 projection growth figures for Greystones, which I urge 20:47

6 are too high, but it does show that over the census

7 figure there would be another 4,000 houses. Certainly

8 even if there's two or three thousand houses it's still

9 significant in terms of that. Because I think in Bray

10 the figure they are talking about is 4- or 5,000. So 20:47

11 my understanding was that it was the entire

12 Metropolitan Area which is essentially Greystones.

13 CATHAOI RLEACH: My originally understanding of it was

14 that was the case but it's only in the last few days

15 that I understood that it's in the Bray area. And also 20:47

16 because Bray is designated with Maynooth and Swords,

17 that's where the greater, the population is going and

18 that's where it's going to be, not so much in

19 Greystones. The major population growth in the three

20 towns in the Metropolitan Area that have been 20:48

21 designated with superior status and the other ones are

22 Bray, Maynooth and Swords. But my understanding is

23 that the growth figure is the Bray figure.

24 CLLR. MITCHELL: Right. That was not the case at the

25 meeting I was at. 20:48

26 CATHAOI RLEACH: We can ask for clarification.

27 CLLR. MITCHELL: I want clarification. If the rest of

28 the County I think the Greystones figure --

29 CATHAOI RLEACH: I'll get clarification on that tomorrow

1           but I think I'm right in what I say. Yeah, I think I'm  
2           right. Cllr. McLoughlin and then we're going to wrap  
3           up.

4           CLLR. McLOUGHLIN: Just very briefly. What impact,  
5           Sorcha, will this have on the Local Area Plan for  
6           Greystones? The next one is 2019. So technically we  
7           should be starting work on it shortly. I imagine this  
8           is going to put it back, will it?

9           CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes. It will put it back. If it has  
10           to be reviewed the Local Area Plan will take a backseat  
11           and the County Development Plan will take precedence of  
12           that.

13           CLLR. FORTUNE: Just a comment.

14           CATHAOIRLEACH: Just briefly, please.

15           CLLR. FORTUNE: I'm just asking or assuming that all  
16           the comments that came from every member will be  
17           obviously taken into account at the meeting on Friday  
18           because while the CEO and Sorcha and Sean have --

19           CATHAOIRLEACH: Absolutely. I've taken a list of this  
20           and the list of priorities as well.

21           CLLR. FORTUNE: I will have a concern when we start  
22           talking about putting certain places into the  
23           Metropolitan Area when we're operating in the District  
24           system if you know what I mean.

25           CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah.

26           CLLR. FORTUNE: I don't want that dismantled.

27           CATHAOIRLEACH: To date, I have to say there's been  
28           good co-operation between the four Members from Wicklow  
29           in regard to this. We're Members of different

1 political parties as well, we talk to our colleagues  
2 there. We talk to our colleagues there, get agreement  
3 on this and I can tell you we've a very substantial  
4 majority then if everyone agrees to it. I think what  
5 we're asking for in regard to what could be reasonable  
6 enough that if we get them there, I think they're  
7 priorities that we all have and certainly I agree with  
8 them as well. Certainly we'll endeavour to do this and  
9 we'll get back to you. Thank you very much for your  
10 attendance.

20:49

11

12 THE MEETING THEN CONCLUDED

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