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**ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY
COUNCIL HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

ON

MONDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2021 FROM 1400-1800

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Certify the following to be a non-verbatim transcript of the stenographic notes in the above-named action for communication support.

J Sinnamon

A Howell (writers)

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TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 6TH 2021:

CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon, members. The can you hear me? How are you all? Welcome to our December meeting. I am just going hand over to Helen for a roll call.

ADMINISTRATOR: I would also like to remind the members of the etiquette for the online meetings. We would ask that all mobile phones be switched to silent. Do not leave the online meeting without informing the Cathaoirleach to ensure that a quorum remains. You can use the chat function to raise a question or raise your hand which is the simplest way if you wish to speak. Speakers should keep their camera and microphone on while speaking and please keep your microphone on mute while you are not speaking. If you lose connectivity please ring me and we will do our best to get you back online. Now for the roll call.

[Roll call taken]

Apologies from Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

[Roll call continues to be taken]

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat Kennedy, can't seem to get in, I don't think he has the link, if you could send it on to him again.

ADMINISTRATOR: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Just call for votes of sympathy. Anyone with votes of sympathy?

Okay, we will move on. Cllr Peir Leonard, first of all, you have your hand up.

CLLR LEONARD: Sorry, Cathaoirleach, I would like to suspend standing orders if possible just if everyone was in agreement, to send a letter to the Department of the Environment Climate and Communications in relation to the Community Benefit funding from the wind farms. Just on behalf of us all, I can read out the Notice of Motion, if that is okay?

CATHAOIRLEACH: First of all, Cllr Leonard, there is protocol in how we suspend standing orders. I am only after getting your email literally two minutes ago. First of all, I am not against suspending standing orders, but we have discussed this issue and a report has been sent by Wicklow County Council to the Department with regards to the community gain off wind farms, so we are very much agreeing with the sentiment of what you are putting forward. So, listen, I am going to open it up to the

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members, if you want to discuss this at 4.30 we can, but as far as I am concerned we have dealt with this issue and we are all united in the fact that the community gain should come to Wicklow County Council for distribution.

CLLR LEONARD: That is absolutely fine. I wasn't aware that a letter had been sent. It's just maybe to, in support of that letter that all the councillors add that support to that letter to Wicklow County Council.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is fine.

CLLR BOURKE: I would support Cllr Leonard to make sure we get that message across very strongly that we want local control over the community benefit fund.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, are we in agreement to discuss at 4.30?

CLLR LEONARD: The deadline is at 5.30 for the public consultation. I was thinking in everyone was in agreement just to send on the Notice of Motion that we could get an email before 5.30 today because of the deadline for consultation closing.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Did you send in the Notice of Motion.

CLLR LEONARD: I did already.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are in agreement with that. Cllr Mitchell is it?

CLLR MITCHELL: Are we discussing it now.

CATHAOIRLEACH: No, as far as I know we are agreed with the motion. It has already been submitted to the department by Wicklow County Council, so it's just to show the support really in terms of the submission.

CLLR MITCHELL: I haven't seen it, I imagine I would support it, but I do like to know what I am supporting.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Leonard, would you read out your Notice of Motion.

CLLR LEONARD: I just put my Notice of Motion that Wicklow County Council email the department of environment and communications outlining such as any future community benefit funding generated from the offshore electricity support scheme be managed at a local council level and not by central Government.

CLLR MITCHELL: I haven't seen what the Council has submitted? I have sent in a submission which says the same thing myself, so.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I think, Cllr Mitchell, we are all in agreement with this, it's nothing new. So if we are happy, I just want to.

CLLR LEONARD: Just to reinforce it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Blake. Go ahead.

CLLR BLAKE: Just got away from the votes of sympathy. I think the reason that Pat Fitzgerald is not at the meeting is because Joe O'Sullivan was an uncle of Pat's, the funeral is today. So votes of sympathy for that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you. If there is any other votes of sympathy, I had moved on, if not we will just...

CLLR BOURKE: There is one more in Arklow. Mrs Patricia Lott passed away, she would be an aunt of Teresa O'Brien, I would like to extend

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sympathies to the Lott family, very well-known family in Arklow. She was the grandmother of Nadine Lott who sadly lost her life two years ago in Arklow. So I would like to remember them all in our prayers.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Any other votes of sympathy? Okay, we will just pause for a moment's silence.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Eternal rest grant unto them, oh, Lord. May your perpetual light shine on them and may they rest in peace.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Moving on to the agenda. Item number one to confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on the 1st of November 2021, copy attached. Could I have a proposer and seconder, please? Proposed by Cllr Snell. Seconded by Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy. Thank you. Item number two, To consider the disposal of property comprised in Folio No. WW582L in the townland of Arklow, Co Wicklow, being the property known as 19 Knockenrahan, Co Wicklow by Transfer Order to Ms Eileen Kinsella of 19 Knockenrahan, Arklow, Co Wicklow, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property.

Proposed...proposed by Cllr Bourke and seconded by Cllr Tommy Annesley. Item number three, note the chairpersons of the SPC, Strategic Policies Committees I am going to bring Helen in to give a run out.

ADMINISTRATOR: The elected members received a note with the agenda in relation to the SPCs. In accordance with the decision taken at the annual general meeting, five of the six Strategic Policy Committees will rotate with effect from January 2022. This will reflect in the corporate policy group. As there will be no representative from the Bray Electoral Area, the Cathaoirleach of Bray Municipal District will have a seat on the Corporate Seat Policy.

So Cllr Tom Fortune will be taking that over from Gerry Walsh. Cllr Vincent Blake will be taking over Community and Social Development SPC from Cllr Gail Dunne. The Housing and Corporate Estate SPC will remain with Cllr Snell as the Cathaoirleach. Cllr Pat Fitzgerald will be taking over Transportation, Water and Emergency Services SPC from Cllr Derek Mitchell. Cllr Edward Timmins will be taking over Planning and Environment SPC from Cllr Sylvester Bourke and Cllr Lourda Scott will be taking over Climate and Biodiversity from Cllr R O'Connor. We would like to take this opportunity to the outgoing leadership and to wish all the incoming Cathaoirleach well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, I would like to add my thank you to the outgoing SPC chairs, Cllr Walsh, Dunne, Mitchell and Cllr O'Connor for all of your efforts and work you have put in over the last two-and-a-half years. Also to wish the incoming chairs all the best in their roles. Cllr

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Fortune, Blake, Fitzgerald, Timmins and Cllr Scott. The best of luck in your roles going forward.

Okay, item number four to review the standing order number 6. Copy attached.

ADMINISTRATOR: The elected members from circulated with a note relating to a further review of the standing order number 6 which relates to the place of the meeting and the address of the principal office. This item has been reviewed twice at this stage as a result of Covid-19 and the current extension to have meetings in a hybrid form or remote. As per the note, it has been extended to the 31st of December. We are now looking to extend that to the 30th of June. By extending the decision on this it allows remote meetings to be held remotely in the council chamber, at an external venue used to accommodation meetings of the council in one or more council buildings or rooms linked remotely in an electronic digital or virtual location with web address a conference call or a telephone number or a combination of the above to provide for physical or remote attendance by elected members. We will keep this under review. We have held a number of hybrid meetings when it was possible to do so and if it is possible to go back to face-to-face meetings before the 31st of June that will be considered as well. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Cllr Joe Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you, Helen. Just a couple of questions if I can, Cathaoirleach. One of the ministers yesterday on one of the programmes said that this Omicron variant, if it turns out it's not as dangerous as they first feared restrictions may be lifted earlier than they had planned. Now, I don't mind agreeing for another six months, Cathaoirleach, but I think it should be on the agenda once a month. Rather than just being left for six months.

Secondly, could I get clarification? Who makes the decision whether we go to remote or we go to physical meetings? Because the last time we got be an item on this, maybe I misread it, but it said that the Senior Management Team had decided to put us back to remote meetings rather than you as Cathaoirleach, or the, if you like the group of Cathaoirleachs of the SPCs. So could I get clarification on that question, but obviously also I am not against the idea of extending for another six months, but I do think we should keep it under very close review and get back to physical meetings ASAP.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Behan. I would concur with what you are saying. I can categorically say I would be delighted to have half a chamber or a full chamber of councillors at this stage. It's difficult to conduct meetings in this fashion, but from what I can gather, the advice from the Department is for, to go back to this type of forum. I might just bring in Lorraine here just to give us a view on this. But, we will certainly

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review this on a monthly basis, because if there is any sign of restrictions lifting I would be pushing strongly to get back to a hybrid model or with safety conditions in place, a full council chamber again. That is only my personal view. Lorraine, can I bring you in on this?

LORRAINE: Yes, Cathaoirleach, this was discussed at our Corporate Policy Meeting before the budget meeting last week. We are, as a local authority in line with other local authorities in the sector, we are following carefully the Government's announcements on public health advice in relation to staff in the workplace. The latest public health advice with effect from midnight, if you recall on the 18th of November last night, or a couple of weeks ago, all staff are requested to return to working from home until it's absolutely necessary to attend in the workplace. We are following the Work Safely Protocol that is issued nationally and in our discussions with our union representatives etc, etc. So with regard to council meetings and Municipal District meetings, the Workplace Protocol advises that face-to-face interactions be kept to an absolute minimum and it only be carried out where necessary. So you will recall our council meeting was held by hybrid, so it was proposed to return to online meetings only to keep it under review, depending on the spread of Covid-19 and Government's announcements. But we can keep it, Cathaoirleach, on review monthly.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, so are we all agreed that we keep it on review monthly and the extension is there for six months if required?

CLLR BEHAN: Agreed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed. Okay. Thank you. Okay, item number 5 to note the resignation of the Chief Executive. I suppose I will come in before I open it up here to the members. We are all aware that our CEE Frank Curran has tendered his resignation as Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council. For me this is a disappointing day for Wicklow County Council and indeed Wicklow as a county. Frank has been in Wicklow County Council for just over four years and in that time has brought structure and a vision to the Council that, in my view, hadn't previously existed. His leadership qualities are evident and can be seen in every department of the council.

I am just going to outline some of the, a brief summary of some of Frank's many achievements in the four years. The funding and development of projects across our county, include the RRDF funds and public realm in Blessington and Baltinglass, the URDF funding of Wicklow, Arklow and Bray. Public amenity aspects of Greystones marina and opening up a board walk and public park. Significant upgrades in Arklow and Wicklow Harbour. Frank's involvement in Blessington greenway which is entering into its final stage of planning with the construction started in 2022.

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The development of the Wicklow Tourism Strategy which has led to a major investment in Wicklow, particularly in Avondale and the investment in, Wicklow mountains area. The Glendalough & Wicklow Mountains Masterplan and Visitor Orientation Plan, which is crucial for Wicklow. The formation of Wicklow Town's Tourism leading to the strengthening of relationships with Failte Ireland. The establishment of food which has led to Wicklow Naturally. His engagement with wind farms has led to the development of operations and maintenance bases in Wicklow and Arklow. The further development of the Clermont Content Creation Enterprise Hub. He has supported the business breakfast, council and enterprise Task Force.

Wicklow is always striving to continue to provide housing and through the Rebuilding For All target of 1225 units has been achieved through a large number of schemes. His continued support the San Remo homeless charity are further highlights. Others include the further rebuilding of the council chamber, meetings room and foyer. The development of the council Content Creation Enterprise Hub and the CRM systems, the solar car park is another example of his forward thinking. The development of new libraries in Rathdrum. I could go on, but this is a summary of his achievements. At the forefront of his achievements are funding and development and every part of our county has been positively affected by this.

Frank is a leader of people and he has proven this by how he works with council management and staff and indeed his relationship with councillors. Respect works both ways and Frank is respectful of everyone and gains the respect of everyone. I suppose the positive that I can take out of Frank's departure is that he is leaving Wicklow and Wicklow County Council on a very strong footing going forward. I am proud of what he has achieved over the last four years and we can go from strength-to-strength. Finally, Frank I just want to wish you every success in your new role and thank you very much for all of you have done for county Wicklow. I am just going open it up to the members. Cllr Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I like to join with you. Losing Frank is a massive loss to the county. I think the amount of funding he has brought in, the amount of projects he has delivered and in fairness to the Chief Executive, any time you enter the door he always had time, give you a bit of time to talk about your problems. I think how he interacted with the member was unbelievable. I think it's a sad day and he is going to be a hard act to follow. I want to take this opportunity to wish Frank and his family the best of luck in the future. Hopefully he will still be a

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friend of Wicklow and we will see him around. To be fair I was thinking last night about what I would say and I know Frank, you have a great love of support. As a GAA manager I would say to you when you take over a team and you bring it to new heights and you achieve so much with a team, when you leave you want to leave it in a better position and you certainly done that, Frank, well done. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Pat Kennedy. Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, can you hear me in.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes. Just about.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you and I would concur with everything you said in relation to your contribution to Frank's legacy. Frank, I suppose I worked closely with you as Cathaoirleach for the previous year and I want, I think you have a made a huge contribution to county Wicklow. You have had an open door policy for everyone, for all the councillors and anyone who wanted to meet you. That was very much to be welcome. I think Dun Laoghaire's gain is Wicklow's loss, but we do wish you well, Frank.

I want to thank you for not just the contribution you make to Wicklow, but the contribution and help you gave to people outside of your office, because I know from working with you over the year there was many people who wanted to talk to you about little things that was big in their lives and you made time to talk to them, which I think was a huge contribution. I think the fruits of your work that the Cathaoirleach has mentioned some of them. We will continue to see them going into the future and you will be looking at it from a different seat and you will be able to say to yourself and most of us who have worked with you on those projects will say, "*Frank started those.*"

You are leaving a seat that is going to take an enormous person to fill it. It will be filled no doubt, but you have made a huge contribution to Wicklow and to the people of Wicklow and I want to thank you for that. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Kennedy. Well said. Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Briefly, it seems a short few years ago when Frank arrived here in the late summer/early autumn of 2017. I would like to say that I would like to sincerely thank you, Frank on your contribution to county Wicklow. You got to know Wicklow really well in your first year here. That is a sign of how seriously you took the job and how dedicated you were and the high energy levels you brought to the job which are so important. You were always on top of your brief, you gave the job the

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dedication it deserved. I would like to say best wishes to you and your family and your future endeavours.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I want to echo the sentiments which have been said about Frank Curran I know as a new councillor it was very daunting coming in, it was made earlier by Frank's approach. His open door policy and his professional manner really helped a lot of the new councillors coming in. Frank, there will be no statues erected of you in Wicklow Town but the monument you are leaving behind with the projects is a testament to your work. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, it's their positive to have you on board and I wish you ever success. It is Wicklow's loss as other speakers have said. Noting in their budget meeting last Monday, the grass is not always greener on the other side, but I do wish him well. So thank you very much, Cathaoirleach and best wishes, Frank.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just want to take the opportunity to congratulations our Chief Executive on his many achievements outlined by yourself over really what was a short period of time, four years. A wonderful set of achievements there. I saw close hand working with Frank on Wicklow Tourism. I saw the passion he brought to tourism in Wicklow and to promote tourism in Wicklow. Your door was always open to lend support and advice to elected members. It's no exaggeration to say in this case Wicklow's loss is certainly Dun Laoghaire Rathdown's gain and I wish you all the best.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Again like previous speakers I like to be associated with the kind words that is being passed on to Frank. If I could just say unlike previous speakers I didn't prepare anything, because, to be honest, I think Frank knows himself that it's been a quick four years and when Frank came in here he was the type of man that rolled his sleeves up and he got on with it. He surrounded himself with a very good team and I know he would be the first to acknowledge all the directors of services and all his staff. But he incorporated himself into, he evaluated every member of staff, no matter what grading or what level they were at. I think that was fundamental to Frank's success within the county.

Again, 32 councillors, Frank would be the first to admit that a lot of councillors, his door was always open, he was open and transparent, but a lot of councillors never had to go through his door, other than to say hello or talk about the weather or football or whatever the case might be. Again that is a testament to his management, because he had everything there laid out for us to see. The Chief Executive's report is second to none, his fingerprints are all over the agenda here today and you have

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outlined them, Cathaoirleach in regards to item 6, the Content Creation Enterprise Hub in Clermont, the housing delivery plan. The Glendalough Master Plan. These are all stuff, Frank's legacy will continue on after he has gone. I know that Frank Curran put his heart and soul into this, he didn't have to go looking for headlines, he brought the massive amount of funding into this county. I certainly and I know Frank will know where I am coming to. I don't want to be attributed into negative, it's a bad day for Wicklow, or it's our loss, because the man has done so much over the last four years. The blueprint is there for us to follow. The people who come behind Frank also, selected members and officials. How I wish Frank Curran the very, very best. More importantly, I wish his family the very best. His family connected themselves into our community straightaway. They're still a big part and parcel. Outside of work, his family are part and parcel of this county. I wish him and his family the very, very best.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Snell. Cllr Tom Fortune?

>> Can I wish you the very, very best in your new position. I think it was always on the cards that you were just passing through. The chair has outlined all the events you're involved in, so I won't get into those. But some people have said about your door being open. I always found that. I think about three different occasions, you met me down in my own area to look at a project that I hope will happen, even in your absence. Obviously, said to you, I think on two different occasions, when I sat in your office, that, when we were chit category, that I reckoned you were only going to be here for the short-term anyway, doing a job in Wicklow, and you would move on to something bigger and better. I guess that is what it happening. I would sincerely like to wish you and your family the very, very best. I spoke to your wife a couple of years ago, so lovely lady. So I wish you and your family the very, very best in your new role. I'm sure you'll do very, very well in it because you're a very, very capable individual.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Fortune. Cllr Lourda Scott?

>> Thank you, I want to echo everything said before me, and we wish you and your family the very best in your new job. I want to acknowledge specifically just your supportive role in the climate and biodiversity SPC. After the first council meeting and after the election where it was bewildering, the SPC was proposed, and you were on board straightaway, and you've been really clear about your priorities of climate and biodiversity action across all the departments in the county council, and that's been great to know we have had your support and backs, and I hope we continue with the person who fills your role. Thank you very much, and wishing you all the best in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

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CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, just to echo the sentiments. I watch the chief executive, and I wondered if I was given a wellbeing input, I would be saying people shouldn't live their work, but I think our chief executive has found a way to be present to show up, and never floundering, never hiding and always committed to having an impact, and that is something ... sometimes, the degree to which the commitment is there, day in, day out, things that stand out for me, when we had the extreme weather event, and again it was every day, the Chief was available to do to talk about what we could do to keep the county open as much as possible and keep things safe, and the community response forum, and such like. We all want to have an impact, and there is nothing surer than the chief executive has had an impact in his time here at the county. I wish him well in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry O'Neill?

>> Thanks. I would like to wish Frank Curran the very best. I met him a few days after, just four years ago after getting the job, and I said to Frank about West Wicklow, and he immediately said to me, "You know, I would be out there soon, Gerry, I will give you a bell in a week or so." Within three weeks, Frank Curran was out, and we spent a few hours driving out here. Immediately, I knew that Frank was the county manager, not just one particular site of the county. I want to wish Frank the very best of luck, and especially as other speakers have said, I want to wish his family the very best of luck. Frank was a good man, and I just hope there, I would say Frank Curran, we won't hear the end of Frank for a while. I think he's a good man.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Melanie Corrigan?

>> As a first-time Councillor coming in, the door was always open, you answered my questions, you came out to the bog meadow, the fact that you came out, met with the people, as Gerry O'Neill has said, you weren't based in one, you covered the whole county I have to say, this is getting a bit much, hugely supportive of the film industry out here, all the new projects going on, the village renewal, the playground, and working with you on Wicklow Tourism as well. It's been a pleasure, I've learned a lot from you and I wish you and the family all the best.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I want to echo everybody's comments there. I want to thank Frank above all. You were kind to me as a new Councillor coming in, listened to me and given me the respect, and listened to my ideas, and stuff. You put in the foundations, and your great vision for Wicklow. Probably won't be seen as Cllr Snell said there for many, many years to come but I can see the foundations you put in Arklow, and I want to thank you for the work you've done in the harbour, and, everything that is to come. Looking forward to see the fruits of your hard work in years to come. Thanks.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Ann Ferris.

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I join everyone's good wishes to Frank. I want to thank Frank on my own behalf and on the community of Bray for his input over the last four years, and for the enormous amount of funding that he has sourced for the Bray area. I'm sure his Director of Services will miss him, and I wish him the very best of luck for the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Ann. Cllr Arlene Winters?

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Again, I want to be associated with all of the good things that have been said about Frank. They say that to be a good and a successful leader, a person needs for the three As - ability, which Frank has in spades; availability, and he has always been available to all of us; and to affability, good natured, and compassion and - Dun Laoghaire are lucky to be getting him, and I hope we get someone equally as good in his place.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh.

>> I want to be associated with the sentiments already expressed. I have to say I was very surprised to hear that Frank was leaving so soon, because the four years really went by very quickly, that I had to actually look up and see how long he was there. It just seems like not long ago that he started, and he had made such great strides in those four years that I have to say I felt very disappointed because I just felt, you know, our star is on the rise, and suddenly was it going to plummet or coast along for a little while? I know he has laid a lot of good foundations, and I know that whoever comes after him, whoever that may be will be both inspired and also be able to benefit from the seeds that have been sown, but, like I say, I was surprised, and most of our chiefs seem to say around for a lot longer - chief executives seem to stay around for a lot longer, or seemed like that. I want to wish Frank all the best in his new job. I know it will probably be a bigger job than Wicklow was, because, you know, it's a huge population, and he has his work cut out for him, but I'm sure he knows, and the people at Dun Laoghaire know who they recruited, and why they recruited him. Best of luck, Frank, and best of luck to all your family, and might see you around the morrow sometime.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mitchell.

>> Thank you. I would like to thank Frank for his work for the county as a whole and for the municipal district and wish him all the best for the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Burke?

>> Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I remember when we were appointing Frank - the councils in ... we were sad to see him go and sad to see Frank go after the wonderful job he has done. I see there is a job waiting for him, 4,500 customers, on a boiling water notice. Frank, roll up your sleeves and sort out whatever the problem is there. Get them back online! Cheerio.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Vincent Blake.

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach. You've outlined a huge amount of work. So other people - thank him for what he's done, and to wish him and his family the best of luck in the new job in Dun Laoghaire, and thank you for what you've done.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan.

JOE BEHAN: I wish you every success in the future, and all the best to you and your family. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Tommy Annesley before

>> I want to reflect back in the chamber, I was amazed when someone shot a question at Frank, he was always able to off-the-cuff have the answer, have the facts, and have the figures. Definitely, he's going to be a hard act to follow. I want to wish you and all the family the best, and thank you for everything you've done for Arklow and County Wicklow, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Rory O'Connor.

>> Just want to put my name to the thanks to Frank. I think he's been a brilliant chief executive, especially when looking across in difficult counties, and seeing other chief executives and how speak to councillors. He's going to be a great addition to his new place.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Everybody at this stage?

>> I want to come in on behalf of ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead, Helen.

ADMINISTRATOR: Deputy Matthews sent in an email and asked to convey to Frank his congratulations and best wishes in his new role. Frank has done great work leading the team well over the past few years, and has achieved much for Wicklow in that time and laid the groundwork for many future projects. It's been a pleasure working with him, and I look forward to continuing doing this work with Frank in his new role in the many cross-boundary objectives shared.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Thanks for that. Without further ado, I'm going to hand you over to the man himself, Frank Curran.

CLLR CURRAN: Thanks to all the members. I very much appreciate all the comments. I've said it before, the role of chief is a very privileged one, and I've enjoyed every day of it, and I particularly enjoyed working with the elected members. When what I see when I look out to the top table is looking out to a screen now, unfortunately the way we are operating, are genuine community people doing their best for the community and the county as a whole. I've tried in my own mind to put myself in your boots and see what you do, and it is really amazing the amount of workload and support that you give the executive. So I really appreciate that, and I want to thank you all very much. I've been very lucky also, Cathaoirleach, to have a great support team. There is a huge amount happening in housing, infrastructure, tourism, customer service, and that could go on.

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You achieve very little on your own. It's people worked together, it's the elected members, the outdoor and indoor staff, the management and different stakeholders. That's how we make things happen. I think Wicklow and Co. Wicklow has a bright future. I think I said it before, the dedication of staff during Covid. We set up the community call which really helped people out there, we set up the rates aware of, all the services - *rates aware of waiver, housing services were maintained, planning was maintained. You saw the dedication of staff. So I think I was really lucky there to have people like that around me. We have very good relations with the government departments, TII, IDA, and we can see the fruits of that coming through now, and I think we need to build on those relationships also. Luckily for me, I can continue to live in County Wicklow. It is a beautiful county, great people, a lot happening, and great quality of life, et cetera. So that is all I have to say, Cathaoirleach. I want to thank members, the management, the staff, and thanks the press, also, Cathaoirleach to be , for their fair and balanced reporting I've experienced over the last four years. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Thanks, Frank. Before we move on, we have a small token of our appreciation from all the councillors here, so I will do a quick presentation to Frank. Bear with me.

>> It's heavy! [Applause].

ADMINISTRATOR: We can all clap now! [Applause].

CATHAOIRLEACH: It is a Wicklow Naturally hamper, I think. We certainly will miss you, Frank, and the best of luck in your new role

Okay, moving on to item number 6: to receive a presentation on the progress of the development of the Content Creation Enterprise Hub (copy attached), and we had some of this presentation at our November meeting, so it is to conclude the presentation today, and I think we have Linda Healy go and ...

>> Thank you for the opportunity to tell you a little bit about where we are with the content creation hub that is being developed. Teresa or Helen, would you be in a position to start the presentation?

ADMINISTRATOR: Teresa will just be one second.

VIBEKE DELAHUNT: can I add my thanks to Frank, and the best wishes to you, Frank. Thank you for your support here on the campus, developing the campus, and being so solidly behind local enterprise office, and I say that on behalf of the whole team here. You've been wonderful. Really, really great support during very challenging last 18 months. Thank you, we are going to miss you, and all the best in Dun Laoghaire.

So and I said, my name is Vibeke Delahunt. I've added a couple of slides there for any who haven't visited the campus in, just off the N11, a stone's throw away from the Ashford Studios, and close to Greystones Media hub also. It was originally built as a private house, but in the 1950s, turned into a boarding school for girls, very prestigious school.

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And Wicklow County Council bought the campus in 2005 when it came on the market. So, the local enterprise office is based on the campus, as well as is IT Carlow delivering their life-long learning courses through the campus, and a number of tenants there on the campus. What you see there is the front of the building, and, in particular, also on the right hand side, the courtyard, which is where the new content creation hub is going to be based. So, just to tell you a little bit about the background, basically. As has been mentioned earlier, the content creation industry, or really the film and television-making industry in County Wicklow is an important sector to the county due to the presence of Ardmore Studios for many, many years. In 2017, Leo and Wicklow led an extensive training programme especially for the content-creation sector, and out of that programme, we learned that the sector really needs a home. It needs an incubation centre where start-ups are being looked after, are supported in their business skills, and training, give them an opportunity to network, to meet as well as have facilities that they can tap into when they want to show their screenings to their investors, and so on. And that is kind of where the idea came from for a Content Creation Centre, as well as from what you've heard from John Gleeson, the statutory has seen an incredible growth for content through all the different media. That content is growing very steadily, and we are experiencing that in County Wicklow as well, with the expansion of Ardmore Studios, as well as the four additional studios that are to be built in Ashford studios, and the completely new media campus to be built in Greystones as well, with and also there is a planning application in for Tara Studios which are to be located south of Arklow. So there is a lot happening in that space, and really, on the east coast, there is not a home for the screen sector as such. We strongly feel there is a demand for offices for a place where it the sector can come together, network, grow, and really create an ecosystem that can help job creation. So that whole idea of the mid-east regional enterprise plan, just the past one up to 2020, and it will be an objective again going forwards in the next mid-eastern regional enterprise plan. So, a funding opportunity was basically identified through the RDEF fund from - to Enterprise Ireland, and funding application was submitted in 2018, and eventually, under the guidance of Frank as well, became successful in January 2020. What this means, maybe if you can go to the next slides there? It means that the courtyard will be completely refurbished into private offices, meeting rooms, training rooms, a good kind of canteen meeting area, and there will be a completely new build, building connected to the north end of the courtyard as well to make sure that we have sufficient floor space to make the hub economically viable. What you saw there in the slides was also within the project, which is basically there is a very large main hall here on the campus. It has been used for many events over the years, but it desperately needs to be

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brought up to speed as a proper Conference centre. So, funding is in place to upgrade what we call the Main Hall and taking in part of the second floor on the college end of the building and turning that into private offices as well, about 300 square feet. Construction has just started on the project in September. There's been a long lead-in to get to this point, obviously, between knocking on the door of the funding, in place, 1.3, 1.4, 3.4 million euros coming through the RDEF fund, and the remainder will be matched by Wicklow County Campus, and also the screen office, and Wicklow Enterprise Park are conservers for the next ten years for the project. The site has been disposed of in favour of the company set up, Clermont Enterprise Hub, through which the funding will be channelled, the board has met a couple of times. It is only in the infrastructure and the enterprise hub. We're talking about bringing together all the different elements that you would see in an enterprise hub, but also providing through this funding business support, helping these businesses to skill, and grow, and to develop their capacity and capability to create jobs, and to make the most of their own IP - intellectual property - which can be an issue in this sector, and really to allow, as I said, an ecosystem to grow and to prosper, where people can work together on projects, which is a real hallmark of this particular industry. These big films that I'm going to talk about a little bit later, they don't happen by themselves. There is a big team of people behind that, so, if we can go to the next slide there, just talk you through where we are at the moment. As I said, 1.43 million is coming through the REDF investment fund. The company has been set up to oversee construction of the hub, and we are seeing great progress now with the construction, the courtyard has been completely stripped. I will show you impressions of what it looks like right now in a moment. The floors have come out, we've come across interesting issues as you do with an 1,800 building, but the Connor Construction, the construction company looking after the refurbishment and the construction of the hub are working away, and they're very good company to work with, I have to say. The hub is about supporting and strengthening the - there is no other in county in Ireland had a has this kind of history in film-making of all different levels, television as well. So it really will contribute, this hub will contribute to position Ireland as a global hub. Not only is that enshrined in our own strategies, but it is also at national level supported by Screen Ireland and the department. So, if you can move on to the next slide, you will see some of the impressions there of what it is going to look like. There is the big picture in the middle, it is the courtyard of which we saw a picture earlier, completely done up, and the building on the north end of it is then the new build which will reflect the kind of look of the courtyard, so we are hoping that it will blend in very nicely with the historical character of the place. You may recall from the November meeting how John Gleeson

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mentioned in the strategy they're putting together for the Screen Development of County Wicklow, that they conducted a survey amongst freelance people and production companies within the industry, and out of that survey, they found that the particular needs and challenges of the industry would be around having a place where networking can happen, where people can meet, where they can access training and networking, where they can attend seminars, where we can bring in international speakers, but also, where we can roll out this business skills programme in conjunction with the different partners that are already in the industry, and also with IT Carlow, the film office, and so on. We have a few very well regarded tenants on the campus already working in this area, so, for instance, Doyle has set up the Foley Lab, and turned that into what is called a Foley Editing Suite. This is unique in Ireland. It is about the small little sounds that you hear when you're watching television, or a feature film. You don't even notice that you're hearing them, but if they weren't there, it wouldn't sound right. You wouldn't be as immersed in it as you would be, as you are, you know, with the proper Foley and sound effects. We're very lucky to have Aoife, and she is internationally regarded as an Foley artist and a good example of what we want to achieve on the campus, where she took part in the East Coast Creatives Corridor Programme in 2017 through the Local Enterprise Office was able to get out an editing suite in the science lab. And then actually create a job for herself, her partner, and has now created an additional three jobs, so that is the kind of journey that we love to see happening in the hub, and we are working closely with the different partners to make sure that that is going to be achieved. So the next slide, then, you a little will see some pictures I took back in November of the courtyard predominantly. If you can move on to the next slide, please. Also started some work on the main hall, and shortly comments to do the work on the second floor as well. But the largest proportion of the work is really around the courtyard and the new build, and I believe next week, we will be looking at the pouring of the foundation of the new build, and so on, so they're moving quickly, and this project is scheduled to be finalised in Q3 of next year. Then to say, as part of the funding, there is a salary for a hub manager in place for the next three years, and we will be looking to recruit for that position early next year. This is going to be a vital role, because that particular person will have to have good links in the industry, know the industry backwards and know what it needs, but also will have to be looking after the tenants, and the tenants' issues, and rolling out business skills programme working together with all the different partners. So if you know anyone with that background watch this space. Then, in addition to that I want to tell you a little bit about and this is on the next slide, what is called the East Crew Development Hub Initiative. This was launched in order to make sure that not only is there enough studio

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infrastructure for the industry to grow and we know that that is now coming on stream, but that there are also sufficient crew to be able to service all the productions that will be coming in to these studios. We know from John Cleeson, we can easily fill these studios and much more once they are at full capacity, but what we don't have is enough crew to service additional productions. So through Clermont Enterprise we have been successful in making the funding application to set up the East Crew Development Hub, which is for funding for €300,000, there is a typo in that slide, I am afraid, for the next year to co-ordinate, additional crew, training and make sure that there is enough crew going forwards for the next couple of years and we hope that that project will be extended beyond the first year. Again to make all this happen, we will be recruiting a coordinator shortly to liaise with Screen Ireland and Screen Skills Ireland and with all the different agency, the production companies, the studios and make sure that we can upgrade or upskill people already working in the industry and also the lower levels, what they call below the line talent and to make sure that we have enough new entrants coming into the industry at the third level by providing bridging courses to make sure that work is ready and don't drift off into other industries and lose them that way. So that is the East Crew Development Hub. That is not just about Wicklow, it will extend all the way from Louth up to Wexford and we have all the different agencies and institutes and everyone on board to hit the ground running in the new year on that. So that is some good news that is happening at the hub and it really will dovetail nicely together with the Content Creation Hub.

So that is my update on the Content Creation Hub. Unfortunately Linda won't be here to tell you about the screen office, so Linda has asked me will I do that as a former film commissioner, I would be delighted to.

So if I can move on to the next slide, I should say Linda was looking forward to giving the presentation, but she is unwell so can't be with us today. This is the presentation that Linda put together for you, you might have seen this slide before, it's a little snapshot to tell you and to show you all the different projects. The only a few of them that we have had being filmed in Wicklow since the 1920s, which started with silent films, black and white and gradually became more international as well as indigenous production. So you see there is the likes of Reign of Fire which was shot here during the foot and mouth crisis. Braveheart, the Guards, Penny Dreadful, Veronica Guerin. Too many to mention, the Tudors, the Vikings, PS I Love You.

So we should all be proud of this unique heritage we have in Wicklow. There is no other county which has this particular industry like we have in Wicklow.

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If I can move on to the next slide, please. I have already mentioned the rich history and a number of very high profile films that have been shot here over the years, literally hundreds and hundreds as well as most of the Christmas adverts you have seen over the years, including this year and there has been three particular ones standing out, Braveheart, Excalibur and Michael Collins. As a millennium project they were turned... people co-drive around the county and look at the film locations and make the most of the film induced tourism at that particular time. On the next slide you will see Excalibur poster, excuse me, the Braveheart Poster and a Michael Collins poster that went up in Rathdrum trying to recruit 1500 extras that had to come out for Michael Collins' address. That is where you can see the economic impact that filmmaking has in the county. It recruits a good few thousand people that all live here, very talented, highly regarded internationally, very experienced, able to work on high-budget film as well as low-budget films. Musical videos, Christmas videos, advertisement, everything that is in between. And if we can go to the next slide, I hardly need to tell you why that is. It's because Wicklow is so well-positioned in terms of the road network. We are close to Dublin city, the airport, the ports. We have the existing studios here and there is more going to come on stream very soon. Predominantly a lot of the crew that are alongside the east coast cluster tend to live in county Wicklow as well and that obviously helps hugely. Then we have, as you know, the variety of locations. So areas in Bray have doubled up as cities all over the world. We have the rural, the countryside, the coastline, the mountainside and the lakes and it's all within minutes of the studios. It's so important. Obviously when you move a large crew between locations, so you go outside of the studios, every mile counts. So thank you.

The Screen Office in Wicklow, really it's role is to promote county Wicklow as a film location and then being a one-stop shop for filmmakers who want to film around the county. Linda would work with the location managers by helping them identify suitable locations. So she would have a locations library and she would share those photos. Then when they come to her she would be the person if they wish to film in a public place, Brittas Bay Beach, for example, she would liaise with the logistics engineers and so on and on many occasions also with the communities, fair use community groups. As you know from the huge production that we saw earlier this year, Disney's Disenchanted in Enniskerry, film can leave a very big footprint and a lot of the time you wouldn't even know that they are there, especially when they are filming within the studios or some of the larger estates such as Kilruddery or Powerscourt. Many of the

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productions go under the radar because they will be dealing with the property owners there. If we can go to the next slide then.

Just to say that over the past two years, despite Covid, obviously it did put a stop to filming for a while, but film people being the ultimate problem-solver, I suppose, came up very quickly with very robust Covid-safe work plans and have since become international leaders in film production during this particular challenging time. So the Wicklow Film Office has become more and more busy over the last two years and we have seen a huge increase in the volume of requests and enquiries to film on public lands. That is only going to continue to grow as the infrastructure expands and more productions will come here, which is something to definitely plan for, for the future to make sure that there is adequate resources there to facilitate and to work with film productions to continue to bring them in, but also to make sure that any pressure that is on the locations is spread around evenly and to ensure that the economic footprint reaches all corners of the county as well. So popular locations for filming, you have all come across them, Glendalough, Bray Head, Lough Tay, Brittas Bay, but also Baltinglass, Blessington lakes, Redcross is a firm favourite, obviously Avoca since Ballykissangel and obviously Powerscourt, Russborough and Kilruddery. Then there are two films with Disenchanted with Amy Adams and Patrick Dempsey being films in Greystones. And Wonder in Redcross with Florence, Pugh.

And this is Disenchanted. While it took over Enniskerry and I know there has been a bit of negative press, overall the Disney were so impressed with the positive reception that they got in Enniskerry. The communities working with them and they have left a very considerable input into the local economy as well. So there is just two pictures of Enchanted. If we can move on then. Just to say more about the campus, Linda is based here on the campus as the film commissioner. She is also part of the local enterprise office and she will be involved with the Content Creation Enterprise Hub. The campus lands itself very well for filming. Over the year we have had a lot of filming here from My Boy Jack to Provision this year. Many RTE productions with Amy Huberman and many others, I can't think of them right now, but there has been a lot.

So there has been provision this year which was lovely, it was directed by Frank Berry. As I mentioned earlier, there is already eight businesses based on the campus and some of them dovetail very well with what we are trying to achieve in the court yard, especially the Foley hub. If we can move on to the next one then. So, as I said, the village of Enniskerry saw an economic net benefit of Disenchanted locally of about 20 million. So

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that is something to bear in mind when we are talking about the film industry, their economic footprint is substantial, it's growing all the time and because the industry has grown so much, it really provides for very sustainable highly-paid jobs at all different levels, so it's a very good and clean industry. They are at the forefront of reducing their carbon footprint and they are the kind of industry that really fits very well with County Wicklow and what we are trying to achieve.

You can go on to the next slide there, it's just two pictures of Vikings on the shores of Lough Tay and the other has Powerscourt Waterfall in the background. I already told you about the Content Creation Enterprise Hub.

We are awaiting the launch of the County Wicklow Screen Sector Development Strategy which John Gleeson gave you a presentation of. We hope to put that in front of the members early next year. We have hit the ground running in developing the Crew Development Hub initiative together with Screen Ireland and also next year the Screen Wicklow Office will celebrate ten years in existence. So thank you very much and if you have any questions I would be delighted to take them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, that is a very good presentation. You have covered a lot in a short period of time. There is a lot of work ongoing in Clermont and I think Wicklow as a county is benefitting from that and long may it continue. I will just open up to members. Cllr John Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and again thanks to the presenter today, because we didn't get a chance to contribute at the last meeting, but it's so important this industry to the county. It's also one, as we see there previously we were paying tribute to the Chief Executive and to the roll of Wicklow County Council. We have a good story to tell in Wicklow County Council over many decades, long before I was a councillor and many of the councillors here when it comes to the creation of the film industry and the creation of the film industry in the county. It's absolutely fantastic that again we are being proactive in creating the new Clermont campus and the Screen Wicklow Strategy because it's going to be a highly competitive market. In a previous life I did work in the media content industry in making documentaries for RTE and for other organisations and it's quite competitive. A lot of private companies out there, Brexit creates opportunities but also challenges. Eastern Europe is now very popular. So we have to be competitive. Wicklow is going to be competing with other locations in Ireland. If you look at Game of Thrones and the impact that is having in Northern Ireland. Wicklow is very well-connected, they have a tourism impact. So even the track and trails which Wicklow County Council was involved in producing, that had an amazing impact on the tourism development we got down literally hours after that programme was broadcast. There is two questions I would like

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to ask. I hope that the Screen Strategy will develop a best practice per outdoor location management and what I mean by that is sometimes productions are very skilled and go down and meet the communities in the village and discuss what they are going to be doing, the type of traffic control measures that are in place and there is some sort of economic reward maybe to the businesses that are held up. Then some of them do not. That can create a bit of friction. So a best practice policy or even liaison officers within the county could help to achieve a smoother way for this business to conduct itself. The second one is in the media editing suites. That reflects that nearly all content now in media can be digitised relevantly quickly to a very high standard. Most of our smartphones can produce a relatively good quality video production very quickly. But the availability of media suites in the Clermont campus and elsewhere should be facilitated in our county plan process and our documents and there should be joined up thinking with regard to that. Particularly in the area of rural broadband. So at a Wicklow County Council level at a high level, I know Frank is going to Dun Laoghaire, but it would be interesting to see if we could talk to the national broadband roll out people and say that film production in Wicklow is one of the key industries. And the crucial piece of infrastructure in that industry is broadband, because on location digitisation of media content is a huge advantage if you have it or have it close by. So I would like to see our various departments of Wicklow County Council lobbying the national broadband roll out to maybe accelerate the very slow roll out of broadband in rural Wicklow to take full advantage of this. Finally I would like to ask, I presume there would be co-ordination then with the other industries in neighbouring counties. I know you mentioned Tara Studios in Gorey. There is also Kilkenny which has a world class reputation in animation. This industry is bigger than Wicklow. The south east of Ireland regionally should be a key locator for this industry. There are so many jobs, very good jobs if we can develop the expertise. So I think this is fantastic news, it's a great news story for Wicklow and it's something that should be front and centre and we should all be proud of and particularly for previous councillors who have served in this body since the early 1990s, they had foresight and energy and the staff that was there had the energy to see it through to this stage. I think well done to everyone involved.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you and well said. Cllr Tommy Annesley.

CLLR ANNESLEY: Thank you, for the great presentations. My best wishes to Linda to get better soon. Vibeke, I was blown away. I had the opportunity to go there a few weeks ago to meet the minister, due to the Cathaoirleach not being too well. I was blown away by the whole Clermont campus. I was stuck for words. When Wicklow County Council purchased this site I was very critical that such an amount of money. I could see the fruits of it in front of my own eyes a number of weeks ago. I

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was absolutely blown away by the Foley Lab. Unless you were there you wouldn't realise what is going on there. So I want to say very well done and all the enterprises that are coming out of that and the help that Clermont is giving people in Wicklow and in business. So well done, keep up the good work and thank you very much for the day. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mags Crean.

CLLR CREAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just to add to that, I think and thank you for the presentation. I think it's a really innovative, a visionary project there. I think it really capitalises on what we do well in Wicklow but also it highlights Clermont, the potential there. I think that Clermont is a gem in terms of the potential to be a centre of excellence and knowledge and that whole idea of strategic development for Wicklow. I would love to see it grow more and more. I just think it would be good to have a bit of a focus. I know that Cllr John Mullen that was a really good point around the digital infrastructure piece. Particularly because we are the garden of Ireland it would be nice to have a focus on sustainability and greener filmmaking, I know internationally there is a push for that. It would be great to have a link between the two strategically. Overall I think it's really innovative and well done to everyone involved, it's a credit to Wicklow capitalising on something so strategic.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr M Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: I am one of these people that can remember when Taffin was made in Wicklow. The excitement in the town was palpable. The whole town turned out every night to watch it being made. I am sure it was the same in Enniskerry for Disenchanted. I think Wicklow fell in love with idea of filmmaking, I am delighted that we have become a centre place for filmmaking. I want to say thank you so Vibeke, for her hard work. I know when she was working in the Film Commission herself she was very enthusiast I think and she has brought that with her. I know she has a deep-rooted passion for films and it does come across. She is always there to facilitate everyone, whether it's for an ad or a short film, she has been very accommodating. I am delighted that Clermont is going to reach its full potential. It's another jewel in our crown and as Mags remarks it's a little gem. I always felt it was under utilised and probably just waiting for its time to shine. Hopefully this Content Creation Enterprise Hub will do just that. Just well done again to everyone, it's great to see that we are out there with the best of them. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you Vibeke, for two excellent presentations. On the Clermont one I again had to, I was out there when they were doing the apple pressing, my God, it was an amazing building and the orchards and everything. I love to see the old buildings being used, rather than us building new buildings all the time, to use what we have that is there and embrace the history of the building

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and everything. I think it's fantastic and that is what we should be associated with as councillors and the support that you give to the small business in County Wicklow is fantastic. On the screen strategy and the filming, I think it's fantastic. Disney here in Enniskerry was absolutely incredible during the summer. I don't think any of us locally have experienced it before. It wasn't all plain sailing, there was a lot of lessons we have learnt from it. As working councillors and community and the film industry working together, I think next time something like that happens again it will be a lot more smooth sailing. We have certainly learnt a lot from it and you mentioned there about the 20 million to the local economy, a lot of people have said where has that money come. There is a huge spin off. The bed and breakfasts were all full, my own children got a job as animal handlers. It was incredible the spin off around the community. There is a huge opportunity for film tourism, I would love to see Wicklow linking together the all the film ems together. There is a huge opportunity there. Thank you very much for a fantastic presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the presentings, Vibeke, as I was listening to you my mind was imagining the young creatives of Wicklow knowing or dreaming that their ambitions can happen in their own county. I have worked with young artists who always felt they had to leave to succeed or even call it quit as they tried to achieve their own goals and ambitions. So it's phenomenal to understand how people start to see this flourish. We see them out there, people who want to be a digital artist, want to be movie craters. Like Cllr Mullen said they are out there with their mobile phones creating content we can only dream of. Sets a foundation of a what we can do. I want to know if you imagine things like placements and opportunities and how we bring it to life and invite young people in so they can see that this is a place for them. Thank you for that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr John Snell. Sorry... Cllr Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. It's been my privilege to serve on the board, Cathaoirleach with Vibeke and Linda and the Chief Executive. As one from this area this was our playground when we were growing up, Clermont Campus, a huge historical value to the area and the county. From a heritage point of view and a historical point of view, it's so important for County Wicklow. But I know there was concerns... someone's speaker is not off.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Could you please... could you mute yourselves there, please if you are not speaking. Go ahead, Cllr Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. So look there was concern going back to 2005 when this 55 acres and the buildings itself went up for sale. I have to say hand on heart from the moment Wicklow County Council

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purchased it we have been very lucky in regard to the safe pair of hands that has looked after this project. Namely a former member of staff, Tom Murphy and current member of staff Lorraine Gallagher have done Trojan work over the years. I would love at some stage in the members could get an opportunity to go down into Clermont and hopefully in time to come before your time is up, Cathaoirleach, if Covid restrictions allow, but even to have a third level education facility there and then what Vibeke and Linda have identified with the Chief Executive, the opportunity, the void that was there, we have a huge draw for international companies coming in here to create films and the like and we are very lucky to have Ashford and Ardmore.

But there was still that void and I think Cllr Dermot O'Brien has identified that perfectly when he summed up in regard to given our constituents and our citizens an opportunity to remain at home and give them an opportunity to work in a creative hub like this is invaluable. I think that certainly the work that going on there, I am lucky enough, I see it at close quarters, but I think the 32 councillors, I would love if they had an opportunity to see how well this is harnessed and the investment that is going into it, Cathaoirleach, over three million to date, this will be money well-spent and I commend the Chief Executive for his vision on this project as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Tom Fortune.

>> We have a fantastic opportunity in that business. Can I ask a different kind of question. What, if any, to we have a connection, or get involved with Bray, with the students in there who are studying film and everything else? Or do they have any kind of link back into the campus? I'm wondering, does that happen? I'm not aware that that does? I think that is something that should be looked at at some stage?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. The final member is Gail Dunne.

>> Vibeke, thanks for your presentation. Exciting to see what is going on in the campus. My opinion, the amount of employment that will create will be unbelievable, so close to Ashford Film Studio. I think everybody who has been around films in our area realises the benefit to the county, not just to our area, but to all the counties in different locations, and I heard that Cllr Kavanagh mentioned, half back in the town with Piers Brosnan, and the excitement it created was unbelievable, and we've been working with the Vikings, and things like that. That builds to importance myself, my late grandfather unfortunately died there, he was a head gardener when it was a private house back in the day, so I'm always interested to see what is going on there. Exciting times ahead.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Vibeke, I'm going to bring you back in. I'm tight on time. We have two more presentations. Three or four questions from Cllr Mullen, digital infrastructure co-ordination with other counties, Cllr

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O'Brien, opportunities for young people, and Cllr Fortune, a link with Biffy and Bray?

VINCENT BLAKE: Regards with best practice of managing outdoor locations, that is certainly we are looking at, and we've also asked ... who are putting together the strategy for the screen development in the county to showcase best practice internationally. We wouldn't be the first location to experience that you really have to weigh up the benefits to the community, working with the community and all that. I would have to say in all the years I was a film commissioner, there are a small group of location managers in the industry, and they come back to you over and over again. They're well trained, usually internationally in how to manage and how to work with local communities. That's not to say that it is not sometimes that there can't be issues, but it's in their interests to work well with local communities, because they, you know, the handful of locations throughout the county that are in the top five, they want to keep coming back to them. To the Film Office, we would always suggest that they reach out to the trade association, the town association, and that they leave a contribution of some sort of to make sure that they have everybody on board. Also, everybody in an area will see the benefit from it, not just the traders or whoever happens to own the location. So certainly that is something that is foremost in our minds. And John Mullen, you're absolutely right about broadband. That is the key, the number-one thing that it all hinges on. We are lucky that there is fibre on the campus. We are also a BCP point which means we have high-speed broadband for the public to come and tap into, and that is currently located in one of the rooms in the campus, but it will be moved once the whole place is up and running, there will be a designated area there where the public can come in and make use of it. Also, to say that all the different agencies like IT Carlow, Education Training Board, Wexford Waterford Training Boards, Dundalk IT, are behind the creation of the content development hub and behind the crew development hub, and we've dedicated particular courses that are going to deliver on, but there is, and there will be a really strong focus on bringing in new entrants, so young people into the industry, or maybe helping people move, or diversify from previous careers, because a lot of experience and talents that people have developed over the years in different sectors can easily be applied within the screen sector, but to come back to the young people, as part of the 300,000 fund that we have for the Crewe development hub, there will be a strong focus on bridging courses for people coming out of Bifi to be workplace-ready, and to have a placement on one of the productions, and that is really where the production companies come in because they hire people, but it is also where the studios come in, because that's where the productions take place in general. To come back to you, Dermot, yes, that's what it is all about. In

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fact, Screen Ireland are focused on sustainability. Any international production will have to have a sustainability and a carbon footprint plan. But, also, all the international productions have a focus on hiring people from minorities, making sure that there is diversity in their crew. Again, through the crew development hub, in our work plan, that is what we put to focus the spotlight on. That's one of the reasons why we were successful in the funding application weighting the together with - in Limerick they're developing a crew development hub for the Munster area, and there is also a production company in all way that is also successful. I think I might have reached on all the questions there. I suppose just to say, Melanie, in relation to film tourism, as part of the strategy we ask ... to look at five different areas. One was for the key surfaces that the film office, so Linda would supply. One was on how best to develop film tourism, and in particular the footfall of films like Disenchanted, and Valhalla and Vikings, and to give us good examples of best practice internationally, maybe from New Zealand, simple things that you can do really to bring in tourists and make sure that we can increase, and then it is about the collateral, the marketing collateral that we need to really promote County Wicklow as a location, and to bring in international productions, and how to best work with a tight budget, and with a different agencies that are already there doing it at a national level. It is also about nurturing local talent, and that is in conjunction with Jenny Shirwin in the Arts Office, looking at a bursary in conjunction with the arts office and film office, if that is the best way to nurture talent, a kind of a programme in a will really help our indigenous film industry to grow as well as the international productions. So, I think I've addressed everybody's questions? Feel free to contact us at any time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Vibeke. That was very, very good presentation, and keep up the good work as members as already said, it's a huge part of what we can offer in County Wicklow. Well done to all involved.

Moving on to item number 7, to receive a presentation, housing for all, housing delivery, we have Declan and Jo?

>> Jo first.

>> Right, going to bring up a PowerPoint. I'm going to do an overrun on the Housing for All. Declan will come in. We're required to do a housing delivery plan. Declan will come in on that. I'm sorry for the SPC members. This is not far from where we are a couple of weeks ago, the first bit. Okay, like I said there, the Housing for All, it is the government policy for the next ten years. It's not just for local authorities. There is I think 213 actions. 34 for local authorities or leads. It is a plan for all the government department, local authorities, estate agents, it is a vision for housing for the next ten years. And the next - the next sheet just shows the - what it is trying to achieve over the next ten years. I will come back

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to that in a few minute, particularly on the social housing end. There are four pathways in the plan. The first one is home-ownership, eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery, supporting social inclusion, the third one is increasing local authority supply, and addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock. Some is for the local authority in general and some is where the government sees the policy over the next ten years, okay? Next one. The pathway 1: again, it's an overview of it. The pathway is supporting home-ownership. The big one there is the implementation of the Affordable Housing Act, and also including there is the establishment of the first home stream, cost rental, launch of Project Tosaigh, expanding the Part V. The second pathway is eradicating homelessness and supporting social inclusion, increasing housing delivery. On top of some of the authority, you have the support of the Lisbon declaration to combat homelessness, expanding homeless first, increasing social housing delivery, there is during the next ten years, which I think is over the next year or two, there is a look at different essential rents again. There will be a look at the tenant purchase scheme, roll out of Choice-based letting and the eligibility for social housing will be looked at. Pathway 3 will be what we are focusing on, increasing new housing supply. This, the emphasis is on local authorities' delivery on local authority land where probably, and that will be I presume seen as the main way of delivering, and Declan will go through our plan for the next five years coming up. And then pathway 4 is addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock. Again, for local authorities, for us, the launch of the CPO programme for vacant properties is the big one there, but there is also other issues at a national level being dealt with, and one of the ones people have always pointed out is the Fair Deal Scheme, and some of these properties aren't available and again that is being looked at. Concentrating now on Pathway 1, supporting ownership and increasing affordability, the areas looking at are the Affordable Housing Act repeals the 2009 Act. There are a couple of big changes here. One is part 3, the introduction of cost rental. There is also the first home scheme which is affordable purchase shared equity. The switchback to the 10 to 20 social. I will come back to those in a few minutes. Okay? The next one, I think that's just the next one. If you move on, that is the repeat. Cost rental is a big difference and it follows the European model. This is the model found that makes it quite visual. Up to now, Ireland, I suppose, has stayed with the traditional social housing mix. That's where the rental market has been in. That is the blue to the left. Invariably situations like that, rents are usually income-based. In European models, in a lot of cases, there is also a sector within the market who can pay but - the eligibility for social housing may not apply for them. That is what we call the squeezed middle and it is referred to in the Housing for All, on one page, there is a thing about the squeezed middle. This is the cost rental

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model and this is a situation where affordable rents will be based on a percentage of market rather than income which is the social housing, so this is a big change. In the short to medium term, the LDA will be involved in this market. So it is a change for local authorities in general for the space in general. Next slide, please. So, the cost rental model, it will be initially targeted at urban centres. The big difference is the rental model, the homes will be available, it will remain in public ownership, so it is a long-term investment, but up to now, affordable housing has been aimed at affordable purchase. This will be affordable rental apply it is targeted middle-income earners who not the social housing support, so it is that gap between the two. It is a big change for the state. It will be a different model funded originally from the LDA and will be involved, we will see where we are going. The big change in how affordable is delivered. The next one is the affordable purchase scheme. This is the aimed at the local authority, constructing on local authority land, it is the traditional way it has done it. It is seen as a low-build cost, and the requirement is that there be discount-to-market value of about 15%. We have limited land, Wicklow County Council has limited land that has no cost. But, we are looking Atsu a number of sites. In the short-term, people will have noticed we advertised recently for an expression of interest for developers. For - who would be interested in working partner issues, in this category, where they would provide houses, and we would provide grants for them through the affordable housing fund. It restructures the service site fund. One of the difficulties with the service sites fund was they didn't allow for land, so the local authority could apply for grants. It had to expend more monies. It could not go back and look at money expended up to now. It was very good for infrastructure that was required - that prevented the scheme going ahead but it didn't allow land costs or a cost to the local authority had incurred. It is currently an open call-out in it. It allows infrastructure, land costs, and site costs. The increase of the original max in the service sites fund was 50 thousand, increased up to 100,000, but it is subject to a number of conditions, including density careers. I think that will be limited to Greystones area. Everything else will probably fall into the 50,000 but we will be negotiating or talking to the department. The recently advanced purchase Turnkey option that we advertised, we envisaged we would be planning in partnership with develops for this grant, and providing 50,000 in that situation per plot, and that would make it affordable. That, and a number of other initiatives. So that is where we see this in the short to medium term. Okay. Another thing that is - sorry, the next ... and the next one, another one that is outside currently outside the local authority focus, but it is a very big part of the government policy, is the First Home Shared Equity Scheme. This is where the government working in partnership with the banking sector, it will establish a shared equity fund where they will

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buy and provide a percentage of the house. An example given in the Housing for All page 39 is where an applicant is buying a house, the mortgage available is 225, they will pay a gap, there is an issue there. Don't worry about that. It will pay a gap between the mortgage and the - what the person can have as their mortgage. It will be announced in the very near future or in the start of the New Year, we are awaiting regulations on that, but that will be, really within the private sector where people, it will bridge some of the affordable equity issues. We will come back through the SPC, come back when that is announced. A number of the affordable housing schemes we are currently awaiting for regulations. The next big change will be part 5 land. People will remember going way back to the initial part V land allowed for 20% and a social and affordable mix. This is the new act brings that back in. So now, lands that have been purchased after 2021 and have new planning permissions will be applying antidepressant 20% criteria where we will be imposing an affordable and social housing. There are a number of criteria. The number of criteria with this, so, for the first year or two, it will depend when the land was purchased, if the planning permission and all that. This will be - "slow burn" is the wrong word. It will take a few years to come in. All the ones where the transition arrangements apply, 10 or 20% will apply, but over a few years, that will change. Through the SPC, we will keep you informed on that, and you will see units beginning to come in, possibly towards the end of the housing delivery plan which is more like 24 or 25, it depends when the land was purchased, and when the planning permission was applied for. So it will be done a case-by-case basis. For ourselves in the social housing, Pathway 3 const straits on an increased new housing supply, which requires a housing delivery plan that is both social and affordable, an emphasis on local authority delivery on local authority lands, and like I said, it also links back to a number of other pathways, including it is accepted that more units are better as we all know for the homeless issue. It does provide a significant amount of solutions for us. I detailed earlier on the housing supply targets for the housing supply targets for the year, and, again, if people watch the first slide, that is the scheme of social housing for each year. You can see it is ramping up for all the local authorities 9,000 up to 10,000 in 2026. Again, next slide, there is - on top of that, order, on the social housing delivery, people with acquisitions, acquisitions and long-term leasing will not be as yielding of any units as it has been for the last couple of years. Mortgage-to-rent will still remain in place. Short-term leasing again will not be yielding of many units. Repair-and-lease, that will be on some local authorities, in Wicklow, limited, by that particular one. That important one is leasing, that is, in the short-term, there are a number of units there. The new build is the big one. The there will be significant demands on the role for PPPs in the plan going forward to - okay, next. So that each local authority, that

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9,000 is broken down as a target for each local authority, for Wicklow County Council, front-loaded, 390 for 2022 going on, with a total of 1,348. Declan now to show how the delivery plan in the next five years will achieve that.

>> Thank you, Jo. Afternoon, members. Can everybody hear me? Next slide there, please, Teresa. So the Housing Delivery Action Plan which we submit to the department in the next few weeks, and it is outlining how we are going to achieve the targets, and giving some background to it as well. Up to 2026 over the next five years. We've to look at data from various sources, the County Development Plan, the housing lists, and land availability as well as where we plan to deliver it, and it has, we have to show that the delivery will be aligned with the demand - that is kind of a fundamental part of it, I suppose, and, as Joe mentioned, the emphasis on local authority construction largely but, it will have other delivery streams as well, and liaison with the HP sector is a big part of it, as part of our plan, 40% of the units are to come from the HB sector, so they're a big part of it as well. He is limiting on the plan, may need to be dealt with, and I suppose, generally, in the case of Wicklow, the big infrastructure deficits that we have are being dealt with, I suppose the provision of Arklow sewerage, we are having that in place. We are relatively advanced with the plan and ideas where the - will be targeted, it's 1,348, we are showing at the moment over the next five years, if we can deliver 1,465 units, so, all going well, we should exceed the target. The balance between land availability scheduling our works, the resources that we have to progress them, infrastructure as I mentioned in Arklow, war, you know, some of the schemes will be towards the latter part of the plan because of infrastructure, and also geographical balance to provide units throughout the county, and I will show that in more detail in one of the later slides. It is going to be a living document. It will be subject to change, particularly the templates, and the tables in it, because as we all know, some schemes get delayed, and some can be brought forward as time goes on. We have sufficient land available for most of the plan, but, towards the end of it in 2026, we will see a deficit where we need more land, as I say, 2026. Three large local authority-owned sites at the moment that we are looking at, and they will need mixed developments on them, a mix of social and affordable, and they're the ones in ... Greystones, and Bray, so we are trying to develop master plans for all those sites, where we have a master plan for Lott Lane, we have pun PPP identified in Blessington which is in for ... with 106 units but likely to have other schemes as PPP is seen as a big part of Housing for All and in providing units for it. Next slide, please.

This is one of the templates from the plan that we have to submit, and I know there is a lot of detail in this, but it's just to give an idea of what we are looking at. Chose the number of households on the waiting list, the

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first column, and then how that is distributed by - how the demand is distributed across those percentages, and then how we are going to achieve that, so, for example, in Bray, we've just over 1,000 households on the waiting list which is 24% of our demand overall, and that would by percentage, that would be 327 of our targets, and our plan will show 357 being delivered, so we are slightly exceeding our delivery in that ways and it is replicated throughout the counties as well. Just to give you an idea of the way that this is planned out. The next slide, please. So this is the way - and this is over the five years of the plan. This is the way it is being distributed generally that 43% of our delivery will be our own delivery on our own land. 26% will be through Turnkeys which are mostly approved housing bodies. We have a small number of direct Turnkeys from direct housing bodies, and 18% is Part 5 delivery, and 7% through PPP, and smaller numbers through repair and lease, buy and renew. They're all schemes that - that is how the percentage is made up for our delivery plan. The next slide, please. This is to give an idea by year how it's going to be distributed. So, the red there is our own land bank, the orange is the AHB, and the blue is part 5, so, for the first two years, extra in the year after, it will be generally, reasonably a third, a third, a third between those varying slightly. In 2024, you can see that a sharper proportion is on our own schemes and land, and also in 2025, and then in 2026, the green is future land purchases, so that is showing where we have a need for additional land that we will need to source by 2026, to achieve our targets.. again, this is to show, we mentioned, we are covering across the full county giving an idea of the distribution through the county over the five years of the plan, so it is reasonably distributed equally. Thanks, next slide.

Affordable does form part of the plan as well. It is largely at the moment dependent on the three sites. We don't really show the delivery of affordable units over the next two years because none of those sites, with the lead in time we have with Part 8 and construction of units and the challenge we have is the tender price, land costs and abnormals and tenders are quite high on the last few schemes we have had. That has to be at least 15% discount on the market value. It's difficult to achieve, especially in areas outside of the north east of the county I suppose where market values are very high. Part 5 will deliver affordables, but as Joe outlined with the changes to the Part 5 that will take a few years to kick in. It doesn't apply to schemes that already have planning permission, so that probably will be towards the latter years of the plan.

The shared equity scheme will be something that will hopefully kick in as well. A big one that we are hoping for is the scheme that has just been advertised which is the advanced purchase, similar to turnkeys that we have got supply from over the last few years for social housing and

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therefore we are hoping that that will deliver some affordable units as well. Particularly in the earlier part of the plan, but of the Housing Action Plan, but right throughout it, hopefully that we will get schemes, that we will get interest on that. So thank you very much for your attention.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Declan and Joe. Covered a lot there. I am going to open it up to the members. Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you Declan and Joe. Looking at the plan and I have gone through it once or twice. It seems to be a good plan for maybe down the road. Where my concern would be is today and that being say for example west Wicklow here and Blessington, of the six developments in the pipeline three of them are already more or less done and dusted. So I am just wondering is the horse drawn here? For example, the land where there would be 106 units going in there, they are housing bodies. If you compare, if you look at page 1, the pathway or page 3 in the document it clearly says pathway one, supporting home ownership and increasing affordability. So it looks like a good document where the emphasis is going back to council build and council where people can buy their own homes, but we have to be very clear here that the units are in the pipeline here in Blessington. They are all housing agencies at the moment and they are houses that are only leased to people for 25 year lease. Now, that is where our concern here in this neck of the woods. So what I am asking these ideas are good here. I can see it's a good document, but it's not going to have any effect here within this part of the world, or within Wicklow for years to come. By then the infrastructures will be done and dusted, these, as I say, in Blessington alone here, three of the six developments at the moment are committed to housing bodies, housing agencies. So those 178 units in the pipeline here, people will never be able to own those. So it's a good document, but I think it's a bit late coming.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you, Gerry. Cllr Erika Doyle.

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, chair and thank you for the presentation, it's a huge strategy document, we could probably talk about it all day. Just one local aspect I wanted to ask about is, I suppose you have to provide all the resources to implement the objectives in this document and one that I saw had been identified already last week was additional staffing resources that are going to be necessary to start implementing it. I saw that seven new housing posts have been resourced to Wicklow. I am just wondering if we have any indication at this point as to what those posts are and when they will come on stream. Thank you, chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr R O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thank you, chair. Just one question to Joe and Declan. In the Wicklow projections for their targets, 2022 is quite a bit bigger compared to the other years. I was kind of wondering why is that? Is it

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some kind of catch up from Covid, or what is the story with it overall?
Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Declan, are you happy to answer those couple questions? Okay, Joe go ahead.

JOE: First of all, Gerry, it's a bit late coming... (sound gone)... five years ago there was a target of 1225 to be achieved in last five years which we have achieved. Baltinglass benefitted significantly from that. The ones, if people read between the lines, it is the local authority, the building and local authority land, the building and local authority land is just the PPP. The reason for that was to try and progress it as quickly as possible. So rather than waiting for, it was a large scheme and one of the problems we would have always had and people have the past in the Arklow area will know that bigger schemes have been broken up by the department. So in this case we went for a system that would take the risk of the lack of infrastructure and progress it as quickly as possible. So that is why the PPP is up and running here. The affordable schemes weren't there at the time, the regulations weren't there and it was just to progress things in line with the infrastructural deficit and when the deficit was going to be addressed. As part of that there is also a [INAUDIBLE] there. This allows for waiting for the infrastructure in Baltinglass, they are running that which will allow a speed up of it, so I am not sure that was a fair comment there.

As regards the staffing we will be working on that, there is a number of architects and other... vacancy resource issues just to progress things going forward. Going back to the difference, the big difference is the 1225 in the last couple of years, that was very, that allowed for leases and acquisitions and not turnkeys, I am talking about second hand acquisitions. They are not available as I showed in that block, there is only 200 in the whole country per year, or sorry, over the five years. So it will be a lot more construction and a lot of that by the local authority are laying out in partnership. So that is where a lot of those staff are coming in. As Declan said, it's 1348 without the leases and the acquisitions going forward. That is why it's more land. The difficulty is we don't have land now or at the end of this plan we will have bottomed out our land and we will be coming back to the area staff to see is there more land available. The 2022, there is Wicklow County Council submit information to the department regarding what schemes are on the ground and what schemes are available going forward. The 396 for next year is a front loading of our scheme. So the whole country is kind of filtered out who is doing what over what period. It was acknowledged that Wicklow would probably be able to carry a lot of units in the first year and Cllr O'Connor you will be familiar with an email recently. Most of those will be achieved early on in quarter one and next year. So it's not, even though it is, it

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might look a very challenging figure, it's not something myself and Declan will be worried about. It will be achieved in 2022.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sylvester Bourke. I will let you in at the end Gerry, I have to get through the others.

CLLR BOURKE: I think it's an exciting and ambitious plan. I know Joe has delivered a lot. When you look back over the last to you are years that Joe has been there as director, what he has achieved as his team, I believe he has the capability to deliver on what he is talking about here. There is just a couple of points I want to raise here. One I am concerned about is the number of people who come to me who don't qualify under some of the existing rules for finance, for house purchase and there is a very stringent interpretation put on their applications and they mightn't tick all the boxes and, for example, one person might have been divorced previously and might still have their name on a house from a previous relationship and even though that is long gone and they are having difficulty removing that name off it, they don't qualify. That is just one example, I have plenty more, I won't go into them now. I just feel we are going to get burdened with a lot of those cases in the future and I would like to see management having more discretion, I believe some councils are using more discretion in getting people accommodation and getting loan approvals and houses for them. So I would like to see a bit of a relaxation on that, Joe, if at all possible. So there was a couple of other points I might come back in later if that is okay, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you Cathaoirleach and Joe and Declan for the presentation. Overall this is a welcome document in addressing our housing situation, which some might say is chronic. It's an ambitious document and some might say it's not ambitious enough. Just a question for Joe in relation to the affordability and the affordable housing fund. I know you gave some examples in what was circulated, I am just trying to look at what was circulated. The disparity, so take Greystones Municipal District has the highest house prices outside of Dublin which has been realised lately. So the couple, as you describe them in the squeezed middle category, how again, you are looking at what will be looking at by the time the 15% discount is applied as long with the housing fund assistance. So it's still, just bearing in mind that the market values of houses in this particular area, it will still leave a shortfall in my estimation, so just wondering, Joe, if you could give an example of someone in that category.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: Just two points. I know in Arklow we are playing catch up in relation to housing. I am just wondering if the council are looking at buying sites is there any possibility they could look at infill sites around the town centre around the housing rather than greenfill sites. I am

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seeing tsunami of housing and development. I can see the construction industry taking off and housing and the treatment plant being implemented now. We have a lot of green infrastructure and really valuable biodiversity status for us there. I just would prefer any new builds, if the council is going to be buying land to look at some of the derelict buildings around the main street and taking some of them on. Just in relation to the housing bodies, there are housing bodies out there that offer, they give an offering of the tenants being able to eventually purchase the houses with a clawback after so many years and do Wicklow County Council engage with those, or are you locked into contracts with housing bodies? I know we are stuck with the housing bodies for the foreseeable future, but could we look at tendering to alternative housing bodies that give people the chance to buy their houses eventually.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Joe. Do you want to take those?

JOE: Okay the Sylvester Bourke... okay, yes that is the discretion. The regulations, there is two things there. The affordable and social, it's a specific type of question. There is no discretion regarding social, it's quite clear where it is. I have looked and a few members have had appeals process. First of all there is always an appeal process in the social housing. We look at it as best we can. However as people are familiar there is very little discretion regarding it. I think your question might have been more towards affordable. If it's the affordable you are talking about there is changes in the new legislation regarding people who are gone into a second relationship regarding not being treated as a first time buyer. I think that is what you are talking about, but that would be in the affordable market. I think I am awaiting regulations on that, I think I have answered the question there. I don't know where to start in answering that question, Gerry, I think I might work with you and send it to you by email. You might ask me the specific question. Really it depends on the person. The new regulations allowed for the shared equity. If it's the shared equity you are asking about it bridges the gap between what the mortgage is asking for, what they are paying for and the house price. I think we might be better off sending a few emails.

CLLR WALSH: On the three sites you indicated the three sites available on the local authority lands how would that...?

JOE: In those three sites no, that is why I am careful of the question. That would be for the shared equity in the private sector. In those three sites we won't be building unless we get them down to a price that is affordable. That is where the problem is. We are trying to get them to.

CLLR WALSH: That is the crux.

JOE: We know the affordable price is about 320, 330, we will get them down there. That is where our delay is at the moment. The cap is basically as Declan said 15% of the, the Department guidelines are under the Affordable Housing Fund, it's 15% of the market value in the area,

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but it's site specific. Cllr Peir Leonard, again I am going to separate between affordable and social for infills. Affordables infill won't work because of the price of the land. They won't be able to afford it. So we are looking at social there. In that situation yeah, we are kind of in a lot of cases their developer run where the developer have land through approved housing bodies or ourselves, they employ we are always interested in that. In the short term in Arklow, it's one of the areas we probably have sufficient land in the short term in Arklow. It's, when I say short term it's up to 26, 27, 28, its infrastructure or particularly waste water we are waiting for there. The infill sites are very resource heavy and we found that in the past and for the numbers we need to achieve we rarely buy small infill sites, like I said they can be quite labour intensive. Does that answer the question?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, moving on to Cllr Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Joe and Declan for the presentation. We certainly need a little bit more time to take it all in. Just maybe Gerry Walsh touched on this, the area I want a quick question on is Declan spoke it, it's the slide where he talks about tender prices plus land cost, plus abnormal versus 15% difficult to achieve. I am slightly confused and the reason I am confused is I have listened to the minister on three different occasions talk about the great plan and all about it and is the slides that we are being presented with today, Joe, is that yourself and Declan's interpretation of what the Minister has announced and you summarised it in your own words on the slides, because in the early part of the presentation you might have mentioned it yourself, Joe, you talked in terms of equity being taken in the houses to the tune, depending on the area and I presume I said depending on the area you were talking North Wicklow of 100,000.

If 100,000 is going to be taken in a house that will enable it to be more affordable. Where my confusion is I am listening to what you are saying and the doubts that yourself and Declan are putting across. It's not balancing out with what I am interpreting from what the minister is saying. I am confused and there is a massive demand for affordable housing. A massive demand. So I will be very surprised if they roll out this plan and they are banking their futures on it and there would be a big hole in it that doesn't enable affordable housing to be built in an area that is most populated and an area where the massive demand is.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry I was on mute. Cllr Grace McManus.

CLLR McMANUS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you Joe and Declan. I have four questions. Firstly in terms of the affordable purchase that will be local authority built. Is there any mechanism to keep them affordable if the people who buy them want to sell them on, or are they just affordable for the first sale and that will be that? You mentioned the

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legislation around the criteria for qualifying for affordable housing schemes. But is there any detail on that or a timeline of when we will get the detail of what kind of income you need to be on to qualify for the Affordable Housing Schemes, the rental and the purchase and the Shared Equity Scheme. A huge think that is coming back from my age group is for single people. So even the example you gave there of the shared equity scheme to be on a joint, or to need an income of 70,000 it's not really realistic for a person who might be on their own or even a couple looking to buy where only one person is able to work. So just in term was the provision of affordable housing, is there anything in there for single people do you think? Finally in terms of homelessness, do we have wiggle room, or is there a way that we can move from reliance on B&Bs for emergency accommodation, more so back to own door, that is a policy that I would like us to see us do and I just didn't see it in the slide. So your comment on that, Joe, would be really appreciated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you to Joe and Declan and Teresa and all of the staff in the housing department for the pain staking work they are doing in that department. It is really the engine room of Wicklow County Council and has to be for the next couple of years. But just following on from a couple of the points that have been made by previous speakers and just to emphasise again there is an entire generation of people in this county in their 20s, 30s and probably in their 40s who were working at good steady jobs, who are now stuck in a property poverty trap because they are being forced to pay exorbitant rents, not able to save for a mortgage and being completely cut out of the property market. With no realistic hope, whether they are single or couples, with or without children, no realistic hope in the short or middle term of ever being able to buy a home of their own. I am quite depressed at this presentation because it seems to me that over the next two to three years, at the very minimum, there won't be affordable housing schemes in County Wicklow. Despite all of the publicity and all of the great speeches and announcements that have been made at central Government, the reality here in County Wicklow and the imagine the rest of the country as well, particularly in highly populated areas is people who are stuck in that trap are not going to get out of it any time soon. One of the difficulties that is exacerbating that situation is that Wicklow County Council are being encouraged and are going ahead full steam ahead in buying up available properties that are for sale in the open market. Doing deals with property funds right left and centre to buy huge number of units, taking them off the open market and taking them away from people who might have hoped to buy them and filling the social housing gap with those houses. So fine you can say it's great from the point of view of people who are on the housing list or the lucky ones who will get one, but

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in fact we are kind of shooting ourselves in the other foot in terms of the many thousands of people in Wicklow who can't aspire to buying a home of their own because Wicklow County Council is the biggest player in the market in the purchase of these houses. I don't know whether Joe wants to comment on that.

But specifically when the three sites that are owned by Wicklow County Council and concentrate on Rehills land where there was a hope, I had a hope that some of that would be affordable housing. There doesn't seem to be any sense of urgency of even getting that site developed. We are hearing the same report for a year now about a master plan being drawn up and difficulties with a bridge, but it hasn't moved forward in a year at least, certainly from what I have read. I would love to be corrected on that if that is the case. But specifically, Joe, can you please tell us when are we going to see something happening on that Rehills land, where that particular plan is going to go forward for a Part 8 planning process.

While we are talking about Part 8 planning process, the members of the last Bray Municipal District passed a Part 8 for a housing development for older people, I think it was in 2017, it's nearly four years ago, it was to be built by an approved housing body, not a single things that happened since. It is outrageous that a body was given that responsibility by Wicklow County Council and we haven't seen any advance on it at all. Second last point. In the past Wicklow County Council I can name two senior official, Ultan McCabe and Tony O'Neill who had specific responsibility for sourcing land for Wicklow County Council's needs. They went out and they assembled land banks over those years because there was going to be a need in the future. I don't think there is any point in talking about buying land in three or four years' time, talking about that need, we need to have a designated senior official going out, trying to source land now so that we will have it in our possession and we can continue to build houses affordable and social hopefully in the future rather than facing up to it in three or four years' time. The last point I will make is this. There are many people caught, just outside the income limit for qualification to be on the social housing list. They are just outside the income limit, but they have no hope of buying a house themselves. Many of these people are working but they are not earning huge amounts of money but they have been excluded from even getting HAP because they are not on the housing list. Can Joe give us any hope that those income limits are going to be revised? I believe the last time they were revised was in 2011, we are now in 2021, we are ten years on. Things have moved on a lot. For those people to get on the housing list so they can qualify for HAP would be a huge improvement in their circumstances.

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Could Joe tell me is there any chance those income limits will be addressed?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, I will bring you in on those three questions or participants.

JOE: I am going to deal with the... I came across the two of them. Sorry. I am going to deal with Cllr Behan, I was looking for one particular question. For Cllr Fortune there was a small confusion between the 100,000 in the affordable housing fund and the affordable, the scheme First Homes. I think that might be where the confusion is. The First Home scheme is a national scheme and the regulations are due early next year. So the start of next year is what that was marked up as. So that will be by the private sector where people can buy houses, can go in and a chunk of it is for this entity through the banks so. Again when I have the information on that I will circulate it, but that will be dealt with nationally. That came across three of your questions came across on that one. The other two, Cllr Fortune affordable purchase.

Anything in the scheme, we are awaiting regulations and particularly I am not sure the clawback will be there. I think the shared equity element will be, Cllr Grace McManus, the holder will be it's not equaliser, but the person will own their mortgage and the state or this entity will own the bits between the mortgage and the selling price. They will have to discharge that at some stage and that money will go back to fund the next stage of affordables. But I am waiting regulation we will have that at the SPC on that.

The homelessness, yes, no, we will always be, depending on B&B for a short term or emergency, however we have the Homeless Hub coming in in Wicklow and that will take some of the pressure off and we are working with approved housing bodies and other specialists. The only thing is there is always a balance to be achieved with our own door units between emergency accommodation and the list and the scheme priority... Cllr Grace McManus, if I didn't answer the question, I can't read my own writing. Sorry, 2022, that is when those regs come in. Rehills land, there is affordables on that, but we are, but part of that is it may be, rather than affordable purchase, which invariably are own door type arrangements for apartments and to increase the density we are looking at apartments and cost rental. That is, we have engaged with the housing agency on that, but, as people know we have progressed with schemes that we could develop and the more difficult schemes are taking a while. The Department has acknowledged these multiple, so there will be affordable on the Rehills to answer the direct question. They are more difficult than the three schemes and particularly the Rehills and the

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Burnaby. Both of those, because of their side they will have affordable and social they are more difficult.

We are awaiting regulation and also regulations where those two are merged together there is different approval processes and different delays. We are not delaying but progressing screams in the short term. Parnell Road is on for delivery in 2022. Apologies if I missed a question. I had four points I only answered three of yours.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going let Cllr Fortune back in at the end. I have to let Gerry O'Neill in as well. Before I move on to the next speakers I am going to look for a time extension until 5.30 if everyone is agreeable, we have another important presentation on the Glendalough Master Plan are we happy to extend until 5.30? Yeah? Can we have a proposer and seconder to keep everyone.

CLLR WINTERS: I propose it.

CLLR DUNNE: I second it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not sure who that was.

CLLR DUNNE: Cllr Dunne.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Moving on to the next speaker, Cllr Blake.

>> I would be confident that we will deliver on it. A couple of questions, the rapid Bill, are we continued with that, through to the projects, there will be a rapid bill. In relation to the private sites we have, the county job. There is an opportunity there, if we were to dispose of these sites, they would be classified as affordable housing as well, but the council, they're only small sites, they're never going to be funded, I'm pleading for the last number of years Joe with you, with the management of the council, that we would dispose of these small number of private sites we have. Can you progress purchases, and they can be classified and affordable houses at the end of the day. Thanks, Chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Pat Kennedy?

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and Joe and Declan for the presentation. Just briefly, on something which Cllr Behan said earlier on in making sure we have a senior official appointed or in the field to be looking at the sites and buying the land back up, and making sure that the land bank is in place going forward, if that is proposed, I would be happy to second that.

>> I propose it, Pat.

>> Can I just go in there. It is - there is not a staff member at the moment that is blocking it, it is finances and market value. So, at the moment - a new resource coming in, that is not a blockage at the moment. One person doing that could be unproductive at the moment before at the spreadsheet four and five sites, we've looked at once it reaches market value and it exceeds market value, then our value itself, we don't follow it in. So I don't know the blockage isn't where you think it is, lads. But thank you.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Snell.

>> We understand that this was a very ambitious launch by the minister. Only a few short weeks ago for the middle of September. The reality is there are 213 actions on this. Most local authorities have been waiting to come down. The local authorities, with what the plans are planning on delivering, I think Joe and Declan and his team have done Trojan work in delivering this delivery action plan for the next five years. As they've outlined, it has not just achieved the targets, it is to go a step beyond that, and exceed the targets within the county. And, look how - we all know, in regards of blockages. One that hasn't been mentioned, is the existing land bank that they have, there is still to be made to government which the existing land banks they have which is trying to try up and make something achievable in regards to the finances, and make it affordable. So, you know, I would implore on all the members maybe to talk to your parties, your political parties, or your Senators, TDs, or otherwise, and ask is central government going to write off the fees they're looking for, some as far back as 20 years ago, to go and purchase land, I can't see them actually one, resourcing this, and I understand the concerns that the members have in regards to the land bank, but there is no provision for the purchasing of the land in this for the next couple of years, and, as we all know, this sector, with the market value of what is happening out there, for developers in particular, who are avoiding units, and the cost of the materials themselves, we don't know where we will be in two or three years' time, like, this country has an awful habit of going from boom to bust and back again, you know? So, a plan is just that until it is implemented. I think that Wicklow counties council over the last five years have far exceeded the target, and are producing a document here today to prove to the members and, to be very open and transparent about it, I think by the senior housing officials going into each municipal district and speaking to the elected members, you know, I'm not interested in fancy glossy press releases from the minister in regards that they're going to achieve 33,000 units year in, year out, for the next ten years, because we all know that governments have a habit of coming and going as well and putting these figures out there, but the reality is, we all share the same concerns, not just for people on the social waiting list, but also for people who are not on the housing list, who are waiting to see about an affordable scheme, and as every member I know has been here a long time, there hasn't been an affordable scheme in the country, let alone in County Wicklow for over 12 years. So, the reality is that at times, it makes bleak reading, but let's be honest with ourselves here and say that we have to do our best with the hand that we are dealt, and that is the reality of it, and I think that the housing officials within Wicklow County Council are certainly punching above their weight in delivering and continuing to deliver, so thanks, Cathaoirleach.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Mullen.

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just a quick thank to Joe and Declan for the work and all their staff there. It is truly good public service to try to achieve what they are achieving. Sometimes one hand doesn't know what the other is doing in Wicklow County Council, or in national policy. One of the reasons the land that are out there are going to become more, not necessary expensive, is because we are removing in our new county development plan lots of suitably zoned land for housing. I'm not an expert on economics, but when you reduce the amount of available land that can be used for housing, and there is a demand for that land, there is only one logical conclusion, and that is the land prices go rocketing up, so, I do think that I know that that is a tricky one for the housing department because they have to deal with the reality of the situation, situation, but at CCM A-Level, or national level, some people have to sit around and say if we want to get on top of this crisis, we have to allow enough land in all areas of Wicklow to be as, Councillor Blake said earlier, even small parcels of land are sitting there, with small cottages sitting there. It frustrates people. Every single unit we can bring into play is a home, it is a home for a family. We should have a cross-department view on this within councils and between councils and central government. I do think the minister is listening, but I do think we have now to start pointing out the contradictions that are there, because they're going to bite. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Two members I want to bring back in, Cllr O'Neill, and Cllr Fortune.

>> Thanks, there, Joe there, I think was being a bit unfair. What I'm finding out again is the issues here in our area on council-owned land, Dublin County Council are the lead on that. They're building 106 houses, they will immediately go to a housing body, and it has been the same in other areas here, there are no affordable houses being built. There is a huge demand here for affordable houses. There are people who suffered with the crash who lost their private houses, they're in positions now to go for affordable. All I'm doing there fairly and squarely is trying to represent those people. There are no affordable houses on the pipeline here. I think it can be a good document as such, but I do agree with Cllr Snell there to a certain extent that we have a majority of Wicklow County Council are Fine Fail or Fine Gael, if they look at the 200 houses here, all they're looking for are parts of those units to be affordable. That is not a huge undertaking. Maybe that could be the solution, because people are in dire need for affordable houses, and, as ... the land had a that has been, these people will never own these houses in ... they've been built by Dublin County council. They will be run and organised by a housing body. Maybe at this stage, even 10% of those could be affordable and that will be the solution.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Fortune?

>> I won't hold you up long. Just to come back on a couple of things. I recognise fully the difficult job that Jo is in, and this hasn't been made easier with what the minister has announced and the way he has announced it, so I do understand where the real blockage is. I can't for the life of me understand why this whole equity thing, this 150 thing can't be put in-situ for the affordable market to make houses affordable. I think that is a business solution. As far as that, the minister is playing short-term games here, and probably will be gun out in two years' time and it will be someone else's problem. It doesn't add up that they would present this type of thing. It is like trying to put a quart into a pint bottle. I think Cllr Mullen made a comment I would agree with. If the minister isn't in tandem with the CDP process, either. I know, Joe, you have to roll out to us the way it's given to you on high, but it's contradictory, and it's not going to work or happen, and the three sides that you're talking about in Greystones, in Bray and others, the equity situation has to be brought into play there or else this is just a joke.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Behan, had you a proposal here? Can I bring you in to see your thoughts on this?

>> I'm not trying to contradict what the Director says. I'm not saying someone should be brought in to do nothing else, I'm saying the senior official in the housing section as part of their duties would be the sourcing of land is a priority. That's all I'm saying, and I would like to put that proposal to the meeting. I think Cllr Kennedy seconded it. It is only advisory. We can't order staff around maybe like we would like to!

CATHAOIRLEACH: It is more advising.

>> Senior staff member as part of their duties should be sourcing and putting together a land bank. It can be making the case to government for giving us a relaxation, some of the money that government are looking for in relation to other land purchases. It is a project that could be part of a senior official's workload. That's all I'm saying. That's what I want to propose, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Jo, can I bring you in quickly before we go to a vote. Is this practical in terms of your staff that we could ensure that a member is given a priority on this?

>> Any piece of land that can identified through council or directly, we've looked at it, okay? There is one in Bray that I'm working on myself actively, another one in Bray that we had worked with the department. Declan had looked at three more pieces of land, one in Greystones, and two other areas. One of them is included in the plan. We don't need assistance at the moment. We need cheaper land!

CATHAOIRLEACH: Jo, are you happy with that response or want to put it to a vote?

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JOE BEHAN: I think I made myself clear. It's reactive in the sense that if someone comes up, they look at it. I think someone's job search the highways and the byways. Jo and Declan are busy people. It should be part of another senior official's portfolio and remit to do this. Yes, I want to put it to a vote.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Helen, we put it to a vote.

ADMINISTRATOR: I've got to get the correct sheet and the wording.

>> While you're doing that, I will answer the other questions ...

designability is an essential part of our scheme and it is where the bigger schemes are. It is where we moved the processes, the first day processes down to two and a half stages, and it is where a lot of the schemes have moved forward quicker in the last couple of years. People have seen that. They took about six months to a year. Service site, while discussed at the SPC, we are looking at one or two sites there, so we will come back, and it won't be the next or the second next SPC, it would be down the pecking order for the first have to be, good social houses, and the second one we ourselves can build affordable houses, if we can't, we will look at affordable sites. We've got six months of that, and there is maybe a scheme on that at a national level. Cllr McManus, parts of the questions that may not be answered, we have ... in the private sector, who have planning permission are ready to go, but where there are blockages either in finances in some cases are from the bank of demand. We write those. That is effectively, what the expression means, affordable purchases. We sent it out to councils I believe in the last 38 to 48 hours. That's what we hope in the short-term. We will be back to give details of that. The first expression of interest is due, so people - developers who have planning permission, and may be interested in this have to have it in by the 12th January. We will talk to the Cllr ... if they have cases. This is where in the short-term we see where you could solve the affordable housing in the short-term. We will take their application and assist them to get that grant to 50,000 to 100,000. It will be limited to 50,000 in the first time. That may get them in some certain areas. John, just on the smaller schemes, yes, we are concentrating on the bigger schemes, but especially in the urban areas, we are still CPO-ing houses that are not in use, and the repair-and-lease scheme is - there is a renewed, a refurbished, probably the wrong word - repair-and-lease scheme out there, so again that might answer some of your specific questions. Just the PPP in Blessington. Yes, our original design had affordables, but to progress things at the time, be - it is now 100% social. I know it won't help Blessington. The first phase of the PPPs, which is the ... three which is what we are on, Dublin is lead on it. That doesn't have any affordable. As we progress going to the 24, 25, we are engaging with the Housing Delivery Office and it is likely that PPPs going forward, would be four, fives, or sixes, which would be an integral part of this housing for all plan

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will have affordable in it, so we wait and see for that, schemes, including one as I mentioned for that. Just one last thing on the PPP, whereas the Dublin Corporation - Dublin City Council - showing my age! - Dublin City Council are the lead, the land itself and the units will revert - sorry, the land never leaves county council ownership and the units revert back in 25 years' time. It's a small ... it is something to point out there. I think that is the only answers. Again, just regardless of this motion, if there is land available, housing land available, myself and Declan, people just get ... take a look at them

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Before we move on, Cllr Behan's motion motion, is there any dissent? If not, we can move on and agree it.

>> It is only advisory, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Is everyone happy to move on? Agree to move on? Yes, okay.

Thank you. Moving on to - just before we go on to item number 8, I just want to take this opportunity which was missed earlier, we are losing one of our directors, Colm Lavery. I didn't realise this is his last meeting. I want to thank Colm for all you've done in your time at Wicklow County Council. You've been a fantastic director in all you've done. You've worked very, very closely with all the councillors, and again thank you for your time. I will bring in Frank Curran first of all.

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Colm has been appointed by the minister as the new commissioner of valuation and chief boundary surveyor, so, just want to say for a man who spent all of his career as a civil servant, he moved into Wicklow County Council in a ... in Arklow MD, and he made a huge difference in moving on the bigger schemes but also in the operation of outdoor services, you know, the sort of work that goes on every day, winter maintenance, water services, fire services, and he really took a keen interest in how we do that as efficiently as possible. I think he treated everybody he met with the utmost respect, and he worked really hard. Any time I've been here late in the evenings, the light has always been on in Colm's office be and behalf of myself and his staff, we wish him the very best of luck in his future career and thank you for your service.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Make this brief because I do want to move on.

>> Briefly, Cathaoirleach, thanks for letting me in. I want to wish him the very best in his new role. Again, the door always open, ready to listen to problems, and I wish him and his family going forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Colm, would you like to have a parting point?

>> A bit at a loss for words the first time. I thoroughly enjoyed my last three years here in Wicklow. Everything that has been delivered over my time here is a tribute to all of the staff particularly in transportation, water and I ... in delivering what has been critical and very important infrastructure for the county. I believe that you yourselves, the

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councillors, have been very supportive of all our efforts both in terms of securing funding for our projects, and more importantly on the ground in delivering them, none more so, I suppose, than the response measures and the active travel programme we've delivered over the last 18 months. I want to say a particular thanks to the Arklow municipal district members who have always been very kind and kicking to me in all their dealings and interactions with me, and very supportive, and in bringing Arklow and bringing Arklow further along the path to prosperity. I suppose I want to concur with everything that has been said about our chief executive. On a personal level, he has been an excellent mentor to me. Obviously, this is my first job in local government, and I think I've fitted so well in, because of the guidance, and the encouragement that I've got from Frank. He is a huge loss to Wicklow. But I've no doubt that he's destined for the very top level in local government. Just thanks for everything, Frank, and I wish you well be and your family well for the future. I want just to thank the colleagues on the management board as well from day one for welcoming me into Wicklow County Council, and for helping me out in my time here. I hope in a both in terms of management board staff here and the members that our paths will cross in the future. No doubt bra Brian will be in touch on day one being on my case trying to secure more valuations for Wicklow County Council. I've enjoyed my time here. I want to thank everybody for what you've done in terms of helping me out, and in terms of helping the staff and my directorate, and in Arklow and Municipal District out in delivering everyone for the county, and thanks for the kind words, Frank - Cathaoirleach and everybody.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Couple of members looking to come in here.

>> Thank you, Cathaoirleach. As chair of the SPC on Roads and Transportation, I would like to say I'm sorry to hear that we're losing Colm and thank him for the work; and it is important throughout the county that we do that. I would like to thank you Colm for his work, and the many different facets of the job as well which he has done well. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Miriam Murphy.

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I'm in shock, Colm. I can say you've been very calming in your approach to us, and, you know, you're always there welcoming, and you're always there any time day or night. You have a lovely way around you with people, and your calmness has always been very effective at meetings. Look it, I wish you every, every success, and I hate losing men in my life, Colm, but there you go. That's reality!

CATHAOIRLEACH: We're losing to presentation by Dawson Stelfox of Consarc Consultants on the Glendalough and Wicklow Mountains master plan and visitor. There is a lot of work going behind the scenes. I want to welcome Dawson, and I think we might have Mark, the product

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development manager on the line as well. So, Dawson, you're very welcome.

>> Thank you. Yes, it was December last year that we last presented to the council, and there's been a lot of work done tonight to tell you about the next steps. There is a presentation which Teresa I think will put up on the screen if that can be put up? I'm conscious of the time. Address trees, we will have to rattle through the slides quickly. I will say next slide, please, we can go straightaway to the next one. Now, the slide that's going to come up now is I'm not going to read through this. This details the background to the plan, the first part of it is a quote from your own strategy and marketing plan which set the tone for the study. That was taken up by Failte Ireland which commissioned this work. I get to the three key aims of the master plan. The first one is that we will enhance the natural built of the county, disperse the benefits and the impacts, the good and the bad. And then crucially, it is improving the visitor experience to the county. So next slide, please. So, [audio breaking up]. Going round the next ... progress, a summary of the whole of the wider Wicklow plan as we are calling it, and specifically looking at the proposals for Glendalough and Laragh because that is where the most pressures are, and looking at management and delivery. Next slide, please. So where we are in the process at the moment, this time last year, when we came to talk to you, we were at the concept stage. We went out in February/March/April to a major public consultation event, and mostly online with very good feedback from that. In April, we did a summary of all that feedback and review, and we presented that back to a number of groups, and disseminated that. We got further feedback from that, out of that has come the draft plan, we've been working that up over the summer and into the autumn to the draft masterplan, and where we are now, at the moment, is we are finalising the draft masterplan, it is with the steering group of the project at the moment, probably in early January, we will be putting that out to further round of public consultation, and out of that hopefully the final masterplan will emerge. We got very good and positive feedback for the key proposals, and that gives the encouragement to move on with the detailed design of that. Next slide, please. And going to run through the next few pretty quickly. Teresa, so you can just keep moving them on. At the moment, we've been looking at all the visitors experiences in Wicklow. There is a large number, well scattered around the county of all different types of experiences. And out of those, then we've been looking at the next slide shows the hubs and connections between all of the various factions. And then the next slide against slides looking at the clusters. One concept that went out was to try and bring together existing attractions into various groups right around the county to all parts of the county represented, and use those clusters to encourage people to come to those areas and stay

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longer within those areas. So you will see those around. We tested that in the public consultation and there was broad support for that idea of clusters. The idea - the central concept of all of this is to get more people to come to Wicklow and stay longer in Wicklow putting more back into the economy, and the dispersal around the county spreads the benefits around the county. There was broad public consultation support for this idea of clusters. Next slide, please. And, this is just one extract ... *** This is just one extract from a very lengthy presentation plan we had prepared for the wider county. And what it's doing is looking at the story and the themes and the great reasons why people would come. Again I don't have the time to go into that in detail. And how you encourage people to come and what experiences you give people. So that part of it is a fairly large document called the interpretation vision for the wider Wicklow area. Next slide, please.

I guess then moving from looking at the whole of the county I want to concentrate on the Glendalough and Laragh area. Sorry, that is the last slide, the wider Wicklow. Part of this is about branding, identity, how you market and how you name it. So Glendalough and Laragh, as we know and what has emerged from the consultations is that there is a need for active visitor management in the Glendalough and Laragh area. That is to avoid congestion and disruption to local activities. So one of the things we did over the summer the first really busy weekend when lockdown restriction were lifted, so we put in place a detailed traffic survey over that weekend. If you can move on, next slide, please. What that was doing was counting the numbers of cars, counting the number of people in the cars and not just in Glendalough and Laragh but at about 20 of the upland car park site as well. What that showed us in fairly dramatic and this is one of the busiest weekends of the year, but the number of vehicle movements through Laragh went from the Bank Holiday weekend from 6,000 up to 16,000 vehicle movements. This was one of the busy days. Move on to the next slide, please.

What does that mean for cars arriving in Laragh and Glendalough? The next slide shows the sort of numbers that were involved. So by mid morning on the 6th of June there were up to 60 cars queueing to get into the upper lake car park. Exhaust pollution, disruption, generally. Next slide. And we counted in total at any one time there was somewhere in the region of 700 plus cars, plus the ones queueing in Glendalough itself. Another 200 cars in and around Laragh and in the wider area about 500 cars. So in a very small area, a very large number of vehicles. Car occupancy rates, on average of about 2.5 people a car and turnover of spaces about 1.7 per day. So people coming for half day visits, for instance. If we move on to the next slide. What this means is we do have

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figures of the numbers of people who are arriving in Laragh on the busy days of the year. Now, we can also correlate this with visitor counter information which has been in place for many years now. In particular the visit and counter information has been in place before the unusual nature of the pandemic. If we go on to the next slide then this is really where we are able to correlate the visitor counter information with that traffic information and what that means and we look back and see at the top, the information from 2019, pre pandemic, obviously and then the information from this year and we are getting similar figures and we have the spread of that through the year from the people counters.

So what, the figures we are getting in the region of 70, 80 days a year where we are getting peak figures in excess of 6,000 people, sorry 6,000 passes which is 3,000 people in the Glendalough valley every year. So we now have a bit of a, a good idea statistically of the numbers of people spread throughout the year and therefore the size of the problem really. If we move on to the next slide. So what do we do about this? There has been a long established plan, it's in the Wicklow County Development Plan, it's been through public consultation to try and shift the arrival of a lot of those visitors away from the congestion of the monastery and the monastic site. We have been looking at ways to manage that, actively manage it through automated systems, through people on the ground, through co ordination between the different state bodies as to how we do that. That is to remove part of the problems of congestion, but also primarily to enhance the visitor experience.

So we are now going show you a series of slides which is starting to look at what that physically might mean on the ground. We are looking that the in a phased way, we are not suggesting at all that all of a sudden the cars move down to Laragh and the upper lake car park and the monastic site car park are closed. We are looking at phased and targeted ways to manage the busy days but at quieter times still allow traffic to be up at the upper site. Part of this is building capacity within Laragh and in the phase 1. Both ourselves and the County Council have been talking to private land owners in Laragh and also the Laragh GAA club about how we might provide capacity in Laragh. The next slide is one example of the first phase of that. I think this pack is going to be sent to you afterwards, councillors to you can see the detail better than you can see on the screen at the moment. We have been talking to the GAA club, talking to private landowners and starting to look at how we might build capacity within the village.

As I say, probably overdeveloped over the next ten years to gradually build that capacity and use it on a seasonal basis as required. If we flick

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on through the slides it shows the development of that within Laragh. One of the things in particular is looking to see if we can find a car park site on the eastern approach, the Roundwood Road which would take traffic out of the village completely. You can see in that one Phase 3 at the top right hand side the potential for a car park at the Roundwood Road which takes pressure off the village completely. If you move on again, the next stage of the journey is how we manage the visitor experience as they move from Laragh up towards Glendalough. So part of that would be a visitor hub within Laragh which does have an introduction to it and explain how people organise their day and manage that and keep moving on through the next few slides, Teresa, as well. We then look at developing both a shuttle bus from Laragh up to Glendalough, but also a trail, walkway and cycling trail, family friendly trail up to arrive at the visitor centre itself. Part of the issue here is that at the moment there is a lot of confusion amongst visitors. You arrive here and there is no clear direct route through to the monastic site. People are split one side or another, buses are often parked in the middle and we want to remodel the car park to create more space around the visitor centre, more people space and move the traffic away. If we move on again to the next slide. This involves quite a complex remodelling of the car park to allow the hotel to expand along the northern side of the site. But crucially to provide the hotel space without the hotel car park and the overflow car park extending into the field between the visitor centre and the monastery. So we are trying to pull the cars back from the people experience around it and add in interpretation links to the hotel and the traders area and things like bicycle storage.

Move on to the next slide as well, Teresa. Part of this is this direct connection between the visitor experience and being able to see the site and a natural flow of people through the visitor centre. At the moment only 10% of visitors go through the visit offer centre and we want to make that a much higher proportion going through and then you have a direct link from the visitor centre across to the monastic site. If you move on to the next slide. So it's links between the car park and the arrival point and the development of the car park and that integration between the hotel and the site is crucial. What we want to do is pull the cars back from the monastic site and allow that area to be developed as part of the visitor experience with the interpretation of this landscape and interpretation on the ground and information about how people find out about the site itself. If we move on again, Teresa. So we have been looking at this in detail with the state bodies, the OPW and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Council and there is still a variety of ways that are up for discussion about how we develop the area around the site. There is preferences from some of the bodies for one option or another.

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That will be developed through the first phase to arrive at the agreed situation. What we are trying to do is to get better access to the monastic site to implement St Mary's Church and the flow around it as well and potentially to open up a market square between the hotel and the Glendalough village area around there. We can do that because we are getting cars out of that area at busy times.

So we move on again. So then we are developing that multi trail ride on to the upper lake and we are also proposals to develop the upper lake as well and we move on through those slides to show what might happen up there. So interpretation is not confined to the visitor centre, but it's throughout the valley. So people out on the ground they get the interpretation in front of and around the attractions to be developed and then moving on up to the upper lake we want to remove the trading stands and from here remove the vans but at the same time provide better visitor services. So new toilets, new cafe area and a better landscaped car park and more interpretation on the grounds up there with the national Parks and Wildlife Service having a major role here in terms of the landscape interpretation.

If we move on to the next slide, this is really about improving the visitor experience, that is the cafe up at the upper lake within the whole valley and looking at the whole valley as one integrated, co ordinated, the key to this is active visitor management throughout the valley. Move on to the final part of the presentation. I suppose one of the messages coming out, the next slide as well. One of the key messages coming out of the public consultation was that the management and delivery of the plan was crucial to its success.

So the next slide I think, Teresa, sort of sums that up. This directly came from the public consultation, so the mechanisms for delivery of the plan were crucial and ownership and responsibility of the co ordinated ownership and responsibility is crucial to that. And the plan will contain proposals for how the Government body, the state bodies, the local authority and yourselves and the private sector and environmental bodies will work together. Where are we at the moment? We are finalising the draft plan. That will have another round of consultation in January.

In parallel to that we are developing the SEA, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and an economic appraisal of the plan as well. And then finally just to remind you where we are in the process, the last slide is just we are at the draft master plan stage, about to go out for the final part of stakeholder engagement and the master plan hopefully in place early next year. Thank you, Chair, that is a very quick run through I am

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afraid, but I know we are short of time. I am happy to take any questions.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, you have done a lot of work there and a lot of ongoing work. I am going bring in the members now. Cllr M Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Thank you, chair. Thank you Dawson, for your presentation there. I had a look at it early as well. First of all, I want to ask have you considered, or has any attempt been made to apply for UNESCO world heritage status for Glendalough. That would have a huge bearing on its development. It would have to be preserved really, so that would be a really important move if that could be achieved. The other thing is, I was just looking at the number one tourist attraction in Ireland which is Killarney National Park, 25,000 acres. The one thing that, the huge difference is that, first of all there is no parking in Killarney National Park. Any parking takes place outside of it. That isn't a problem, it's a bigger problem for outside the car park. So it's free. It's free entry for everyone. It's the number one tourist attraction and it's free for everyone to enjoy. I was just speaking to someone from Killarney a couple of weeks ago about this and she said it's wonderful, a wonderful facility.

The one thing I worry about with all of this master plan is when you use a phrase like "Improving the visitor experience", without interviewing visitors to know what is their experience, the only problem that seems to be coming across really is the parking and the problems with the parking and the fact that we are so close to Dublin is that for bank holidays and things we tend to get overwhelmed by day visitors. But the visitor experience of Glendalough is unique to the visitor. I just wonder how many people have been asked why they go to Glendalough on a regular basis which a lot of us do. What is our experience of it, would we like to see anything changed? Personally I would hate to see some of those things I saw in those slides. It almost seems to be encroaching on the uniqueness of that site which is both a spiritual and a from a heritage point of view, a very important site. It's a monastic site, we can't lose sight of that. It is a monastic site first and foremost and it dates from the sixth century. Some of the slides I have seen seem to be bringing a load of modernity to it which actually is completely out of keeping with the character of the place. Now I am all for trying to expand the visitor experience into the wider area and taking it, the pressure way from Glendalough because there is an awful lot of places in Wicklow that aren't being considered or are being overlooked. But the one thing that could really help and it wouldn't be anything to do with Consarc, but it would be to try and improve the tourism, hotels and B&Bs in the area to bring people into the area and to keep them here. So I just want to say, I am kind of viewing it with a lot of trepidation. Yes, I am all for sorting out the parking problem. I want to make sure that it's going to be affordable for

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the people who just want to go there and walk, which is what they have been doing for generations. And that it's going to be with the agreement of all the people who live there. Because it's their village at the end of the day. So that is all I want to say.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just have one point. I attended the consultation night that was in the Glendalough Hotel a number of weeks ago with yourself and Cllr Kennedy and the only point I want to make and Dawson made it loud and clear. This time last year, a lot of members spoke about it, that is about engagement and public engagement and consultation. I know it's so difficult in these times of Covid and a pandemic and to get it to this stage even has been an achievement. In the main I support it, but there is, because it's on a phased through up to a ten year period and there will be multiple changes as we go along and it's hugely ambitious, but I think the community themselves have spoken many times and I think the vast majority want to support this. It's only about being kept in the loop, as I mentioned with regard to the Chief Executive, to be open and transparent is the key to everything I think. So there is no hidden agendas, I think you have been very fair up to now, Dawson, you and your team and I just, I am just encourage you to keep that dialogue open with the local community, because there is people who their livelihoods depend on the visitor attraction that is the Glendalough Heritage Site and the upper lake, so I would encourage that through all avenues, even though we might not be able to meet in a physical capacity with the community again, but if you go down the same routes you did before with regard to leaflet drops and notices and trying to obey the pandemic regulations, but at least engage with the community. The best of luck with the project and thank you for everything you have done to date.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: The illustrations look beautiful. They are very well done. I would concur with the other councillors. The communication, there is a whole community living up there. That is very important to me that they are consulted with and brought on as part of the journey. But another thing that just struck me there, if the car parking has been removed from the centre of Glendalough. For anyone bringing older people up, will there be allocated parking for those who aren't able to get up into the heart of it without being able to walk far. How will you manage that?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: I was going to make a similar point to John Snell, Glendalough is a fantastic spot and probably one of the biggest attractions in the country. That is why it's so popular. I was wondering if we do make changes how we move people around it? That is going to be very important. There is another question, probably, I think it's related to

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Glendalough, maybe everyone might not. But the biggest challenge I see we have in Wicklow is trying to see how we can disperse all of those high numbers of visit offers coming into Glendalough around the county. So I don't know whether it's possible in a project such as this to consider that aspect or not. Wicklow has so much to offer all across Wicklow that with the opportunity of the amount of people that come to Glendalough, are we going, are we thinking in any way how we can encourage people to stay? Wicklow and spread around the county.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Before I bring you back in, I have attended quite a few meetings with yourself, Dawson, and other representatives and local communities and so on. Look, I fully concur with Cllr Snell in terms of public engagement and working with the local community and to be fair you have done that very successfully to date. I suppose with any of these plans you are never going to get people to agree on everything and I suppose that is the challenge. I suppose one of my main concerns Dawson going forward is the management of the facility and the overall umbrella group that is going to be put in place to look after the facility. That concerns me, I have listened to a lot of different views in meetings where people are very much tunnel vision of what they want. For example if it's purely heritage or it's someone else that is purely concerned about local issues. I think we really need a mix of people on the overall umbrella group to make this work. If it's side-lined or side-tracked by one or two groups, I think we are doomed to fail. I suppose if that is my general point on this, that it's hard to get agreement from everyone, but it's to have the proper working group in play, I think will make that easier. So if I could just, sorry, Cllr Kennedy wants to come in and then I will go back to you, Dawson.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you for the update and as you know I have spoken to you about the local consultation in Glendalough and keeping local people up to speed and consulting with them. One thing that just came to me when you were giving your presentation. It's something I never thought of before. I won't go over everything that the other councillors have said. It's just to keep in mind that there is an active graveyard in Glendalough. To put something in place that when there is a funeral in Glendalough that people can block book car parking spaces for a family member on a funeral day. I am sure it's not something you have thought about, but it is something you might keep in mind. Thank you for the work you have done to date.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawson, I will let you back in there.

DAWSON: I will maybe deal with that last one first because I do have something positive to report. It did come up as part of the consultation. We have discussed that with National Parks and Wildlife Service. There is a bit of OPW work, but it might be Parks and Wildlife Service where they

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are looking at creating a small access point and car park area for that, for access for funerals and to the site.

So I think there is a positive, there is a positive answer to that particular one which I think would be, could work very well. I think generally, chair, we will be making very specific proposals about the management of the area and we will be recommending strongly that that will include representatives from the local community within that. We have been doing some case studies of models used elsewhere in Ireland, north and south, in Europe and in Scotland. There are, I think quite a number of interesting examples now where the management of let's call them national parks but protected areas shared between central government, local government and the local community and the representatives from each coming in. That seems to us to be the best way to make sure there is an ongoing presence of the local communities voice within the management of it. Exactly that, getting that balance of voices directing it. So we are not just producing a physical plan here, we are producing recommendations for the mechanism by which it's delivered and managed into the future. So that seems to be the key to that, about it. The public consultation, there was a couple of questions about the visitor experience and talking to people.

The public consultation did include a lot of bodies and organisations and individuals who are visitors as well as the consultation with local people. We got a lot of feedback about that, about the reasons why people have been there. We did produce a document back in April which summarised the consultation, I am not sure that was circulated to all the councillors at the time but we would more than happy to circulate that document. It's a big document, but it is a lot of detail in it about the responses we got for questions like why do you come to Glendalough for instance and why do you come to Wicklow? So there is a lot of information in that that we would be more than happy to circulate to all the councillors.

The link to hotels is important. The Council did an accommodation study which came this time last year, I think, it was published. There is a sort of a chicken and egg there. At the moment one of the barriers is to development of accommodation is seen as people not coming to stay in Wicklow and they stay in Dublin and travel down. But on the other hand people don't stay in Wicklow because the accommodation isn't there. So what we are proposing to do and it is this dispersal of trying to get people to come and stay for longer. If you can show people there is things for them to do for multiple day trips, so the hotel strategy is very much Cllr Kavanagh part of what we are doing to develop the hotels to get people to come and stay for longer.

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There is another whole part of the study that I didn't have time to show you tonight. That is to do with the managing of car parking in the uplands, trail heads, access to trails and all the environmental work on the trails themselves. Some of which the council is bidding in for and there was big news last year in terms of the Sugar Loaf Trail which is one of the priorities. But we are also proposing a shuttle bus service for walkers, one of which is to deal with the upland car crime issue. So secure car parks in the lowlands, a shuttle bus to drop off points that deals with car crime and congestion and lots of traffic on small roads. So a shuttle bus service is part of what we are proposing within that. And we want to look at integration of the access in the uplands to where people move around the county. It's another chunk of the study I didn't have time to present to you tonight. But it will be in the draft master plan when this comes out.

Finally I think the questions, there was one about UNESCO and world heritage status. That is progressing. It's not part of our brief as such. We are keeping an eye on it. There is that proposal, the council is involved in that, but Cllr Kavanagh was right, depending on the outcome there could be big implication for what happens in the valley.

There could be big implications for what happens within the valley. Cllr Kavanagh, I would personally, it is not our intention to put any modern structures in the round of sensitive areas of the monastery itself, so hoping not to give you that impression. We are looking for interpretation of approaches to the site, and there is very little to help people understand the landscape that they're looking at at the moment, when you're out on the site, and that is the interpretation we are talking about.. I think that has answered most of them. We have on the call ... I'm not sure if he wants to come in.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are almost out of time, but if Mark, if you're there, if you want to comment?

>> Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks, Dawson, and thanks to all the councillors as well. Just one other point, and that was something Senator Fortune mentioned about dispersal. There is a major part of the study that is all about moving, orientation, and utilising other sites, so it is how can you move some of the people away from Glendalough on busy days to as far south as Shillelagh. Other than that, Dawson has covered it all before there.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Mark, and thanks for your participation. I didn't realise Cllr Fortune was elevated! Anyway, listen, Dawson, thank you very much for your presentation. All I can say is keep us informed, and involved going forward. I think you know our interest in this. This is probably one of the biggest, most important tourism potential projects in our county, and indeed in the country. And we have a genuine strong

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interest here in Wicklow County Council in that, and we want to work closely with yourselves going forward. You know where we are, and we will talk soon. Thank you again.

>> And continue the way we've been doing, we will be talking to you in the New Year.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Dawson. We are almost out of time. I want to hand you over to Helen for some - correspondence.

ADMINISTRATOR: Firstly, the elected members received an email from myself on 16th November in relation to three circulars for elected members' expenses, that is LGO32021, LGO4 of increased to elected members to remuneration and allowances and expenses of elected members. I will be in contact with every one of the elected members this week by email and telephone. There were two questions in that email we asked you to come back to us with in relation to the moved on to the LRA for the 2022 or whether you wanted to remain as you are, at also the amount that you intend to claim in 2022. I'm going to ring you all if you have questions, and go through them with you. And that is on that one. And then secondly, all the CPG and protocol minutes for the year have now been circulated throughout the year to the elected members. And I just want to note that, in the minutes. And, finally, Sister Oliver Tracy from Bray is the recipient of the President's Distinguished Service Award for Education and Business for her work as school principal in South Sudan, and, as a council, I think we should extend our congratulations to her on that achievement and note it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Could we extend a letter of congratulations? Yes, okay, that's an agreed. Members, thanks. It was a long meeting today. Thank you for your participation. We have protocol directly after the meeting, so maybe on some protocol, stay on the line. Thank you all.

>> Thanks.

>> Thank you.

>> Good luck, Frank