

ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

HELD AT COUNTY BUILDINGS, WHITEGATES, WICKLOW TOWN
AND VIA TEAMS

ON

MONDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2024 AT 2:00 PM

STENOGRAPHER: Niamh Kelly-Leahy, RMR, MBIVR

Transcript Provided By
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1 PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED ON MONDAY, 7TH OCTOBER 2024, AT 2:00
2 PM, AS FOLLOWS:

3

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon, members. I am going to hand over to Helen
5 for the roll call first. Thank you.

6 MS PURCELL: I would like to welcome everybody who is present in the chamber
7 and also those are remote. Can I please remind everybody to talk into the microphone
8 for the benefit of those who are listening to us remotely. If there are any issues with
9 technology please don't hesitate to contact me.

10 Can I ask that phones in the chamber be put on silent and those remote as well, please?
11 They do interrupt the meeting.

12 MS PURCELL: Councillor Danny Alvey?

13 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.

14 MS PURCELL: Councillor Mark Barry?

15 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.

16 MS PURCELL: Councillor Joe Behan?

17 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Present.

18 MS PURCELL: Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

19 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.

20 MS PURCELL: Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

21 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.

22 MS PURCELL: Councillor Avril Cronin?

23 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Present.

24 MS PURCELL: Councillor Erica Doyle? Councillor Malachai Duddy?
25 Councillor Gail Dunne?

26 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Present.

27 MS PURCELL: Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?

28 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Present.

29 MS PURCELL: Councillor Orla Finn?

30 COUNCILLOR FINN: Present.

31 MS PURCELL: Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?

32 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.

33 MS PURCELL: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy?

- 1 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Present.
- 2 MS PURCELL: Councillor Tom Fortune?
- 3 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Present.
- 4 MS PURCELL: Councillor Patsy Glennon - he's on his way. Councillor Pat
5 Kennedy?
- 6 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Present.
- 7 MS PURCELL: Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 8 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Present.
- 9 MS PURCELL: Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 10 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Present.
- 11 MS PURCELL: Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 12 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Present.
- 13 MS PURCELL: Councillor Miriam Murphy?
- 14 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Present.
- 15 MS PURCELL: Councillor Ian Neary?
- 16 COUNCILLOR NEARY: Present.
- 17 MS PURCELL: Councillor Dermot O'Brien?
- 18 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Anseo.
- 19 MS PURCELL: Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Present.
- 21 MS PURCELL: Councillor Gerry O'Neill?
- 22 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Present.
- 23 MS PURCELL: Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 24 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Anseo.
- 25 MS PURCELL: Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 26 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Present.
- 27 MS PURCELL: Councillor Lourda Scott?
- 28 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Present.
- 29 MS PURCELL: Councillor John Snell?
- 30 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Present.
- 31 MS PURCELL: Councillor Peter Stapleton?
- 32 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Present.
- 33 MS PURCELL: Councillor Stephen Stokes?
- 34 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Present.

1 MS PURCELL: Councillor Edward Timmins?

2 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Present.

3 MS PURCELL: Councillor Caroline Winstanley?

4 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Present.

5 MS PURCELL: Thank you.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Do we have any condolences, please? Councillor
7 Gail Dunne.

8 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to propose a vote
9 of sympathy on a very sad occasion for Victoria Leonard, a young woman who died in
10 Wicklow Town over the last number of days, who recently had a small child Lilly, her
11 husband Ciaran and also parents Geraldine and Pat; and Ciaran's parents, Eddie and
12 Veronica. Very well-known families in Wicklow Town. Tragic circumstances. I
13 would like to wish the family well. Thank you.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. And I would like to also be
15 associated with those comments.

16 Do we have anyone else? No.

17 I just have one then. I would like to offer my sincere condolences to the family of the
18 late Bill Dickenson. I know he will be greatly missed by his wife, Mary, and his
19 children, Craig, Kelly, Conor and Neill, and indeed the wider community.

20 Sorry, Councillor Stapleton?

21 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: I would like to add my condolences, give my
22 condolences to the Slater family. Adam Slater, a young 23 year old who just passed
23 away tragically on our roads last week. I know his brother worked within the Council
24 and it's just such a tragic event that I would like to propose a vote of sympathy in his
25 honour.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

27 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I would like to offer my
28 condolences to Teresa O'Brien, our manager, our municipal district manager on the
29 death of her mum, to both Teresa and her family. Go raibh maith agat.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Okay.

31 MS PURCELL: We extend our sympathies to the families of Patrick Paddy
32 Flemming, father of our colleague Deirdre Flemming; Cathal Mac Oireachtaigh,
33 husband of former Councillor Mags Crean; Adam Slater as already mentioned, brother
34 of our colleague Billy Slater; Pat O'Donnell, brother of our colleague Mary Heslin;

1 and Lizzie Lott, again as mentioned earlier, mother of our colleague Teresa O'Brien.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would ask you to stand for a moment's silence please.

3

4 (Moment's silence.)

5

6 MS PURCELL: May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the
7 mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just before I go -- sorry, Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

9 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thank you
10 for the opportunity to just come in briefly. I want to note on record congratulations to
11 Bray Emmets Senior Hurling Team, who following a win against Carnew on Sunday
12 have won six hurling championships in a row. Also to the Garden County Football
13 Club who have secured both the league and the Harding Cup. I also want to
14 acknowledge the success of Wicklow Pride on their nomination of the Gala Awards.
15 They were nominated both for the community organisation and also their chairperson,
16 Patrick Bracken, for the LGBTQ Person of the Year Awards.

17 And finally, Cathaoirleach, I just want to acknowledge your appointment as
18 chairperson of KWETB and wish you success in your appointment. Thank you.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Just going back to the
20 agenda there. I have two requests in for suspension of standing orders. The first one
21 proposed by Councillor Danny Alvey, seconded by Councillor Mark Barry. And the
22 second one I have in is proposed by Councillor Peir Leonard and seconded by
23 Councillor Joe Behan. I propose we take both of them at 4:30.

24 All in agreement? (Agreed.)

25 MS PURCELL: I will read them first. The first suspension is proposed by
26 Councillor Danny Alvey and it is that: "This Council agrees to write to An Taoiseach
27 and the Minister of Heritage and Electoral Reform asking the State to examine
28 purchasing 197 acres of land currently for sale in Kindlestown, Delgany, that connects
29 Kindlestown Woods to the Glen Of The Downs Nature Reserve in line with our
30 obligations under the Nature Restoration Law and thereby bringing this land into the
31 ownership of the State as is the preference of this Council."

32 That is seconded by Councillor Mark Barry.

33 The second suspension of standing orders is proposed Councillor Peir Leonard,
34 seconded by Councillor Joe Behan: "That this Council request that the Chief

1 Executive write to the EPA to request an emergency, environmental and human
2 impact assessment be carried out on Ballinclare Quarry, Kilbride and environs due to
3 concerns from the local community around the presence of asbestos and the quarry's
4 recent water drainage operations and the risk of contamination to nearby lands, water
5 and air quality."

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. So we all agreed, then, at 4:30, one after the other?
7 Okay. Thank you. I would also like to propose something here that we have an
8 important presentation by the NTA and I don't want us to run out of time both for the
9 NTA's presentation and the Chief Executive's presentation. So I am proposing that
10 we flip them around and we bring up the NTA's presentation to before the Chief
11 Executive's presentation so we get do it. Is that okay? Can I have a seconder for it?
12 Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. His report, sorry. The Chief Executive is not
13 making a presentation. It is a report, sorry. You can if you want.

14 MS O'GORMAN: No, it's okay.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We will go on to item number 1: To confirm and
16 sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday, 2nd
17 September 2024. You should have all received a copy attached. Can I have a
18 proposer? Councillor Gail Dunne; seconder Councillor Pat Fitzgerald.

19

20 Item number 2: To consider the disposal of 285 square metres or thereabouts in the
21 townland of Lathaleer, Baltinglass, County Wicklow, known as The Enterprise Units
22 at Lathaleer, Baltinglass, County Wicklow, by way of a three-year lease commencing
23 the 1st September 2024 to Mr Eric Woods, 12 Verschoyle Rise, Saggart Abbey,
24 Citywest, County Dublin, t/a Sports Partnership and Leisure for consideration of €500
25 per month in addition to rates, taxes and other applicable charges (as per notice
26 previously circulated).

27 Can I have a proposer please? Councillor Edward Timmins. Seconder?
28 Councillor Avril Cronin.

29

30 Item number 3: To consider the disposal of 8.96 square metres or thereabouts in the
31 townland of Ballard, Shillelagh, Barony of Shillelagh, County Wicklow, comprised in
32 Folio 2214F being land situated in Ard Darach, Shillelagh, County Wicklow, by
33 Transfer Order to the ESB of 27 Fitzwilliam Street Lower, City of Dublin (as per
34 notice previously circulated). Looking for a proposer? Councillor Pat Kennedy.

1 And seconder? Councillor Pat Fitzgerald? Are we agreed? (Agreed.)

2

3 Item number 4 on the agenda: Appointment of one Elected Member to the Local
4 Community Development Committee (LCDC).

5 MS PURCELL: This nomination is as a result of the resignation of Councillor Orla
6 Finn and the other three members who were appointed following our annual meeting
7 were Councillor Corrigan, Councillor Leonard and Councillor Snell. So we are
8 looking for one additional member now to replace Councillor Finn, please.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do we have a proposer, please? Councillor Warren O'Toole.
10 You want to switch on your light there? Councillor O'Toole.

11 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: I propose Dermot O'Brien.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do we have a seconder?

13 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: I second that.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed? (Agreed.)

15 MS PURCELL: You are happy to accept, Councillor O'Brien? Yes.

16 No other nominations. All good. Thanks.

17

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Item 5: To consider the appointment of the following two
19 Elected Members to the County Wicklow Heritage Forum (Bray and Baltinglass
20 MDs): Councillor Gerry O'Neill from Baltinglass; and Councillor Caroline
21 Winstanley from Bray.

22 Can I have a proposer please? Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy and seconder
23 Councillor Patsy Glennon. Are we agreed? (Agreed.)

24

25 Item number 6: To ratify the appointment of the following two Elected Members to
26 Clermont Enterprise Hub CLG: Councillor Graham Richmond, Wicklow MD; and
27 Councillor John Snell, Wicklow MD. Can I have a proposer, please? Councillor
28 Shane Langrell; and seconded by Councillor Gail Dunne. Are we agreed?
29 (Agreed.)

30

31 To ratify the appointment of the following two Elected Members to Wicklow
32 Enterprise Park CLG: It's item 7 on the agenda, Councillor Graham Richmond; and
33 Councillor Gail Dunne both from the Wicklow MD. Can I have a proposer, please?
34 Councillor John Snell and Councillor Shane Langrell, seconded that. Are we agreed?

1 (Agreed.)

2

3 Item number 8: To ratify the appointment of the following Elected Members to the
4 Local Sport Partnership Committee: Councillor Paul O'Brien, Wicklow MD;
5 Councillor Jason Mulhall, the Baltinglass MD. Can I have a proposer, please?
6 Councillor Gail Dunne. Seconded? Councillor Shane Langrell. Agreed?

7 (Agreed.)

8

9 Item number 9: To consider the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with section
10 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and noticed in
11 accordance with section 138 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, for the
12 construction of 54 Social Houses at Hawkstown Park, Wicklow Town. Joe, do you
13 want to...?

14 MR LANE: No. That's the Chief Executive's Report.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: You would have all got the report. I a looking for a proposer.
16 Councillor Snell, and Councillor Graham Richmond for the seconded. Are we
17 agreed? (Agreed.)

18

19 Item number 10: To note NOAC Local Authority Performance Indicator Report
20 2023, and the report has been attached. So it is just for noting. Any other comments
21 on it? No. Councillor Edward Timmins?

22 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Just briefly, and I say this every year, this is a really
23 good report and I would urge all members to look at it. It provides a lot of
24 information and the main factor in the report is benchmarking. So you compare
25 Wicklow to other counties, see where we're doing well and where we're not doing
26 well. As a result, we can focus in on the areas where we need to improve. So I think
27 it is a very, very useful report. Thank you.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

29

30 Item number 11: To approve in accordance with section 106 of the Local
31 Government Act 2001, as amended, a temporary overdraft accommodation of €20
32 million for the financial year ending the 31st December 2025, and we all got a letter
33 attached. So, Brian, do you want to...

34 MR GLEESON: Yeah, I will be very brief. This is a standard process we do every

1 year. It is a contingency in relation to our cash flow. And just acknowledging the
2 timing difference between when we pay that expenditure and then we claim it back
3 from the department via grants. So it's just, as I say, a contingency precaution. We
4 haven't had to draw down our overdraft since I have been here anyway, but it is good
5 to have it in background. So that's the explanation for that. I just need a proposer
6 and seconder, please.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Proposer, Councillor Silvester Bourke; seconded by Aoife
8 Flynn Kennedy. Agreed? (Agreed.) Thank you very much.

9 I am going to skip over item number 12 which is the Chief Executive monthly
10 management report. I am going to invite the NTA representatives. I would like to
11 welcome Anne Graham who is the Chief Executive and Hugh Creegan, Deputy Chief
12 Executive and Director of Transport and Investment. Thank you very much.

13

14 MS GRAHAM: Good afternoon, Cathaoirleach, members. Thanks very much for
15 the invitation. I'll just bring up our slide presentation. Just to introduce the NTA.
16 For those members who I haven't met before and who may not be aware what the NTA
17 does; so we are the National Transport Authority and our job is to develop and support
18 public transport services, build public transport infrastructure and promote sustainable
19 travel. We're an independent statutory agency working in partnership with the
20 Department of Transport and with local authorities around the country. Our mission
21 is to provide high quality accessible sustainable transport connecting communities
22 across Ireland in both urban and rural areas.

23

24 So we also have a role in terms of regulation of the commercial bus routes.
25 Nationally they would be services like expressway services, those provided by
26 Wexford bus. And we are also the national taxi regulator. We have a responsibility
27 for the provision of public transport information and integrated ticketing on a national
28 basis. And we have a specific role, a statutory role, in terms of transport planning in
29 the greater Dublin area. We have got some minor roles associated with vehicle
30 clamping appeals and EU passenger rights.

31

32 We don't operate in isolation. We obviously have to develop our strategies in line
33 with both national and regional strategies and they are just listed there. Obviously a
34 key one now is the Climate Action Plan and the Department of Transport's National

1 Sustainable Mobility Policy. That drives, along with the NDP and the National
2 Planning Framework, the delivery of our strategic transport.

3

4 Next slide. There is another policy document which you may be aware of, the
5 strategic rail review. That was carried out jointly across an all-Ireland strategic rail
6 review by the Department of Transport. That obviously will feed in to future
7 transport strategies, particularly in the greater Dublin area.

8

9 So the next slide. So the transport strategy for the greater Dublin area, we are
10 required to undertake a review of our transport strategy every six years. Our strategy
11 must be aligned with the regional strategy and the GDA local authority development
12 plans must align with our transport and regional strategies. The last revised transport
13 strategy was adopted in January 2023 and it provides a framework for transport
14 investment and delivery across the Dublin area for the next two decades. So the next
15 review will commence in and around 2026/2027.

16

17 So what is in strategy? It covers every aspect of land-based transport within the GDA
18 and sets out a variety of actions covering planning for sustainable transport,
19 integration and inclusion, and then across every mode, including roads, traffic
20 management, travel options, freight, delivering and servicing and then climate action
21 management as well.

22

23 The next slide it just gives a visual of what's planned up to 2042 in terms of rail and
24 light rail. As you can see, DART plus, DART to Wicklow is a key part of our
25 transport strategy.

26

27 The next slide. Just to introduce the capital investment programme that the NTA is
28 delivering in terms of transport investment. This gives you a breakdown of the
29 different agencies that are involved in delivery of major transport investment. Our
30 parent department being the Department of Transport. We are the approving
31 authority for the transport investment across heavy rail, light rail, metro, bus and
32 active travel. We're also the sponsoring agency for the delivery of infrastructure
33 associated with bus. And then all local authorities, including yourselves, are the
34 sponsoring agents for the delivery of active travel. I just listed some of the major

1 projects across that.

2

3 So just in terms of active travel, if we skip ahead two slides. In terms of what is being
4 delivered in Wicklow County Council. So the funding from ourselves, from 2020 to
5 2024, we've seen investment of nearly 36 million in active travel right across Wicklow
6 County Council.

7

8 We have been in a position to increase your funding up to the 2024 allocation was 8
9 million allocated this year. And there's 34 schemes as part of the 2024 programme.
10 So the travel projects that are at construction stage during this year, are the Bray
11 DART Interchange, which is due for completion in quarter 2 next year. The
12 Ballyguilemore, due for completion quarter 4, 2024. Arklow South, again, due for
13 completion at the end of this year. Safe Routes to School, Nioclais Naofa, Dunlavin
14 and St. Kevins, Greystones due for completion at the end of this year. And the
15 Greystones Pathfinder Phase 1 and 2 due for completion, again, at the end of this year,
16 and some visuals for that. You will be very much aware of those projects.

17

18 On the next slide some other significant projects are the New Access Bridge to
19 Wicklow Rail Station. So the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge to connect with
20 Wicklow Rail Station and to Wicklow Town Pathfinder. That scheme is due to go to
21 Part 8 at the end of this year. We are funding additional land purchased to allow for
22 future extension of rail station parking as well.

23

24 In terms of the Greystones Cycle Network Development. The Charlesland
25 Roundabout Upgrades with pedestrian and cycle crossings, they are due for
26 completion at the end of this year. The Greystones Pathfinder (Seafront to
27 Charlesland), preliminary design has been agreed. St Kevin's Safe Route to School,
28 the front of school is complete. Laneway works are due for completion in quarter 4
29 this year. And the Safe Routes to School Blacklion Road, due for completion quarter
30 1, 2025. And the Delgany and Killincarrig Village, they are currently at detailed
31 design.

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33 So lots of work underway. I'm sure there's ambition to do lots more, and we hope to
34 work with you to continue investing in active travel in Wicklow.

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On the next slide, just to talk to you about the Public Transport Capital Programme and the DART system in particular. So the DART+ Coastal Project is focused on increasing the capacity of the Bray to Greystones section to three trains per hour in each direction. The proposals for this section are being finalised for public consultation to commence later this year. And separately, the strategy, transport strategy up to 2042, sets out the objective to deliver electrified rail services to Wicklow. A project team is working on developing a proposal to extend the DART operation to Wicklow, using battery-electric DART fleet, a detailed options report is being prepared and the outcome of that work will be published early next year.

In terms of the BusConnects Infrastructure on the next slide. Planning approval has been granted by An Bord Pleanála for eight of the 12 corridors that you see there in the picture. The remaining four corridors, including the Bray to City Centre, are still with An Bord Pleanála for determination. The first two schemes are currently being tendered for construction to commence at quarter 2 of next year, which is the Liffey Valley to City Centre; and Ballymun/Finglas to City Centre. And construction on other schemes will follow the conclusion of the planning process and resolution of judicial reviews, if applicable.

Next slide. Fassaroe Park and Ride; 388 parking spaces at junction 6 Fassaroe on the M/N11 are planned. So the statutory planning for the facility was approved in quarter 1 of this year. The procurement of the contractor is underway with construction expected to commence before year end, and the facility is expected to be opened in quarter 4 of next year.

Bus service arrangements will be finalised next year with objective of providing bus service at a 20-minute frequency during peak hours.

On the next slide: Other Park and Ride developments, Kilpedder Park and Ride, which is a bus based shuttle; 380 parking spaces at Junction 11 on the N11. A preferred site has been identified and preliminary agreement has been reached with the landowner to purchase the site by agreement, and planning process will commence next year.

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On the Ashford/Rathnew Park and Ride, which again is a bus based shuttle; 210 parking spaces facility being designed at Junction 16. And the Templaraine, which is the Arklow Park and Ride plus Park and Share, 139 parking space facility planned at Junction 20 on the M11. That's at the early stage of planning and it's being jointly progressed by the NTA, TII and Wicklow County Council.

Just to give you an update on BusConnects Service Network. So there's now been a revised plan for the Wicklow routes which are route L1, which is every 30 minutes between Bray - Newtownmountkennedy via Greystones, Delgany and Kilpedder. Route L2 every 20 minutes between Bray - Kilcoole; every 60 minutes between Kilcoole - Newcastle and via Greystones and Charlesland. And then four buses per hour per direction between Bray to Greystones which is combined L1 and L2. Route L3 every 30 minutes between Delgany and Charlesland via Greystones beach. The planned implementation of all three bus routes is the end of November this year.

On the next slide: So subsequent phases of bus connects that will impact in Wicklow are the E Spine. So that's frequent services between Ballywaltrim, Bray Main Street, City Centre and Northwood. The L44, which is at least one bus per hour in the direction between Ballymore Eustace, Blessington, Tallaght. And the P43/44 which is a regular peak period services between Ballyknockan, Ballymore Eustace, Blessington and the City Centre. And we are hoping to deliver those next year in 2025.

On Connecting Ireland which is our rural transport programme, there's been a number of service improvements. The 183, Sallins to Arklow; the 800, Arklow to Carlow; the 885, Baltinglass to Sallins approved in March 2024 to six services per day per direction, seven days a week.

On rail, in the last two years we have seen increased level of service for Kilcoole. A new late evening service between Gorey and Dublin serving Bray, Greystones, Kilcoole, Wicklow, Rathdrum, Arklow and Gorey.

And on the next slide: The planned services that we want to introduce next year are

1 the new regular services between Roundwood to Bray in quarter 1 of next year, and
2 we're assessing the connectivity in Carnew, Coolboy and Knockananna. Enhanced
3 frequency and hours of operation on the 132 bus service between Dublin, Wexford via
4 West Wicklow is also planned.

5

6 And what we have seen in terms of the delivery of our improved services is very rapid
7 increase in journeys. So these are very popular routes. The 183 we have seen
8 increase from about 400 to 1,500 journeys a week. Arklow, the 800 Arklow to
9 Carlow, we have seen an increase, 4,500 to 5,500. And then Baltinglass to Sallins, an
10 increase from 800 to 1,100 journeys a week.

11

12 On the next slide just to talk to you about the bus and rail services, the more regional
13 services. So as you know the primary services are operated by Bus Eireann; that's the
14 131, the 133 and the 132. So we now have 143 departures each way per week on the
15 133 and 112 departures each way on the 131 service. There is planned frequency
16 enhancement of the 132 scheduled for November. Usage has grown significantly on
17 the 131 and 133, it is up by 65%. And reliability and punctuality is well within
18 contractual targets, but reliability can disimprove very suddenly due to road traffic
19 congestion and road works.

20

21 In terms of the challenges that we have for implementation of new and enhanced
22 services: So funding always remains a challenge, we could always do with more and
23 be able to deliver more as a result of having additional funding. However with a full
24 economy, driver recruitment and retention of drivers is an issue for our operating
25 companies. The road congestion and the variable traffic pattern does have an impact
26 in terms of the reliability of bus services. And then illegal parking at bus stops, lack
27 of bus priority, they can impact on journey times as well.

28

29 And now we're seeing, because we seen a very strong response from customers to
30 actually using the services, we are having capacity challenges particularly at peak
31 time, and in fact we gave permission to Bus Eireann to put on an additional bus on the
32 133 which started this morning, just to kind of deal with some of the peak time issues
33 that are occurring now on our services.

34

1 In terms of -- just on the next slide, bus stop delivery. So we recognise that we need
2 to do and improve not just the information but the infrastructure at bus stops. And
3 approval of bus stops is a function of the Roads Authorities, yourselves Wicklow
4 County Council here, but locating bus stops safely on national, regional and local
5 roads is challenging. Accessibility of bus stops is increased the more bus stops that
6 are provided on the route, but it has to be balanced with keeping journey time as short
7 as possible.

8

9 So we need your support, as with all local authorities, to help deliver the stops which
10 we will fund.

11

12 On the next slide it shows you the type of improvements that we want to deliver on
13 some of our regional roads to give that infrastructure on the right-hand side with good
14 hard standing and safe place for people to wait.

15

16 And then the next slide, similarly, because you understand that lots of our services
17 have a bus stop located in the road verge, whereas we need to provide both hard
18 standing as well as shelters, which I know you are probably going to be asking me
19 about as well.

20

21 So that is just a run through of where we are on delivery of services and infrastructure
22 in Wicklow. I will be happy to take questions with my colleague, Hugh Creegan.

23 Thank you.

24

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Anne. Before I invite the members in, what I will
26 do is, I'll take them in blocks of three. Can I just thank the members before we start,
27 for your cooperation in the last meeting on sticking to three minutes, or there or
28 thereabouts talking time. It allowed me to get through the agenda. We have another
29 packed agenda. We have a number of motions, suspension of standing orders. I
30 would appreciate if you could keep it to the three minutes if possible.

31

32 I will start, because there's a number of speakers here now, Councillor Gail Dunne.

33 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Cathaoirleach I won't keep you any more than three
34 minutes. Anne, thanks very much for your presentation.

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There's two issues that I am interested in Anne: The DART in Wicklow is one. As you know, Wicklow Town has grown over the last number of years. We're bursting at the seams in Wicklow Town, and people can't get in to Dublin to work. They're getting into their cars and it's a traffic jam all the way up. If we had an increased DART service, it would make such a difference to the county. It really would.

I am just wondering about the timeframe of this. I hope I heard wrong, 2042? I would be, was hoping it will be quicker than that, because the frequency of trains coming out of Wicklow Town is not good. That has to be improved. But the DART service would be a game changer for us in Wicklow Town to get in to Dublin, people to go to work and come home from work. It's a huge issue.

As you know there's an election shortly, Anne, and you'll be knocked down by TDs and intendant TDs up there saying they're going to deliver it, but it is such an important issue for the town I cannot emphasise this enough. We've people buying houses in Tinakilly, Maltings, all these areas; they're coming down from Dublin to live in Wicklow and they want to go back to Dublin to work and they're finding it very, very difficult.

One guy told me he does six hours a day trying to get in to Dublin because he goes at the wrong time. So we need help. We need it as soon as possible. Anne, I would really like an update on this.

Just one minor issue: A bus shelter in Rathnew, there was planning permission granted there, 14 houses. There was room left for a bus shelter. The scheme is finished over the year. Really, the people there it's sad to see them in the morning getting so wet. I am wondering could you give me an update on that. Thanks for your time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Joe Behan.

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And welcome again to Anne and Hugh. I have been here at a number of your presentations in the past. Certainly, it is welcome to you come back again and again and deal with the questions that the public representatives put to you. So you're very welcome today and I appreciate how

1 quickly you went through your presentation. It gives members time to ask you a few
2 questions.

3

4 I will focus on a number, if I could. First of all, there's been quite a lot of confusion in
5 the last few weeks in Bray with regard to the future of the 145 service. Bus drivers
6 are telling passengers that change is coming in the next few weeks with regard to the
7 145, but they don't know what it is and they haven't got any details. It is causing quite
8 a lot of confusion among passengers. Would you be able to clarify for me and for the
9 public, what are the plans with regard to the 145 and, also, the associated proposed
10 local around Bray bus service that was to be part of any change to the 145. That is
11 number one.

12

13 Number two: I have a petition from residents of the Kilmacanogue area, hundreds of
14 them, who are affected by some short-sighted decision that was made many moons
15 ago, that the bus routes that serve Kilmacanogue and go back to Bray, they terminate
16 on the eastern side of the N11. Very few people live on the eastern side of the N11.
17 Most of them live on the other side. Many of them are our tenants. And they have
18 asked in this petition, which I hope I can give you a copy of afterwards, they have
19 asked for the termination to change to the western side of the N11, where Sweeney's
20 pub or whatever it is called nowadays is, so that elderly people, people with
21 disabilities, young kids coming home from school can get off nearer their houses
22 rather than having to walk across the bridge in all kinds of weather. It is a very
23 reasonable request. I think Council in Bray wrote to you about it.

24 I haven't heard if we got a response from you, but I would certainly welcome a
25 response here today, if possible.

26

27 And the last point, and I am keeping it very brief, Cathaoirleach, a lot of money has
28 been spent on the Bray DART Plaza and it is going to be a very welcome development
29 when it is completed. But there are major problems with some of the local businesses
30 at the moment with the usage of, particularly, Adelaide Road as a kind of bus lay-by at
31 the moment. It's causing extreme difficulties for some local businesses there. And I
32 raised this at the last meeting in Bray Municipal District, some of the team in Wicklow
33 were to liaise with contractors about that. Do you know, can you tell me what is the
34 situation when businesses have problems like this, who they go to have resolved?

1 They all say it's going to be an advantage in the end, but they have to try and work in
2 the meantime. And one particular road has been turned into one-way road without
3 explanation and an assurance was given it will take a week, but it hasn't, it has
4 continued on. On behalf of those people I would ask that perhaps you might indicate
5 if that could be addressed. Thanks, Cathaoirleach

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Stephen Stokes.

7 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh math agat, Cathaoirleach.

8 Anne, thank you very much for the presentation. It is clear that there are lot of
9 positive projects happening and I commend them, including the bus shelters that we
10 saw on screen.

11 As chair of the Transport Special Policy Committee, I would warmly welcome the
12 opportunity, if you would be willing to meet with our SPC at some point in the future,
13 you know, to engage with us about shaping policy for public transport in particular.

14

15 Just in relation to the DART+ Coastal South. I raised this at a Greystones District
16 meeting. I am quite concerned that there seems to be continued delay with going out
17 to public consultation. On their website until recently, I believe that they were going
18 to go out to public consultation in March, and we're in October and there's really no set
19 date it seems. The aspiration is very positive to have DARTs every 20 minutes, but
20 there are a number of challenges that the DART+ Coastal South Project is going to try
21 and address. For example, we only have one track between Bray and Greystones.
22 That's really hampering the ability. But also, we have the only uncontrolled crossing
23 on the DART line at Greystones, which means the DARTs have to show right down
24 and that potentially loses whatever it is, 30, 60 seconds. And if we're trying to get
25 DARTs every 20 minutes we need to make sure the journey is as efficient as well. I
26 would appreciate if we could put pressure on Irish Rail to go out to public consultation
27 on that as efficiently as possible.

28

29 I would support Councillor Gail Dunne in relation to the appeal for the DART to
30 Wicklow. Because I would also point out, not everybody wants to go north. People
31 like myself in Greystones sometimes want to use the train to come south to these
32 meetings. There are currently only two trains a day with Irish Rail. Like, if I want to
33 come down to Wicklow County Council, there's a train at 10:30 and 2:30 for what is
34 only a 15-minute journey. I think there is a real missed opportunity there.

1

2 I am very concerned about it Kilpedder Park and Ride. I am wondering why the
3 capacity has been reduced from 600 cars to what we were promised previously, or it
4 was announced previously, we had your park and ride team in in the last Council
5 session, now it's gone down to 280. If we're losing over 200 spaces, if that is correct,
6 I think the NTA is massively underestimating the demand that's going to be there for
7 good park and ride facilities with bus connections. I would like to get clarity on why
8 it is only 380.

9 I said to the park and ride team, if it is a success I think you will need to be up scaling.

10

11 Also in relation to the Charlesland dual carriage, there's 1.2 million approved. That is
12 tremendous, very, very welcome funding. It said on the screen in the presentation
13 that it was quarter 4 of this year. My understanding is Wicklow County Council is
14 going to go out to tender to have that work done and I don't think they have gone out to
15 tender yet. I'm open to correction on that. I just think that we need to get on with it.
16 We had another crash on the Charlesland dual carriageway. There seems to be a
17 crash on that dual carriageway every two months into the railings, into the barriers. It
18 is such a critical project. I would ask if the NTA and Wicklow County Council could
19 get together and really push that project.

20

21 Finally, it is good to see that the 133, there is an extra bus. I have been trying to find
22 out from Bus Eireann what time is the bus, you know. It doesn't seem to be very well
23 advertised. It is welcome. But it shows with the demand going up 65%, I think we
24 need to have a lot more public transport. Like, North Wicklow in particular and East
25 Wicklow has gone up in population so much, and the services are really struggling to
26 keep up. I have also asked Bus Eireann if they would be willing to put a service on,
27 an extra service in the evening, so going southbound if that is something you could
28 bear in mind. Thank you

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillors. I will hand over to you, Anne and
30 Hugh.

31 MR CREEGAN: Good afternoon, everybody. I think Councillor Dunne was first
32 there with some question about the DART+ to Wicklow. First of all, you will be
33 delighted that 2042 is not the intended date for the DART to Wicklow. We proposed
34 this a couple of years ago when we identified that it would be possible to run battery

1 electric train fleet between Greystones and Wicklow. A fair bit of work has been
2 done since then. There is still a fair bit more work to do. I would say it is four to five
3 years away from now, by the time we get planning permission, by the time chargers
4 are put in, by the time the bits and pieces need to be done. Within that timeframe we
5 would hope to have an hourly DART service that goes to Wicklow, which we do agree
6 it would be transformative. You're talking about four to five years from now.

7

8 The bus shelter in Rathnew: I don't know the answer to that, but there is a bus shelter
9 programme being worked on with your executive here, so we will check it out with
10 them and see where it is in the programme.

11 MS GRAHAM: Councillor Behan, you asked about the 145 service and what are the
12 impacts on that service with the next development of the BusConnects network. So
13 rather than giving you the wrong information, I am going to take that away and write
14 to you with the most up-to-date information, if you don't mind. I think some of the
15 works that you're talking about in Bray are in preparation for not just the changes, but
16 also the new L1, L2, L3 services that we went out for consultation recently. So
17 they're up on our website to show. We hope to deliver those at the end of November
18 this year. If there are any issues around those, you can come back to us related to that.
19 But it is all around providing, you know, much better services within Bray itself that
20 can connect in then to our more regional services.

21

22

23 MR CREEGAN: I think the follow-on question was about the road in Bray, and the
24 use of bus, I think the question was who do you go to to sort this out. It really is a
25 combination of the local authority, in this case Wicklow County Council, and to some
26 extent ourselves. So all buses need spaces to pull in, in other words bus stops. All
27 buses at the end of their routes need a lay-by whereby they can pull in and allow for
28 some recovery time in the timetables, and all busses need a place to turn around as
29 well. There are a number of things.

30

31 That package requires ourselves and the local authority working together to resolve.
32 But I think the place to start would be with the local authority. I don't want to be
33 passing the buck, but they're happy to come to us because some of the stuff is going to
34 be with us, but most of it is how we are going to use the road space that's available

1 there and that starts with the local authority.

2 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: The termination of the bus at Kilmacanogue?

3 MS GRAHAM: We will take that away and have a look at that, if that's okay, and
4 respond to you directly on that.

5 MR CREEGAN: Councillor Stokes then raised the issue about attending the SPC.
6 We have no problem doing that. We can certainly do that. On DART+ Coastal
7 South, yeah, being absolutely upfront, dates have slipped on that project and I am
8 pretty confident that it's developed enough now that it will go to consultation next
9 month. That is the intention. We did want to have a clear understanding of where
10 we were with the further extension to Wicklow before we went out, which held us up a
11 little bit. It's no use going out with just Bray to Greystones, people are going to ask us
12 what happens with the Wicklow section. Whilst we don't have all the answers, we'll
13 at least have some signals we can give with that. I have checked with Irish Rail as
14 recent as the last few days and next month it looks like that should happen.

15

16 On the park and ride site at Kilpedder; so the reason for the reduction down to 380 is
17 that the assessment we did was showing us that is what we need initially. We will be
18 buying the land to allow us to expand easily. We future proof it that way. There's
19 also the issue that above 400 spaces it's a more complex planning process, so there are
20 a number of advantages having it at this level as well. But the assessment we did was
21 indicating that was the number we should start out with. We have the means of
22 expanding it and expanding it pretty quickly if that was required.

23

24 And the Charlesland dual carriageway, the information Anne had in the presentation,
25 that is the information we have at the moment. If that is incorrect, time will tell.

26 MS GRAHAM: And the 133, so that is usually an auxiliary bus service. So it just
27 goes along at the same timetable, but I will check what one it is associated with in the
28 timetable and we can get back to you on that. I am not sure of that myself.

29

30 And then, we're always looking at, you know, what is the demand for services and if
31 we feel that there is an additional demand for service in the evening, we will work with
32 the operator, Bus Eireann in this case, to see are we in a position. It also might mean
33 additional drivers and fleet, which can be constraint as well, as well as funding. But
34 we will see what we can deliver within the funding we received.

1 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Just one clarification sorry, on the park and ride. --

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Danny, could you switch off yours for a moment please.

3 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Sorry. Just one clarification on the park and ride. I
4 understand there is a reduction, but I don't understand why we would announce it as
5 600 space park and ride and then reduce it by 220 space. You know, I am concerned
6 at that. To be honest, I think it should be a thousand spaces, you know. Because
7 there's going to be such huge demand if it's a good service from all over the county and
8 from Wexford. I am wondering now -- I am concerned about that, but what can you
9 scale it up to? Like if you are saying it is going from 600 down to 380 but you can
10 expand it, what can you expand to it? That is what I am wondering. Thank you.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

12 MR CREEGAN: And I don't know the answer to that here. But just to say in terms
13 of why numbers move around as the design process moves on.

14

15 So the early stage of sizing park and ride, it's a very rudimentary calculation that's
16 done to size it. We can't really rely on just guessing. At a later stage there is a
17 detailed transport modelling undertaken, and that did happen here and that is what
18 sized it at the current size. But I will find out what it is scaleable to within the lands
19 that we hope to purchase and be able to advise you of that, so you'll have some
20 indication of what we are able to scale up to.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Just before I go to the next speaker, maybe when
22 you are responding you may respond to Helen and Teresa, rather than individual
23 councillors. Because even though the councillor might asked the questions, I am sure
24 a number of councillors would appreciate the answer. So it will save you a bit of time
25 then as well.

26 Can I invite Councillor Miriam Murphy in, please.

27 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Thank you for the presentations. Mine would be
28 accessibility for people with disabilities. And I think that it is lacking in a lot of
29 places, both train and buses. And my concern is that I don't believe that proper
30 accessibility at bus stops are in every town and village. I know it is expensive to put
31 in the proper kerbing height for a wheelchair user or a mobility person to use, but I
32 think these should be certainly enforced. Again, down to training of drivers for the
33 specific need, I am not sure how good it is. Also the times of trains to Wexford, there
34 as well, from Arklow definitely, on a Saturday it's 9:30 and nothing then until 4:30,

1 which is very big gap I think.

2

3 Also I just want to clarify, am I led to believe that there is a connection from Arklow to
4 Carlow? Or did I pick that up wrong? Again with licences being given out to taxis,
5 and are these being enforced by use of wheelchair taxis as well? It is quite difficult
6 to get a taxi locally even though they actually do have the taxi licence with a taxi
7 vehicle, when you ring up there's no one available and there might be only one driver
8 to specifically drive that specific vehicle, which I think is absolutely crazy.

9 I was led to believe that once a taxi firm applies for a licence it is a cheaper price to
10 provide a wheelchair taxi. But I mean, if that is the case, it is wrong. So I think
11 disability hasn't been very well included in your presentation, and I would like to see
12 that improve. Thank you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Edward Timmins.

14 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Thanks, Chairman, and thanks very much for the
15 presentation. Just a few points. I have just five main points. I am sure my
16 colleagues from West Wicklow will reiterate a few of them.

17

18 Just at the outset I would like to say we don't have any train service in West Wicklow
19 whatsoever. We don't have any dual carriageways whatsoever. So we are relying
20 totally on bus transport. I just want to draw your attention to one thing, and that's a
21 proposal to bring the Luas to Blessington from Saggart, from Citywest. The distance
22 is about eight miles. It is in our County Development Plan. I am sure it is not on
23 your radar at this point in time, but it is something that I would like to bring your
24 attention to and something that you could think about how this could happen. There
25 is a route from the new N81 that it could track.

26

27 So the other point about Blessington, is Blessington is the same distance from Dublin
28 City Centre as Greystones and it is a very fast-growing town. So I think we need to be
29 ambitious in terms of what infrastructure, public transport infrastructure goes into
30 Blessington. In the short-term, the 65 service needs to be improved. We met in
31 Dublin Bus two months ago in our MD. It is still a problem. Many passengers can't
32 get home from work if they don't get the bus at Poolbeg Street, the 65. If they get it in
33 Rathmines, Rathgar, the bus passes them because it is full. So that is a serious
34 problem for people coming home in the evening.

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The other obvious thing which is countrywide is auto ticketing on Dublin Bus. You know, they only accept exact change. They don't accept notes. If you haven't a Leap Card there's a real disincentive to get on a Dublin Bus.

Just two questions then at the end. You mentioned about improvements in the 132, what exactly improvements are they? At the moment there is no 132 service from West Wicklow into Dublin after 3 o'clock in the afternoon except on a Sunday night. And lastly, you talk about park and ride, but you have no mention of the park and ride at Hollywood which we have done a lot of work with TII on. There on the N81 seven miles south of the Blessington Park and Ride. I would like to bring that to your attention. Thank you

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor of Avril Cronin.

COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thank you very much. It is great to see you here today, and thank you very much for your presentation. We did extend an invite to our MD meeting to yourselves over the past number of months, but unfortunately it hasn't worked out. So it is great that you're here today that we can ask some questions in relation to our transport issues.

We often sit here in the chamber listening to issues with our transport. We hear about problems with the 133 and need for additional DART services, but as my colleague beside me said here, we don't have that luxury in West Wicklow. We don't have a train line. We don't even have a frequent bus service, unfortunately. We really are caught in limbo in West Wicklow. We have the M7 in Kildare. We have the rail line in Kildare. And then the far side of the mountains then, we have the N11. We have 133 and the DART line. But unfortunately in West Wicklow we have two services; the 65 that goes to Blessington and other than that we have the 132 service. And while the 132 is a lifeline for many people in West Wicklow, there is a huge problem with the frequency. We have four options to go to Dublin during the day. If for any reason you miss the first bus in the morning, you have to wait two hours for the next one. And if that doesn't show up, you have to wait another two hours for the next one again.

That is not the only problem we have. Coming home in the evenings the last bus

1 leaves Dublin at 5:30. For many people like myself, my hours are 9:30 to 5:30. That
2 bus really isn't suitable for me. If I have to get out of town after 5:30, it is like the
3 movie trains, planes and automobiles trying to get back to Dunlavin where I live.
4 This really is not suitable for anybody, whether you are working or commuting to
5 Dublin, it really is a huge concern.

6
7 Now I will agree that over the past number of years we have had huge improvements
8 when it comes to our Local Link services. We have daily services to Newbridge and
9 daily services to Naas but there are still many towns and villages that are left out.
10 Simple alterations to the timetable could alleviate this problem. Villages such as
11 Donard, Hollywood and Stratford are still left out of Local Link service. I understand
12 the Local Link, the whole idea is to link up rural areas with our national network.
13 Hopefully that can be improved going forward.

14
15 I just have two last things to bring up as well. I have been trying to get a bus route to
16 Carlow. I have been working alongside my colleague in Kildare County Council,
17 Ivan Keatley and Minister Martin Heydon to try and get a link from Dunlavin to go
18 into Kildare and down to Castledermot into Carlow. At the moment many people
19 from the Dunlavin, Donard, Stratford area are travelling into Kildare to get the Local
20 Link to get to college in Carlow, but unfortunately now that service is at full capacity.
21 So I really do think that there is a need for Local Link service to Carlow, as there's
22 three third level colleges in Carlow now. I think that certainly is something that could
23 be improved.

24
25 And, finally, I would like to acknowledge the great work that's been done on the Safer
26 Routes to School Programme. We have had big improvements outside the schools in
27 Baltinglass and the schools in Dunlavin, and I am just wondering can that be extended
28 to secondary schools or is it just open to primary schools? Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I am going to hand over to our
30 speakers.

31 MS GRAHAM: Okay. So I think starting with Councillor Murphy. So my
32 apologies Councillor Murphy, we didn't cover accessibility in our presentation and
33 you are right, we should have done that. Just to show you that there is work being
34 done, particularly on the bus side -- I suppose our primary focus has been on the fleet

1 that operates the services that are subsidised by the State. So they will be the main
2 regional services; the 132, the 131 and the 133. And in particular in improving the
3 accessibility of that fleet to remove the requirement for a high floor lift, but that our
4 services are low floor, front door accessible with a dedicated wheelchair space that
5 means you don't have to book the services, that you can actually turn up and go in
6 terms of those fleet. So we have been investing in low floor fleet for a number of
7 years now to the extent that we're close to having a hundred per cent accessibility on
8 our regional services, whether it is single deck bus or a double deck bus.

9

10 But we do have to do more in terms of the infrastructure at bus stops. So while those
11 fleet can operate with the low floor ramp, it doesn't need as much space as the high
12 floor lift does. We do need to improve for those services, particularly the commercial
13 services, that separate, continue to operate with high floor lift. It does require a
14 significant amount of space, about 3 metres, at least 3 metres of a footpath and that can
15 be challenging in particular rural bus stops and even in some town services as well
16 where a bus stop, that kind of level of space is not available.

17

18 MR CREEGAN: I think you mentioned bus stop kerbs as well. It is worth knowing
19 all the buses we buy now have what's called a kneeling suspension on them. So the
20 corner of the bus where the front door is can be lowered by the driver, the air
21 suspension can be dropped down. Such that the need for the high kerbs that we used
22 to put in back a number of years ago, it is not necessary. Any footpath height, the
23 front of the bus can be lowered enough so that the motorised wheelchair ramp there
24 can function properly. That is a change that occurred a number of years ago. It
25 means the kerb issue is less an issue than it was about ten or 15 years ago.

26 MS GRAHAM: We recognise on train services Wicklow to Wexford is not at the
27 frequency that we would want and we do want to make improvements in that. It does
28 require fleet and drivers, and we would hope to be in a position to offer some
29 additional frequency, certainly in our timetable review with Irish Rail next year.

30

31 On the wheelchair taxis: So we have a grant that we make available every year and
32 have done for a number of years now for wheelchair accessible taxi, it is a wheelchair
33 accessible taxi grant, which means that we have been able to increase the percentage of
34 wheelchair accessible taxi from a low of 4%. We are up at about 18.5% of all taxi

1 fleet around the country are ow wheelchair accessible. That doesn't necessarily mean
2 that they are made available at the times that you want. Part of the grant is that they
3 do make themselves available to wheelchair users.

4

5 If you find that you're not getting that service, we would like you to make us aware of
6 that, and make complaints, continue to make complaints for taxi services that when
7 they are wheelchair accessible vehicles, are not making that service available for
8 wheelchair users. We would like to know about that so we can take some
9 enforcement action in relation to that.

10

11 MR CREEGAN: Luas to Blessington is something that comes up on a regular basis.
12 When we were reviewing our transport strategy back about two years ago we did look
13 at it quite a bit, and at the time our view was that it wasn't going to be an economically
14 viable project, but that is not to say it can't revisited again. As was said in our
15 presentation, our strategy, like the development plan, is up for review every six years.
16 In about three years from now the review will be starting again and we can have a
17 relook at it at that stage. Our view at the time was we needed to enhance the bus
18 service and I know there are a number of questions around that and challenges to that,
19 but we needed to enhance the bus services to Blessington in the time being, with the
20 Luas to be looked at possible for a future project, but not for the here and now.

21 MS GRAHAM: Councillor Timmins, on the 65 service, so we have put additional
22 capacity quite recently, I think it was just at the end of the summer, and we'll continue
23 to keep that under review in terms of whether we need any additional capacity on the
24 65 service.

25

26 In relation to ticketing on bus services in general, we have a Leap Card and obviously
27 our services, then, use the free travel passes as well. I suppose we need to move to a
28 system increasingly to try and reduce the boarding time on our services. So the least
29 amount of interaction with the driver, the best in terms of ensuring that buses move
30 more efficiently. So we're increasingly moving away from cash on our bus system,
31 but offering alternatives in terms of ensuring that you can purchase tickets even off the
32 bus, ensuring that Leap Card functionality is improved and also, then, providing the
33 facility on the regional services to operate, or to buy tickets on mobile phone as well.
34 And then, you know, our programme for next generation ticketing is looking at what is

1 the next stage, which is ensuring that cashless bank cards can be used on services.
2 Again all with the objective of reducing the boarding time and reducing the time that
3 people are with the driver to pay for their services.

4

5 MR CREEGAN: Park and ride at Hollywood. I didn't include that because from
6 memory TII with Wicklow County Council are leading on that, and I think there's an
7 element of park and share in that particular proposal and that is why we didn't include
8 it in the presentation. But my understanding is that it is being progressed. And if I
9 jump to the last speaker there, there was a question about --

10 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Sorry one question, the 132 improvement was
11 mentioned?

12 MS GRAHAM: Sorry, I was going to combine that with Councillor Cronin who also
13 mentioned the 132. As I indicated in my presentation, it is planned to increase the
14 frequency and hours of operation on the 132. I just don't have the details at this stage
15 but we will obviously be making that available. It does depend on what fundings are
16 made available to us through the budget in terms of what we can deliver as additional
17 services next year. But the 132 is on the list for improvement next year.

18 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Sorry, just for clarification on that. I thought you said in
19 your presentation you'd have enhanced improvements in November. There was an
20 announcement during the summer that improvements would be made by September.
21 Can you clarify when actually we are going to have improvements?

22 MS GRAHAM: I will take that away. Just from the information I have, I have that it
23 is planned new services for the 132. It could be later on this year and I will clarify
24 that for you. Okay.

25 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thank you.

26 MR CREEGAN: And then the last Councillor just asked the question about the Safe
27 Route to Schools Programme and whether or not this comprised secondary schools as
28 well as primary schools. The answer is yes, it does. The issue is that there is a
29 backlog of schools that we have to address. It's not so much funding, but resources
30 holding it back. But secondary schools are absolutely eligible for that programme.

31 MS GRAHAM: I think Councillor Cronin also had a question about an improved
32 route from Castledermot to Carlow; capacity issue on the existing services.

33 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: It was from Dunlavin, to extend to villages Donard --

34 MS GRAHAM: Sorry, yes. I suppose, one of the things when we look at our regular

1 rural services, which is what we call these services, is we have to try and ensure that if
2 we go off to serve off-route, off the main route to serve another village, it does add
3 journey time for the people that are already on the bus service. So we have to balance
4 it between ensuring that the journey time is reasonable and attractive to those that are
5 going to do an end-to-end journey or even part of that journey, versus the additional
6 towns or villages that you are serving. So it is a balance between that. And we do
7 consistently look at that. It might be better to serve those villages in another way, you
8 know, to link in either through a demand-responsive service which would link in then
9 with the regional service. That tends to be the balancing and the judgment that we
10 have to make in terms of our service planning.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you. Councillor Lourda Scott.

12 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I hope you can hear me.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: We can indeed, yeah.

14 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thanks, and thanks Anne and Hugh, I am sorry I'm not
15 there in person to question you on my list that I have here in front of me. Thanks for
16 your very thorough presentation. Also, just to thank as well for always the very
17 prompt responses I get from the NTA when I send in the many queries that I get from
18 constituents here.

19

20 I am a Councillor in the Greystones district, so covers Greystones, Kilcoole and
21 Newcastle. As you are probably aware, we are very much a commuting area of North
22 Wicklow. We have had a huge population growth in the last number of years and that
23 has led to a huge number of houses being built, and subsequently a huge number of
24 people that travel outside of the area, usually travelling northbound but not
25 exclusively, to areas of their work. And one of the biggest questions I get raised to
26 both when canvassing and just in day-to-day is issues with the bus and train network in
27 the area. People want to leave their cars behind but are running in to difficulties in
28 doing that. So I just want to kind of highlight in that saying that progress on the three
29 times an hour DART can't come quick enough here.

30

31 Progress on the BusConnects, people are very much looking forward to, however a
32 few concerns have been raised to me and I will draw them to your attention, is
33 concerns over the governance, I suppose, of the operators. So far we have Go Ahead
34 operating bus 184 here. It is notoriously unreliable. There's lots of disappearing

1 buses. Lateness. Busses disappearing off the timetable. People are concerned with
2 them being given to contractors to run the new BusConnects routes, the L1 and L2. I
3 hope I am correct in saying that. They are wondering can the NTA give any
4 reassurances as to the operation and the quality of the operation of those routes
5 because we cannot afford to have any drop-off of service in the area.

6

7 Similarly on buses, I just had a question when the BusConnects come in, will there be
8 any adverse effect on the Night Link bus coming from Dublin City Centre to
9 Greystones, or will Greystones still be served?

10

11 The other question I had was around the Pathfinder route in Greystones. Again, the
12 investment into cycle and pedestrian infrastructure is very, very welcome in the area.
13 But I suppose what I wanted to raise with this is, the original funding for this sort of
14 active travel from the seafront to Charlesland also included an off-road pedestrian and
15 cycle link to Kilcoole, and this really would have been transformative particularly for
16 the people in Kilcoole who would have been able to walk or cycle, getting off the
17 roads, the country roads that link the two towns, and link in with the new secondary
18 school being built in Charlesland along with sports facilities and also, of course,
19 linking up with the rest of the facilities, bus and DART. It seems that the piece
20 between Kilcoole and Greystones was dropped when the new funding for the
21 Pathfinder was introduced. I have raised this with the Council and certainly they
22 seemed not to be aware as to why it was dropped. I just wanted to ask you directly the
23 thought process behind this and how can we get this back onto the funding stream.

24

25 There had been NTA funds allocated for a feasibility study looking at routes between
26 Kilcoole and Charlesland, and I really want to advocate to progress that as quickly as
27 possible.

28

29 A couple of final points I had to ask was: Just about the park and rides. Again, I
30 can't emphasise enough how much people need this and how potentially
31 transformative a good park and ride, particularly starting off in Fassaroe, with a good
32 reliable quick bus service into Dublin would be for people in this area. We had a
33 presentation from your park and ride team at the end of 2022. I know we passed the
34 Part 8 on this at the full Council meeting about this time last year. I am disappointed

1 really at the slow progress that we won't see it opened until the end of next year. As I
2 said again, is there any way just to highlight really the importance of this and the other
3 park and rides coming on stream as well to get traffic off the N11.

4

5 My final point I just wanted to say, again, we are very welcome of the investment in
6 our pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, but I do want to ask is the NTA planning, and
7 if not I would urge you plan for this, to provide any funds for our local authority staff
8 to maintain our cycleways. We are coming into the winter now. We need funds and
9 we need support in clearing them of leaves, in gritting them when there's bad weather,
10 because otherwise they're only going to be used in few fine months of the year that we
11 have. So to try and keep them working as best as possible over 12 months of the year.
12 Thank you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Tom fortune.

14 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Cast Anne and Hugh for your
15 presentation. Some of my questions have been answered already, but there is one I
16 want to revisit that has been asked.

17

18 I just notice, Anne, in one of your first slides where you were listing about you're the
19 approving authority. You're a massive, massive entity and I just have a concern,
20 because you're so big, how it all filters down to the ground. Because I would pick up
21 on awful lot of criticism of the NTA because we're now becoming aware that you
22 appear to be in control of spending in local authorities and with the transport
23 companies. In fact, my understanding is, you even prioritise the projects. Could I
24 just to get a better understanding on that if possible? Because you're so big now, and
25 I will come back to it at the end with your six-year plan.

26

27 Specifically on questions, again I want to revisit the Greystones Pathfinder. There
28 was a great big announcement made about the Pathfinder project which included
29 Kilcoole Village where I live. All of a sudden it was changed, taken out, and it really
30 makes no sense that it was taken out, when you look at all the stuff we're trying to
31 achieve now with climate change and less, kind of, motor transportation and
32 everything else. There is kind of a contradiction in terms there. So I would like to
33 really understand why was that taken out and it should be put back in, as Councillor
34 Scott.

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The other thing is the Delgany and Killincarrig projects. Can you give us an accurate timeline on what's going on there? Because these projects have been talked about and going on for years. We thought they were coming to final decision based on interaction between local engineer and ourselves and the residents. But then all of a sudden it is in active travel, and active travel falls under your responsibility. Are we starting from scratch again on that, or where are we? We need to know the timelines on it because people are getting really, really frustrated.

My other question then is: What influence, if any, do you have with ABP, An Bord Pleanála, and what, if any, is your interaction with Wicklow County Council when ABP end up getting involved? In other words, is there a proper line of link in communication backwards and forwards across so that things are done quickly and efficiently?

On the train and bus service, I must say, it's great that the train is now coming down from Bray, Greystones in to Kilcoole. They're all stopping now, that pass through, that is really good. We now have a proper ticket machine. We have a population of 5,000 people in Kilcoole. Quite a number of them are working in the Civil Service in different jobs and if the trains were really proper and regular, people will use them.

Just getting back to the bus service, the Bus Connects project has been talked about forever. It's still being talked about. I'm not sure what stage it is at. Is there a completion date in your schedule for having that project fully completed? And I really would ask you to revisit the proposed changes you're making at the moment, have listed, for bus services in to Kilcoole. I think it leaves a good bit to be desired and I wouldn't mind if you would come back to me on that very directly, because I get bi-daily questions from people on it.

The other thing I would just observe is that I just think there's a gap in the communication that comes from your entity and ends up down with ourselves as public representatives. There's a tendency in more recent times to really, really deal with us as public reps at the very end of the chain. One of the problems with it is that communication lacks a lot, in my view.

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And then looking at your six-year plan, six-year plans are great and it is great to say we have all this planned for six years, but do you have a two-year review built in? In other words, that you would look at it every two years and revise it or tweak it based on progress? Because the demand for all the things I heard mentioned here in the chamber, that's growing at a pace now and we've got various government departments pushing certain aspects and then obviously ye play a vital role in all of this.

As I said at the outset of my comments, I really have a concern to see how efficient you're able to deal with everything in the manner it needs to be dealt with due to your size. Is there, for example, a resource problem within your organisation? Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Patsy Glennon.

COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thank you, Anne and Hugh for your presentation.

As Edward has said, Edward Timmins has said earlier, we're unlike many in this chamber, we don't have to worry about DARTs or Luases, at least not for the moment. And I, obviously, would support Edward's call for the Luas to be extended, but I think I will remain more realistic than thinking that will happening in the immediate future.

I do believe there should be an adequate bus service introduced immediately to Blessington. It's totally -- the service is a sham. It is not up to purpose. I do accept there were a few new routes put on recently. That should be done immediately. There should be at least an hourly bus service to Blessington. As I said, we don't have Luas, we don't have DART. We have no other way down. I would ask you to look at that. Perhaps even a minibus link to the square, half hourly or whatever, might resolve the problem. But the service is totally inadequate.

The service to West Wicklow is now worse than it was when I was a teenager. In the 1970s the 65 bus went to Hollywood cross, and turned at Hollywood cross at 7:30 in the morning. Many of your services went to went to Poulaphouca. There was a service in Donard on a Saturday and they all had bus services. And all those bus services are now gone. What happened was, petrol became cheap and everyone had cars and buses weren't getting the traction that they were getting prior to that. But it is now policy to try to get people back on the buses, so I would ask you to reinstate all

1 those routes sooner rather than a later.

2

3 As some of my colleagues have said, we're situated on the N81, and the N81 is
4 between the N11 and the N7. Two very fine roads, the two surrounding us. But ours
5 is simply a dirt track. It is not fit for purpose. The plans to revamp it have been
6 shelved for years and it is actually a danger to the public and something needs to be
7 done with it sooner rather than later. It's an absolute disgrace that that's the only route
8 in to West Wicklow, running right down through Blessington, Baltinglass, Dunlavin,
9 Tinahely, right down, and we will never get anything there unless there's some
10 infrastructure. So I would ask you to bring that back and see can you advance it
11 somewhat.

12

13 The Local Link, going back to buses, has been a big success. I welcome it in
14 Ballymount, Dunlavin and Baltinglass. It is very welcome. But there's villages
15 totally passed by, by it; Donard and Hollywood being two. The bus going from
16 Dunlavin to Ballymore Eustace could go by Hollywood Cross and it would put no
17 more than three to five minutes on their journey rather than the route they are currently
18 going and it is servicing another community. Some service should be provided in to
19 Donard too in this day in age.

20

21 I mean I could go on giving out for ages. My other colleagues have already touched
22 on the 132 service and it is good to see that has been improved. I understand that our
23 bus stop at Hollywood is going to be built shortly. Tenders are supposed to be going
24 out in the very near future. At least the 132 will stop all the time, rather than occasion
25 as it does now. Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I will hand over to the speakers.

27 MS GRAHAM: Thanks very much. Just to collar back on the 132, my apologies,
28 the enhancement is scheduled for November 2024. The frequency will increase by
29 between 40 to 50% of the current service levels. That's planned for November 2024,
30 and there will be more information available in relation to that.

31

32 So from Councillor Scott, just you mentioned the progress on BusConnects and the
33 governance of operations and the 184 and Go Ahead. So just in terms of the -- we
34 know there had been just post Covid many of our operators, including Go Ahead,

1 found it very difficult to retain their drivers and did, as a result, lose a number of
2 drivers and as a result drop a number of services across the network that they were
3 operating. This wasn't just a Go Ahead issue, this was also an issue for Dublin Bus
4 but it happened later. And we saw very significant reduction in the reliability of
5 services, because they weren't able to get out the full service. And as a result, you
6 would have seen buses that weren't arriving.

7
8 Now that did last for a period of time, but we have moved beyond that now and I
9 would expect, and I do expect and have seen that the 184 is operating in a much more
10 reliable way. However, there are times when, due to particularly road congestion and
11 traffic congestion, because there's very limited bus priority on a route like the 184, that
12 it does get caught up in traffic congestion and as a result can be delayed. But it
13 should, at this stage, Go Ahead are operating a very high level of services and are
14 turning out and operating.

15
16 So I wouldn't have difficulty, and I can give you a lot of assurance, reassurance on the
17 quality of the operation of the L1 and L2 in future when they are being delivered. We
18 monitor all our operators all the time in terms of their reliability and punctuality and
19 they are penalised if they don't meet the targets that we set for them. But there's no
20 doubt that there are some things are outside their control and the main one being car
21 traffic congestion does impact on the operation and efficiency of a public transport
22 system.

23
24 MR CREEGAN: Councillor Scott, on the Pathfinder and I think Councillor Fortune
25 raised this as well, the Pathfinder project in Greystones and connection to Kilcoole,
26 standing here I don't recollect the reason why that connection wasn't included. It is
27 worth noting the Pathfinder programme, while we did a lot of the running on it, it
28 ultimately was determined by the Department of Transport. There was a timeline
29 issue with it, in other words projects were supposed to be complete by the end of next
30 year. So it may be that there was land acquisition delay that could have caused a
31 delay to it. But if it is a good project, I'm sure -- I'm assuming it is, I'm not close
32 enough to it, but I am assuming it is, even if it is not in the Pathfinder, it is something
33 that can be considered in the Active Travel programme in the coming years. But I
34 will find out, because I think Councillor Fortune asked directly, the reason why it

1 wasn't included in the Pathfinder. I suspect it is perhaps something to do with either
2 the cost of that particular link or timeline to deliver it. Probably one or the other.

3

4 On the park and ride, effectively your question was can it be accelerated. I think Part
5 8 only went through earlier this year. We're using an accelerated procurement
6 arrangement with Wicklow County Council to procure the contractor for that scheme
7 and it will be on the ground at the end of this year and the particular contractor, it's
8 what we call a sole supplier framework we're using, is doing really good work
9 elsewhere. So there's nothing further we can do to accelerate it, but I am pretty
10 confident the timelines we gave here today will get delivered.

11

12 You have also asked about bugbear of our own, which is maintenance of active travel
13 schemes and cycleways. We're investing millions in building cycle routes, but we
14 don't have a maintenance budget for it. The maintenance budget has to come from
15 your general arrangements for road maintenance. We have raised this with the
16 Department and the Minister and I know it has been considered but it is a challenge
17 and, unfortunately, this is one case where I can say we have no funding for active
18 travel maintenance to give out to anybody. So we're not in a position to address this
19 particular one.

20 MS GRAHAM: And I just missed out on the request for the night link service for
21 Greystones isn't impacted. I want to check that to clarify it, but our intention wouldn't
22 be that we would be reducing services, particularly 24-hour services or late night
23 services. I would hope that the 24-hour services that are planned as part of
24 BusConnects will ensure that connectivity, but actually do it on a seven-day basis
25 rather than on the night link, which is just three nights a week. But I will clarify that
26 for you.

27

28 MR CREEGAN: And then to speak up some of the questions from Councillor
29 Fortune. On Delgany Village, I think we will have come back to you with more detail
30 on timeline. But my recollection is people were looking at other funding sources a
31 number of years ago, and then we were asked could it be an Active Travel project and
32 we said if it is appropriate, yes it could. I thought we were being positive in trying to
33 assist, but I will get a more detailed note rather than just leave it at that.

34

1 You asked what influence we have with An Bord Pleanála, we're the same as any other
2 applicant. We're in there with, as Anne said, we have 12 BusConnects corridors in
3 front of An Bord Pleanála, we're the applicant. We're in the same position as
4 everybody else. There's no extra arrangement that we can utilise to address the issues
5 you were raising there.

6 MS GRAHAM: I will speak up, just on the authority itself and you asked as well
7 about the BusConnects project, what stage is it at. It's at different stages depending
8 on which aspect of it. So in terms of the network, we're about halfway through the
9 delivery of BusConnects network which we have done about half of the phases. Now
10 I think we would like to be a lot further on than we actually are. But what has been
11 impacting our delivery is -- well, Covid impacted on it, and then the significant issue
12 was driver recruitment. So just getting enough drivers to be able to deliver the
13 improved frequency associated with BusConnects and the improved coverage has
14 limited our delivery in terms of being able to respond and deliver it. So we're still
15 unfortunately halfway through. There's another two to three years in terms of
16 delivery of the network and subject to us getting the funds to deliver it as well.

17
18 And then on the infrastructure side, again we're coming through An Bord Pleanála
19 with the 12 projects. We have eight of them approved. There's six judicial reviews.
20 So we have two schemes that are fully cleared to go ahead and construct and we intend
21 to start that next year. And we will just keep going as we get permission and a clean
22 permission for those and to get them delivered as quickly as we can. But you're
23 talking about a programme up to 2030, you know, for delivery of those. They don't,
24 unfortunately, happen overnight. But it will deliver very significant journey time
25 savings once they're introduced to make it an even more efficient bus service; not just
26 for those services that serve just Dublin City, but also the services that are serving
27 Wicklow and beyond because they can benefit from the bus priority measures as well.

28
29 And in terms of our resources, so we like to think that we make ourselves available.
30 We certainly communicate a lot with your officials here in Wicklow County Council
31 and we continue to work in partnership with them. And it is a partnership. You
32 know, we do rely on you to deliver the kind of infrastructure that we need, not just for
33 active travel but also that supports our bus services as well. So we have to work
34 together. I would have hoped that our communications were up to scratch but, you

1 know, if there are improvements we can make on part of it in delivery here today and
2 us being here today is to improve on that communications.

3

4 We're not able to attend all municipal committee meetings because we're a national
5 body. We just don't have resources to do that on a national level. But we are
6 committed to meeting the Council at least once a year and your SPC to work through
7 the issues for Wicklow County Council.

8

9 On the six-year plan: So the transport strategy for the greater Dublin area is very
10 much a high level plan and there's a lot of modelling that goes in to that. Based on the
11 projections that are set out in your own development, in the regional strategy and that's
12 set out by the Department of Housing and Local Government as well. We don't make
13 the figures up. We take the figures that are set out by yourselves and your regional
14 authority in what is the potential growth, and we build our transport demand based on
15 that future growth and plan the infrastructure to meet that demand.

16

17 But on the services side, we're continually, you know, reviewing services. And the
18 Connecting Ireland programme that we are undertaking is a five-year programme,
19 again a national programme, where we're looked to see where is the demand, what is
20 the minimum level of service that we need to serve every town and village across
21 Ireland? And it is a huge programme of delivery that we are working our way
22 through. We are about halfway through our delivery of that programme as well.
23 But, yeah, it's appropriate that we do continually monitor our services level but a
24 six-year review of transport strategy is appropriate.

25

26 MR CREEGAN: The last question I want to pick up on was N81, I think the issue
27 was raised it is not fit for purpose and dangerous. That's outside our remit. I can
28 pass this one to TII. It's national road under Transport Infrastructure Ireland's remit.
29 We did include a commitment in the transport strategy that it needs to be improved, so
30 it's there as a scheme that needs to be address, but I think you'll have to talk to TII on
31 that particular scheme.

32 MS GRAHAM: And Councillor Glennon highlighted just improvement of services
33 that we need, particularly for West Wicklow. As I said, the 132 will see
34 improvements. And Connecting Ireland is our programme for delivering of services

1 that you will see, it's published on our website. But that's not the end of it, you know.
2 We have said that that's only the start of our programme for delivery of rural transport.
3 We know that as we deliver more services, the demand for those are going to increase
4 and we will need to continue to link in much more remote villages in to our network of
5 transport. It's very challenging in Wicklow, just for your own environment, you
6 know the actual environment of Wicklow means that it can be very challenging to
7 meet all the villages in Wicklow. But it is not to say that Connecting Ireland is going
8 to be the end of the process; it's actually probably the start of the process of improving
9 bus services for West Wicklow in particular.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I know a few members are looking to get in, and
11 it looks like your microphones are broke, they're not. Only six microphones can
12 come on at a time. When you see one go off, jump in. Councillor Leonard.

13 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thanks, and thanks Anne and Hugh. A lot of my
14 questions have been answered. I had millions here, but I have only half a million
15 now.

16

17 I am representative of the Arklow MD. I just want to get you to outline what are the
18 obstacles to bringing the DART down to Arklow now infrastructurally and
19 financially? I know we have this big 13 million surplus in government, and just
20 looking at new housing developments happening and being planned down in Arklow,
21 I know some of them are quite close to the railway line and should we be looking to
22 invest in and provide for infrastructure and land around the railway line to be able to
23 expand it?

24

25 And also the bridges, the bridge infrastructure is, like a lot of the bridges are just one
26 vehicle bridges for access in to a lot of land that is going to be developed in our towns
27 and villages. And while you might say it is not Irish Rail's or the NTA's remit to fund
28 bridges to open up land; that takes the cars out of the town which frees up, you know,
29 more room in the towns for active travel and safer environment for everybody. So it
30 all kind of connects to each other. There's a couple of bridges south of Arklow that
31 there's a lot of land landlocked there that will be going in for planning and there's a
32 current open planning that the Council have but the houses actually back right onto the
33 railway line. And, you know, we don't any future plans to be prohibited by building
34 now when we can change it at design stage. I would be interested in your feedback on

1 that.

2

3 The accessibility: Councillor Miriam Murphy raised accessibility there and I actually
4 just have never thought and I'm ashamed to say, you know, our railway line you can't
5 get from one side -- a lot of them are staircases. There's no lift facilities in a lot of our
6 town and villages. That needs investment and it is not good enough in 2024.

7

8 I know the school bus service is technically under the remit of Department of
9 Education, but are there any plans to bring it under the Department of Transport? It is
10 an absolute disaster. I think it all needs to be streamlined. We were a whole month
11 without buses going from Arklow up to Wicklow here. The train station is right
12 beside one of the local schools, a couple of the local schools here and this building
13 here, and a lot of the staff who live and work in the buildings here come from Arklow
14 and are coming from the south. To increase that service when the train station is so
15 near so many buildings and schools and services that have staff commuting every day
16 and bringing their cars, would take a lot of cars off the road if that could be increased.

17

18 The DART to Wicklow: Are there plans to introduce a shuttle bus to connect with
19 that when it does go ahead, to connect the south of the county Arklow up to Wicklow
20 Town?

21

22 Obviously, you have been speaking about streamlined payment system for all, but I
23 think another valuable thing would be an app for the Local Links and for the school
24 bus service. The school bus service, even though I know it is not technically your
25 remit, I think an app for the parents to be able to see when the school busses are
26 coming, when the kids are getting on them and going home would be really helpful.
27 Also for the Local Link, a lot of rural areas don't have bus stops. So for someone to
28 be able to see if the bus is coming in 10 minutes' time when it is raining, you would get
29 more people using the bus.

30

31 And then last but not least, there's one stop at Arklow, it's actually on the Dublin Bus
32 route. It was originally a bus stop, there's a lay-by and everything there at there, at
33 Invermor Park. I think that needs to be revisited. There's a lot of people attending
34 hospitals that don't have transport. They find trekking into the town to get the bus,

1 that, you know, it is a long walk for anyone that has a mobility issue or that are older or
2 vulnerable. So if that could be reinstated for the main bus routes up to UCD and City
3 Centre, that would be great.

4

5 Lastly, the safe route to school, I know I sort of wouldn't be in favour of the plastic
6 bollards and pencils that have been introduced. Are there any plans to upgrade those
7 to more, you know, high quality infrastructure down along the line? I noticed already
8 that some of them are starting to look, and they're okay around the front of the school,
9 but further on in the schemes I think there's an opportunity there to put investment into
10 nice landscaping and urban realm that has the same result but just -- and then you
11 could possibly move the bollards to the next scheme. Just something to be explored.
12 Thank you.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Danny Alvey.

14 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Thank you very much. Thank you Anne and Hugh for
15 coming in here today, we really appreciate it. I know for myself canvassing ahead of
16 the local elections, the number one issue that came across at doors across my district,
17 which is the Wicklow Municipal District, was public transport in so many different
18 shapes and forms. I think it is fair to say that it really is subpar in this county in terms
19 of getting people into Dublin and back out again every single morning and every
20 single evening. I am a regular commuter on the 133 service and every single autumn,
21 without fail, the service is completely overloaded in terms of capacity. I have stood at
22 7 o'clock departures from Newtownmountkennedy, 7:30 departures, 8:00 am
23 departures, they have all passed me by for being full. It is even worse further up the
24 line in Kilpedder. I know most people from Kilpedder don't even attempt to get on it
25 there. They drive south further away from Dublin, just that they might get a chance to
26 get onto the bus. This happens every single autumn. It happened last autumn and
27 there was a Bus Eireann supervisor at the bus stop one morning after we all raised a
28 load of complaints, checking the capacity issues. The exact same supervisor was
29 there last week, and I had a conversation with him. He said that they were potentially
30 looking at getting an additional bus that would run just to UCD during term time. I
31 am wondering if this is something that has come across your radar or something you
32 can give more information to, or if you can speak about improving the 133
33 whatsoever, because it is a massive issue in our district in terms of reliability and the
34 capacity that's there.

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In terms of local loop bus services for some of our larger towns, this is an issue that has come up in Wicklow Town and indeed many years ago there used to be a local bus in Wicklow Town that would connect some of the outskirts housing estates down into the City Centre. We haven't had it for many years. Now with massive increases in population, a lot of older people living much further away from the town centre, is there a possibility to have a local loop service that would come from Brittas Bay, connect through Wicklow Town, to Rathnew and potentially to a future park and ride. Is that something you're looking at, or if it is not, how do we go about looking at that, or what channels do we go through for such a request like that?

We've talked about it DART. My colleague Councillor Dunne has already talked about the DART+, I am glad to hear -- I'm not glad to hear four to five years, but at least it is some sort of timeframe. I remember speaking to my father recently, he told me that he attended a meeting in 1984 requesting that the DART be brought to Wicklow Town. So we are a very, very long time waiting for that, But I am glad there is some progress being made on that.

In the interim, is there any scope for looking at a shuttle bus between Greystones and Wicklow Town? Two of our largest towns in the county. There's no connection between the two of them. A lot of people drive from Wicklow Town to the park and ride in Greystones. There's a lot of students that also travel up to schools in that area. Has anything been looked at in that regard?

And my final point for you is, connections between Kilcoole and Newtownmountkennedy? The main secondary school for the area is in Kilcoole. Most of the students from Newtownmountkennedy go to school in Kilcoole. There was plans for a connection between both of those towns in the last version of the BusConnects. It was changed for some reason. I believe there was concerns about the road connection between the two and I just want to ask a question on that and see if there's any answer or plans around that. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Silvester Bourke.

COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just very briefly, thank you very much for all the hard work you do for improving our lives in the county and I am

1 looking for to seeing the culmination of all of that by 2030.

2

3 Very briefly, junction 20, I live close to that, the park and ride proposed for there,
4 when do you expect that will be up and running and will there be a cost for parking
5 there and what will the daily charge be, if so?

6

7 Could you clarify, please, on route from Arklow to Dublin, St Vincent's Hospital, how
8 often does that bus pass St Vincent's Hospital now?

9

10 I also got queries from people who use the late bus coming back from Dublin on
11 Saturday evening, the last bus back is a Wexford bus and it stops outside the town on
12 the Old Dublin Road, which is annoying for some because they have to walk into town
13 if they don't have a car to pick them up. Could that be looked at possibly, an option
14 given to drivers to re route the Wexford bus back through the town if there was
15 demand for it from the people who are descending from the bus.

16

17 The cycle lanes on the south side are welcome, but it is annoying that it is taking so
18 long to get them completed. Can you just give us a more up to date timing on the
19 completion of that. You're saying the last quarter of this year, but by the look of it
20 there, we're into the last quarter, it's not going to be finished. Maybe you could
21 clarify that for us please.

22

23 I had an anomaly as well. It was somebody complaining to me recently. They went
24 on the bus, on the route 2 to Dublin. They were to meet their wife at Loughlinstown,
25 but when they got to Loughlinstown, the driver wouldn't stop to pick up his wife and
26 he had to get off at Loughlinstown. It seems like a crazy anomaly, but it is a
27 no-pickup point. You might address that as well. Thank you

28 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you very much. Anne and Hugh, if you
29 would like to come back on those questions please.

30 MR CREEGAN: Sure. Councillor Leonard there asked about not just getting the
31 DART to Wicklow, but getting the DART to Arklow.

32 So I think we have to take it in stages. I'm not sure, it's challenging because we are
33 running the trains on battery power, so there is a distance limit to how far we can build
34 them. There's a number of issues around the line layout, the track layout and so on.

1 So we never thoroughly investigated that. Our intention was to see if we could get
2 DART to Wicklow and then improve the train services south of Wicklow, so that they
3 could shuttle and people could get much more regular service from Arklow and further
4 south, Gorey and so on, that could interchange with the DART service in Wicklow.
5 That was our stage one there. There may be a stage two in the future, but that is stage
6 one and it will take us a few years to get there.

7
8 On building a number of bridges to effectively open up lands: We have done that in
9 some places where it has really been more of a sustainable transport bridge than a
10 general road bridge. So if that is required, we can fund those kind of projects. Often,
11 though, it is a multipurpose bridge that is required and really it needs to be the likes of
12 the Department of Transport that is being consulted on funding for it and perhaps we
13 can do a contribution. Something like that is possible. But I don't deny the need to
14 build bridges in various places to open up access and ease access.

15
16 On the issue of accessibility ad stairs and lifts at train stations, yes, there is already a
17 programme underway for a number of years now. We invest about 3 to 6 million
18 depending on what is happening each year, in retrofitting bridges and lifts on train
19 stations to ensure that the platforms are fully accessible to wheelchair users. In other
20 stations the arrangements are that the trains pull into the platform where there is
21 access, but there's still places where that doesn't happen and there are accessibility
22 problems around the place. There is a programme underway, but it will take a
23 number of years more before that is fully tackled.

24 MS GRAHAM: Just on school bus, it is not, as you know, the responsibility of the
25 Department of Transport. I don't think there is any plans to bring it under the
26 Department of Transport. We have engaged with the Department of Transport and
27 Department of Education looking at a pilot where there's integration between school
28 services being provided on the regular public transport services. It was in Clare that it
29 operated this year. So we need to see how that's worked and see what the cost
30 associated with that was, because it was a significant cost on our side in terms of
31 delivering additional capacity. It is very hard to manage a large group, particularly a
32 large school, you know, on to a public transport service and move that volume of
33 people by public transport at those kind of school times. So it's something, you know,
34 we try and do as much as we can to integrate to ensure that school children can use our

1 services and they're still part of the planning that we do when we are doing service
2 planning, and we will continue to do that. But bringing the two services together will
3 be challenging but we have done some pilots and we will see whether that is possible
4 to replicate in other parts of the country.

5
6 In terms of a DART to Wicklow and then operating a shuttle bus to the town,
7 obviously that is something we will consider when the DART is extended to Wicklow.
8 Even, I know Councillor Alvey I think had a question around a loop bus service and
9 that would obviously serve the train station as well. So we have got such a list, like
10 we have a long list of town services that we're trying to deliver right across the
11 country, so we're not looking currently at a town bus service in and around Wicklow,
12 because there's a proportion of the town that is currently served by the more regional
13 services. But we do acknowledge that there's parts of the town that aren't covered by
14 public transport service. It is not on our list yet, but it is certainly one we can look at
15 in the future when we have got through the delivery of services in towns that have no
16 service whatsoever.

17
18 And then an app for Local Links. So part of -- we have work underway at the
19 moment to replace what are called the automatic vehicle location terminals that are on
20 the main bus services that would be services operated by Dublin Bus, Go Ahead and
21 Bus Eireann. And once we have completed that project, which will be over the next
22 two years, we then want to move putting what we are calling automatic vehicle
23 location light on to our Local Link services which will give us a realtime feed of where
24 the bus is relative to its journey, that we can then publish in an app for information for
25 customers. That is work that we do want to deliver for particularly on our Local
26 Links.

27 MR CREEGAN: On the additional bus stop suggestion you had near Arklow. If
28 that can be sent in to us because we will have to look at what the location is. Our
29 general email for public representatives is oireachtaslaiison@nationaltransport.ie.
30 Most people are aware of it. If you send in where it is, we can have a look at it. I
31 couldn't commit anymore than that.

32
33 Safe routes to schools: Upgrading infrastructure, yes, that absolutely could be done.
34 I am just conscious that that means funding gets diverted from a new school in to

1 upgrading that existing school. There is a judgment there. If something has
2 deteriorated to the point that it doesn't work well, we do need to change it. I heard
3 what you said about reusing bollards, actually by the time you take them out of the
4 ground it is hard to reuse them. That is a case-by-case.

5

6 If something deteriorated substantially, yes something should be done. But in general
7 we rather invest the funding initially into other school, would be our position.

8 MS GRAHAM: I will just pick up on that stop at Arklow, that possibly would have
9 been a commercial services, is that on the route 2 possibly, or one of the Wexford bus
10 routes -- route 2. Yes. So that is a commercial service. And decisions around
11 where those commercial services stop and where they serve are made by the operator
12 themselves. We can't force them to kind of go to a particular stop or a particular
13 location. So that would be something to take up with actually Bus Eireann on route 2.
14 And then they can apply to us then to amend their licence to serve that stop.

15 MR CREEGAN: If I go then to Councillor Bourke. Park and ride at junction 20 and
16 the exact time it will be open; I actually don't know. So rather than giving you an
17 incorrect answer, we will put that in the note back and give a clear answer there.

18

19 As regards charging, we are currently developing our strategy around what needs to
20 happen at park and ride sites in terms of ensuring that they're used by people using the
21 bus service. So we can't give you a clear answer yet, whether there will or won't be a
22 charge, but we're very conscious that the whole package needs to be an integrated
23 package. We just haven't got a clear answer on it yet.

24 MS GRAHAM: Councillor Alvey, you just mentioned the 133 service being
25 completely overloaded. Yes, we recognise that there are now capacity issues. I
26 think what we are kind of struggling with, normally as a transport planning
27 organisation, you're usually generally dealing with population growth in terms of from
28 year to year and maybe a little bit more if you've attracted people based on what you
29 are charging. We are seeing double-digit growth on services year-on-year, which is
30 phenomenal and, actually, that is not what you see in other countries either.

31

32 So it is something that, yes, we think we plan every year and then the growth actually
33 surpasses what we have planned for. We recognise also that travel patterns have
34 changed both with hybrid working, but also with the fact that students are travelling a

1 lot longer distances and more regularly because they're not actually living close to
2 UCD or to other, and they're travelling day. So that has put demand on it.

3

4 We do our best with the operator to estimate what that is, but we have just seen it, the
5 growth being way above what we had expected it to be. But we will try and respond
6 quickly by putting in additional capacity at those key times and keep trying to learn
7 from year-on-year about how patterns are changing.

8

9 And then just on the number 2 bus. So as I said, Councillor Bourke, that's a
10 commercial service. I don't know how many times it passes Vincent's Hospital, but,
11 again, Bus Eireann makes those commercial decisions around how many times it
12 wants to operate, what's the frequency of those services. There is obviously, you
13 know, a Wexford bus that provides services along that route as well. So we kind
14 of -- our regulatory role is about ensuring that the demand is served, that if additional
15 frequency is put forward through a licence, it is not going to undermine the total
16 service that might be operating by a competitor. And, again, if the last bus, by
17 Wexford bus, and where it stops again it is a commercial decision by the operator. So
18 I would suggest putting that forward to that operator.

19

20 And then, because it is a commercial service, that question about picking up at
21 Loughlinstown, that's part of the licence condition. Because that's served by services
22 that are being operated by Dublin Bus from Loughlinstown or other operators, you
23 know, into -- so they're two separate kind of services. One, the 2 is supposed to be a
24 regional service and can drop off at Loughlinstown, but not necessarily pick up on the
25 way into City Centre. That is a restriction of the particular licence.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you. I am conscious of time, members. So I
27 am obviously going to keep going. We do have suspension of standing orders at 4:30.
28 Can you keep your points to the point that the NTA can answer? If the question has
29 already been asked, you don't have to repeat it. Because I had to step
30 out -- Councillor Melanie Corrigan, and then I will let you in. Melanie switched off
31 her microphone to let me jump out. Councillor Corrigan.

32 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you Anne and
33 Hugh for the presentation. I will be brief.

34

1 I just want to go back to some more issues in Kilmacanogue Village. There's
2 presently over 30 school children attending schools in Greystones. They don't
3 qualify for Bus Eireann because the nearest school is in Bray and they can't get spaces
4 there. There's a lot of people -- I recently sent in a petition with over 200 people on it;
5 shoppers, children attending school, people attending appointment, doctors. I sent it
6 into your colleague, Richard Kelly, and the response I got was there were two buses
7 they could get, one to Bray and one to Greystones, and that the frequency could be
8 increased. I don't think that is adequate. I think by extending the bus service
9 between Newtown, Kilpedder to Kilmacanogue and then on to Greystones would
10 which inevitably linked up with the DART as well, it would service a lot of people,
11 school children and otherwise, and decrease the amount of cars on an already
12 struggling N11, and I would ask that this is looked at in the future. That is one thing.

13

14 Then the 185, the bus from Enniskerry to Bray, I know that route is due to be changed
15 slightly shortly. It had improved, but I am getting a lot of complaints again about
16 buses just not showing up last minute. It always seems to be, because it's during the
17 day it is not a highly-used service but it is still a service that we depend on in
18 Enniskerry. But it seems to be that the driver, if there is a lack of driver it is taken
19 from that particular route which could mean someone standing at bus stop for two
20 hours in the rain with their shopping trying to get home.

21 And information now I would frequently send in emails or whatever, and it is difficult
22 get responses. I will get them, but it can take a bit of time and getting even updates, it
23 often seems members of the public seem to know more than as public reps than we
24 know. I would like that as well to be looked at and increase the information to public
25 reps. Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

27 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And thanks for your
28 presentation. I'll be as brief as I can.

29

30 There's a few issues there. I am delighted, someone mentioned there that the bus stop
31 for Hollywood cross is going in place very soon. I was elected to the Council here ten
32 years ago and that was one of the first issues that I had to deal with, and ten years later
33 we're getting it. The reason for that being that the drivers on the 132, it wasn't a
34 designated route or stop, rather, and some would stop there and more wouldn't. So

1 that's good news that we have the bus stop on the way.

2

3 As regards the park and ride there, I wouldn't agree with the Councillors there, I don't
4 see -- there's only four bus a day travel from Tullow to Dublin. So I don't know why
5 a park and ride would be in place, because I in the past have written to you, or to Bus
6 Eireann, rather, to extend the service from Hollywood to Blessington and there was a
7 no to that. So I don't see a big reason for that park and ride there.

8

9 The 132, maybe there's something there that you might work on and have I been in
10 touch with your office there directly myself. Gerry O'Neill is my name. And the
11 132 travels, as you know, from Tullow up to Dublin and it will stop at every stop on
12 the way, including the town of Blessington, but it will not take anyone on in
13 Blessington. So you could have maybe someone wouldn't miss the 65 and there's a
14 half-empty bus, long distance bus as we call them, but they will not allow anyone onto
15 the bus at Blessington. It doesn't make sense to me and to a lot of people. The
16 person who has missed that bus would have to wait another half hour or an hour for a
17 65. And it's the only bus stop on the N81 that won't pick people up. So I think that is
18 something that could be addressed and sorted fairly quickly, you know.

19

20 The N81 I know it is not really your issue. It is more TII and that you know. But
21 again if you have any influence there. In Blessington there, you know, we supplied
22 the whole of Dublin for many years with sand and gravel and building materials to
23 build Dublin and we don't have the upgrade of the road. Now there's a carriageway, a
24 proposed carriageway for a long, long time. South Dublin County Council have
25 dropped that off their 2022-2028 development plan. So I don't know where we stand
26 on that one there as regards West Wicklow. Presumably it will be dropped as well.

27

28 But maybe in you do, you know, if you are in discussions you could look kindly on
29 West Wicklow there, you know. We're the only road, only major artery out of Dublin
30 that is not a carriageway. So if we had a decent road and, you know, encouraged
31 cyclists to get out to the Wicklow Mountains. That's the only way out for cyclists is
32 to use this road, but it is a very, very dangerous road, a narrow road at the moment, and
33 I would love to see some commitment somewhere along the line with NTA and TII,
34 you know, that we can improve the road. Okay, if they don't want to go for the

1 carriageway, that we can get improvements on the road that's there. I mean there's
2 talk on works about a greenway in Blessington sometime down the road. So we had a
3 decent route that there's a cycle lane, road either side of the N81 to welcome the
4 cyclists to West Wicklow.

5
6 Just on the Local Link there, you know we've had -- to me now, I seen your figures
7 earlier on but I didn't catch them as such. And I would be based in Blessington
8 myself, just outside the town. But I don't see the Local Link from Arklow to Sallins
9 being used greatly. I think one of the big reasons there being is that the designated
10 stops are too far away. If you are travelling the Wicklow Gap there and you come
11 down into Ballymount and, again, as someone mentioned, you know, you miss
12 Hollywood there. But, anyway, if an elderly person wants to get the Local Link even
13 into the town of Blessington and he lives in Lockstown, he'd to have to make his way
14 one way or another to Ballymount to a designated stop. So I think you're losing out
15 on a lot of people. It would be convenient if there were more stops that these people
16 can just get out of their house and get the bus to Blessington

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Councillor. I am pushed for time.

18 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Okay, go raibh math agat.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Shane Langrell.

20 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. You will be glad to hear
21 I will be very quick. First of all thank you both very much for an amazing
22 presentation. With the Local Link that you mentioned there from Roundwood to
23 Bray, this is very welcoming obviously in the doors there the last few months it is the
24 big issue that came up in Roundwood.

25
26 So I suppose what is the actual route? Like is it Roundwood to Bray. My suggestion
27 to be Glendalough, Laragh, Roundwood, Newtownmountkennedy, Kilcoole to the
28 DART in Greystones and to the DART in Bray. How often will it run? When will it
29 service start? And what is the seat capacity of this bus? Then moving on, I suppose,
30 I've had a lot of emails and calls regarding the Local Link that comes from Bray to
31 Ashford, up to Roundwood and Laragh, where what is the plan on that? Is there
32 certain stops where people are coming to me and saying that the bus driver won't allow
33 them off if their house is on the road from Ashford to Roundwood, let's say, where
34 they have to go -- so let's say they're five minutes Ashford direction and the driver is

1 actually letting them off in Roundwood where then they have to get a way back to their
2 home where the bus has actually passed. What is the issue with it, or what's
3 the -- should the driver be stopping, basically, and what's the update on that? Thank
4 you.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I will hand over to the speakers.

6 MS GRAHAM: Okay. So Councillor Corrigan, I wasn't sure what route you were
7 talking about in terms of the Kilmacanogue Village and the petition related to that, was
8 it a particular route number?

9 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: 184.

10 MS GRAHAM: 184. I will take that away and follow up on the question asked.

11 And the 185, so if there is any particular time that, you know, services are not showing
12 up. Sometimes it may be a question that it just has got delayed in traffic congestion.
13 We have seen very significant improvements, but that's not to say that from time to
14 time services do get cancelled for whatever reason. But our instructions to go ahead
15 are that they should, if they have a driver short, that they don't impact on the low
16 frequency services but they do impact more on the high frequency services. So we try
17 and ensure that the 185 is protected because it is a lower frequency route. But if
18 there's a particular time, I'm happy to pick that up with the operators but we have seen
19 improvements.

20

21 The Hollywood Cross bus stop: I will pick up on that actually. So there's just been a
22 general, between Councillor O'Neill and Councillor Campbell, just around, you know,
23 stopping and where the stops aren't designated stops. And this is down to, I suppose
24 it's really a road safety issue. When we were looking at and working with the local
25 authority to get approval around bus stops and it is a function of the roads authority to
26 give approval for stopping locations, there is a concern, you know, given some of the
27 speeds on some of the roads that are being served by either our Local Link services or
28 on our regional services, that there isn't a location to safely stop and for a person to
29 board and alight -- board a bus or alight from a bus. But we recognise that, you know,
30 in rural Ireland that could be a challenge, and where you used to have kind of hail and
31 ride bus stops that were operated without a formal approval process, we're looking to
32 see what would be appropriate to try and ensure that we do have -- and reduce the
33 distance between stopping locations. But we have to find a way to do that safely;
34 safely for the passengers, safely for the bus, and safely for other road users as well

1 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Can I point out on that, there are 14 stops between
2 Blessington and the Embankment, the busiest part of the N81.

3 MS GRAHAM: But have they got stopping stops, like physical infrastructure? The
4 issue is where you don't have physical infrastructure and that is where the challenge is.
5 If you have physical infrastructure, it is a lot safer to allow somebody to board and
6 unboard at that location. But where you don't, particularly on a rural road, and I
7 showed you some of the bus stops with a bus stop, even if there isn't a bus stop
8 marking you're actually getting out at a junction or into a ditch, and that's not really
9 safe given the current, I suppose, safety environment around our roads. But we do
10 know that that is a challenge and we're trying to find a safe way of delivering for hail
11 and ride, or for services stopping, you know, between bus stops to be able to either
12 take passengers on or to drop them off safely. But we will need to work that with you
13 as a local authority to ensure that we're doing that safely.

14 MR CREEGAN: On the bus stop at Hollywood Cross, you said you mentioned it ten
15 years ago. I have a sneaking suspicion I was here ten years ago when you mentioned
16 it. It just shows you have to be patient in this business, but it's been done now.

17
18 On the parking arrangement there, I'm not intimately familiar with it, but I have a
19 sneaking suspicion because I said I thought it was a TII facility, it is more a park and
20 share where cars stop and they share a car for the remainder of a journey, rather than
21 park and ride. Because with only four buses a day, you're dead right, it doesn't really
22 work as a park and ride. On the N81, repeating again, it is in our transport strategy as
23 a road that should be improved. From memory, we have an objective in it that part of
24 it at least, it should also have some level of bus priority on it to allow us get faster
25 buses out to Blessington. So that is in the transport strategy, but because it is a
26 national road it does rest with TII to do that.

27 MS GRAHAM: Councillor Campbell, I wasn't sure on the Local Link services you're
28 talking about. Is that a proposed Local Link Roundwood to Bray, was that?

29 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Is that something you had in your --

30 MS GRAHAM: These were the L1, L2 L3 services, is it?

31 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: On your slide, "New Regular Service Roundwood to
32 Bray".

33 MS GRAHAM: I will pick it up on the next round, if that is okay.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. It is actually Councillor Langrell by the way.

1 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Why the bus doesn't stop or pick up people in
2 Blessington? You only let them off, won't allow them on.

3 MS GRAHAM: That is a regulatory issue, where, when we have got a direct award
4 contract -- what a direct award contract is, it's a contract with the operators, and we
5 have one with Dublin Bus and we have one with Bus Eireann, and those are given to
6 them without tendering. The regulation that governs that allows us to have those
7 direct award contracts between the two operators, but they also require us to have a
8 boundary between the areas that they operate in and really they shouldn't overlap so
9 that you don't have one service being provided by -- a same stop being served by two
10 different operators. But, yeah, it doesn't seem to make sense but we will see whether
11 there's anything we can do within the regulation that we have that can overcome that.
12 But it's kind of a regulatory thing, that, you know, it doesn't make sense but we might
13 be required to do it that way.

14 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: It would be a real help for the people.

15 MS GRAHAM: I understand that.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Peter Stapleton.

17 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for your
18 presentation today.

19 Just a quick question on the Local Link services from Sallins to Arklow, Arklow to
20 Carlow; is there any potential for the frequency of those services to increase? I just
21 note there is a huge increase in the Baltinglass to Sallins service when it went up to six
22 times a day and could understand how transport services becomes far more attractive
23 for that sort of interval versus four times where a lot of students are going to Carlow IT
24 and at the moment the times are around four and a half hours between buses which is a
25 lot of time to put in study if you just finished up a lecture.

26

27 And then just a quick question on the date for when the assessment for connectivity
28 for Coolboy, Knockananna and Carnew is hoped to be due, just so I can keep an eye on
29 that.

30

31 And then finally just outside of any specific service, I know Councillor Timmins
32 alluded to contactless payment and I think Councillor Leonard also mentioned it. Just
33 to ask, it's something that comes up in almost every conversation you have with
34 anyone about transport in Ireland and its comparison to services abroad, is why we

1 don't have contactless payment available across transport infrastructure and if you do
2 now have a date in mind for when that will be available. And also just an
3 understanding on the cost. I know it has been thrown out in the news recently that it's
4 going to cost up to 2.7 billion of a tender for a project that was put to out to tender.
5 Those figures generally encompass a whole different range of things, so just to have a
6 clear understanding of the cost to implement that system when in London I think it was
7 done for 10 million, would be very helpful

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

9 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks Cathaoirleach. Anne and Hugh, fair
10 play, some stamina you have up there at this stage in the game. My attention deficit is
11 absolutely off the charts, while you are tuned in. Big respect.

12

13 Cathaoirleach, I find myself through the conversation wondering, you know, is this
14 type of engagement better suited to a clinic. There's about 19 or 20 different ideas
15 that you've had, and some of the work that I do in youth and public engagement, ideas
16 are as they come, they're kind of thrashed or binned or they flourish or they move onto
17 the next level. So I appreciate how challenging it must be for everyone in the room.
18 There's some brilliant stuff coming out about insights that live in the community,
19 insights drawn from lived experiences. I didn't know that Patsy Glennon was a
20 teenager in the 70s, and now I know that also. That insight is...

21

22 So I wonder what happens to ideas that are generated in an arena like this. Do they go
23 somewhere? Do they get then unpacked, and do they get tested against, you know,
24 the priorities that are sitting there that we are aware of, the strategies, the plans the...?
25 Because I think, you know, I'd hate to feel that something, a golden nugget emerged in
26 room but because it is just a whole load of councillors giving out that it dies before the
27 meeting is over. Because I would like to feel there's value to the engagements and the
28 work people have put in to preparing their comments and their contributions. So I
29 would love to get a sense of the journey from ideas to analysis to action.

30

31 And then three other key points that I would love to raise, Cathaoirleach. Just again
32 maybe speak to, which in a way is similar, to what degree data informs the
33 decision-making around what happens in County Wicklow even. Can we zoom in
34 and look at Wicklow. And data represents, you know, the surveys you do around the

1 volumes of traffic, but also how you engage with the public. And, again, as
2 Councillor Alvey mentioned, people are standing at bus stops and telling you that the
3 buss are passing them by, can we act on that data quicker? Or what is the scope to act
4 on a data in a quick way?

5
6 The other two. If driver retention and recruitment is a critical element of the future of
7 transport in Ireland, again, to what degree can we do something about that? So I am
8 sure all the members here know and will hear stories of the Dublin Bus drivers' terms
9 and conditions compared to the Go Ahead drivers' terms and conditions. Can you
10 influence that? Like, is there an ethical dimension there around T&Cs of drivers
11 who -- if you are awarding a contract to a company that's in a race to the bottom
12 around the terms and conditions and pay of its employees, then that can be a factor in
13 who you award contracts to or who you are willing to work with? Because I think we
14 can have all the best notions about plans and routes and brilliant buses and trains and
15 great infrastructure, but if we don't have drivers who see a career in all these
16 professions because there's better options elsewhere or because the terms and
17 conditions aren't good enough, then we're in trouble.

18
19 Then the last one I would love your view on the future of, and maybe how important
20 the public service obligation is to the future of transport in Ireland, and where that sits
21 in looking at the strategy in terms of public transport not needing to be driven by the
22 desire for profit, and that it is kind of rooted in the public good or service. Yeah,
23 where do we sit in terms of public service obligation right now and what do you see in
24 the future on that topic? Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Graham Richmond.

26 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you Anne and
27 Hugh, just for staying up there as Councillor O'Brien said, for taking the time to
28 answer questions.

29 I just want to go back to two issues that were raised by Councillor Dunne and
30 Councillor Alvey, to say it is okay, the DART is going to come to Wicklow before
31 2042 and got four to five years is frankly not good enough. We have been waiting
32 long enough for the train service, and to put it off is going to be two years, 18 months;
33 sorry, it is four to five years. I know Councillor Alvey said would you not look at
34 maybe a bus service in the intervening period. What is wrong with a shuttle train

1 service? And has it been explored? Because there is such a high demand for a
2 proper train service to Wicklow at the moment, that it has to be addressed. There's
3 three trains in the morning and if you're on the first or the second one, you're lucky to
4 get a seat on that train. And in the evening, you're lucky to get a seat on that train.
5 And that's not servicing the public. If someone who happens to be retired wants to
6 go into the city after 9:30 in the morning, they have to wait until 2:45. So that means
7 an elderly person who wants to go into Dublin on the train, goes in at 2:45 and then
8 they have to have a quick turn around and back out. That's not providing a public
9 service. And then with regards -- so I want to say, have you addressed the possibility
10 of a shuttle train service?

11

12 And also on the 133, just the route in and around Wicklow Town, there's obviously
13 with the increased building, particularly up the Marlton Road, Hawkstown Road, and
14 what I refer to as the new Rathnew, there's greater centres of population which in order
15 to get to the closest bus stop, you have to walk back into the town. And for someone
16 who is elderly or struggles with walking distances, whatever about going down to the
17 bus stop, on the way back up, again, it is not addressing the public need. Thank you.
18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Just before I invite the speakers in,
19 much to everyone's delight, can I look for an extension of time please. Seconded by
20 Councillor Kennedy; until 5:30. Okay. I will hand over to yourselves. Not that
21 you will be here until 5:30.

22 MS GRAHAM: Thank you. So Councillor Stapleton, you were just asking about
23 the Local Link from Sallins to Carlow. It is six times a day, and when will the other
24 services improve their frequency. You know, as I said in connecting Ireland, we have
25 outlined what we are going to deliver over the next few years in terms of frequency.
26 We will always review that and try and improve that frequency, and if we see that
27 demands are higher than we had planned for, well then we will try and improve that as
28 much as we can within the funds that we get.

29

30 Then in terms of contactless payments across infrastructure. Currently we do have
31 contactless payment, it is called the Leap Card, the Free Travel Pass across most of our
32 services other than intercity services. However, what we are trying to move towards
33 is bank card payments, cashless bank card payments as well as other forms of ID, you
34 know, to use to identify you on the start of your journey and at the end of journey.

1

2 What you would have seen in the media was, as you would be aware, for any public
3 procurement under the EU public procurement rules you have to indicate during that
4 procurement, at the start of that procurement what your estimate, your absolute
5 estimate of the value of that contract would be for the entire length of that contract,
6 which is 20 years, and try and see -- and build in every eventuality in that. That
7 doesn't mean that we actually draw down up to that amount, or that the tender is bid to
8 that amount. And in fact the first call of contract which is delivering next generation
9 ticketing in the greater Dublin area, the value of that is a tenth of what was set out in
10 the tender award notice. So, like, that's what we need to do. We are unfortunate that
11 we weren't in a position to invest in our ticketing systems after we put in place the
12 Leap. The Leap infrastructure was used on top of what was relatively old equipment,
13 ticketing equipment that were in place. So the functionality of that ticketing
14 equipment now cannot take contactless bank card payments. So we need to replace
15 all the ticketing systems right across the network in light rail, bus and in heavy rail as
16 well. So it's a big project, a big IT project. It's now underway. It is going to take a
17 number of years, but in the meantime we do have a contactless system, it's called Leap.
18 The first thing we need to do is ensure that we continue to have the integration in the
19 Leap Card system and then we move to providing an even better service across our
20 ticketing systems.

21

22 MR CREEGAN: Then Councillor O'Brien, your query about the insights and do
23 these ideas go anywhere. The answer is yes they do. We have committed to give a
24 lot of answers back in writing because we're not able to answer on the spot. In the
25 feedback we get today, yes, you're right, there's some ideas we take to see is that a
26 runner or is that not a runner. So they are valuable to us. Good ideas don't get left
27 behind.

28

29 In terms of data informing our decision-making, we use a lot of data in order to make a
30 decisions. What is a bit harder to get hold of it instantaneous data, like the bus
31 yesterday was overloaded, it's quite hard to catch up on that. In terms of planning
32 new routes, we have data. Data starts with census. Data down at a very granular
33 level that starts with travel survey data and so on, so it is very much data driven.

34

MS GRAHAM: And just to add onto what you said, so, you know, one of the things

1 you might consider is, so we're quite happy, as I said, to meet the Council on a yearly
2 basis and sometimes we do that in other councils on more of a workshop basis where
3 we do receive questions in advance, actually, and that allows us to, deal with the
4 questions in advance and have a more discussion around services in general. That is
5 something you might consider as Council for the future.

6

7 The other thing is that we engage across projects and programmes all the time as well.
8 So our Local Link team, our Connecting Ireland team would have been engaging over
9 the years as we were developing that programme, as we developed the Bus Connects
10 programme, there was a significant amount of engagement with the members here.
11 So it can be programme related. It can be strategic like we're trying to do today, but
12 also focusing on local issues as well and getting that feedback from local issues. So
13 we're happy to provide whatever you think is in the best interests of the members here.

14

15 In terms of public service obligation, you know, our obligation, we feel the obligation
16 of the National Transport Authority is to provide services that wouldn't necessarily
17 have a commercial value. So it is around a social value, you know, and providing
18 connections. And they come at a cost. So it does mean that we very much focus on
19 public service obligations. So if, for example, a commercial service was withdrawn
20 or whatever reason that might serve your county, we would examine in particular
21 whether there is any linkages broken, any connections to communities that are not now
22 being served and we will put forward a public service obligation service to meet that.
23 And 132 was actually a response to that many years ago as well. That was a public
24 service obligation. So it is crucially important for us to provide linkages and to
25 provide those services that are public services obligations.

26 MR CREEGAN: And then Councillor Richmond, I get your frustration about the fact
27 that we can't do DART+, you know, tomorrow. We'd love to, but we just can't.

28 Infrastructure in Ireland does take a number of years to get delivered. Nevertheless, I
29 think there's a solid pathway to get this done. There's a fleet already ordered.

30 There's planning already underway, well advanced and, you know, that timeline in my
31 mind is fully achievable. We did look at the idea of a diesel shuttle train between
32 Greystones and Wicklow, it does require a third platform to be installed at Greystones.
33 So we would be building something that then wouldn't be compatible with the DART
34 extension that we want to do. Our view was it's better to focus on the project that's

1 going to provide the most benefit overall, which is the DART to Wicklow. And the
2 other, building a shuttle arrangement which would take a couple of years by the time it
3 would get built anyway, we would then end up in a position of decommissioning it
4 almost immediately afterwards.

5

6 So for us the focus is on getting the DART, battery electric fleet in Wicklow in the
7 shortest time possible, but it is the timescale I gave you a short while ago.

8 MS GRAHAM: Then you asked about the 133 service and extending it out of the
9 town; and, again, this comes down to the, you know, considering by adding on
10 additional time onto the journey and also the possibility of that service getting caught
11 up as it moves through Wicklow Town, is that the most efficient use of that service?
12 It would be better that that main service is kept as regular and hopefully improve, even
13 improve the frequency of it in the future, and that would you have a support service
14 like a Wicklow Town service that some of your councillor colleagues have brought up.
15 That would probably better serve the communities outside and up the hills to bring
16 them to the more scheduled regional service. So while that's not on the list at the
17 moment we will take it away, stick it on the list and work through it with the priorities
18 that we have.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We have our last three speakers and I know
20 there's two looking to get back in. If I have time I will come back to you, Councillor,
21 in a second. I will try my best. Councillor Pat Kennedy.

22 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, I will be very brief. Thanks
23 Anne and Rory. I won't go over all the other questions in relation to some of the ones
24 that I had because you have already covered them. But I do have one question for
25 you: Do the NTA look at areas of growth that may be outside of the main towns, such
26 as Bray, Arklow, Blessington, Wicklow Town? And I am specifically speak being
27 Rathdrum which has the only inland train station on the east coast. It caters for a rural
28 population, you might say, from Knockananna to Avoca on one side and from Avoca
29 to Roundwood on the other side. Do you have any plans to put in a park and ride in
30 Rathdrum where commuters could use either the bus or train? Thanks,
31 Cathaoirleach.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Jason Mulhall.

33 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you to Anne and
34 Hugh for their very informative presentation.

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I am going to go back to the 65 bus service for a second. You know, it is a pretty good service, by no means the best in the world but not the worst in the world either and I think the recent changes have improved it a lot. And the idea behind BusConnects is to improve services. A lot of the work that would have been done for the Blessington area would have been based on statistics from a number of years ago, and population statistics have changed since then for a number of different reasons.

So with the L44 being a one-hour frequency to Tallaght and then the P43 and P44 being regular peak services from Blessington to the City Centre, I am just wondering what specifically regular peak services mean, what period of time it covers and what that frequency would be? Because I think it is important that, you know, with the change in services that we don't end up downgrading the traditional 65 route any more than it already was.

The other thing then is the possibility of a night link service to Blessington, whether that has ever been considered. There is a phenomena that happens on occasion where you're in the City Centre you're looking at the realtime information for the 65. It gets down to one minute and then it disappears, and you don't see a bus for maybe 90 minutes until the next schedule service. So it is something that probably needs to be looked into.

Maybe also if there's been any considerations about maybe just during term time, connectivity between Blessington and West Wicklow and Maynooth University. At the moment students are travelling on the 65 from Blessington into the City Centre to take the bus back out to Maynooth, three-hours-plus journey which could be a lot shorter. It might be as simple as one early morning service and one late evening service to facilitate those students.

And finally the 800 service, Tullow to Arklow. So that service is about 55 to 60 kilometres in route length, and I just wonder could there be any consideration to a minor alteration there on the journey from Shillelagh to Coolboy -- Sorry, Shillelagh to Tinahely to actually travel through Coolboy. It would be an extra 3 kilometres on the journey, similar road quality and maybe five minutes overall in the two-hour journey that happens. Thank you.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Orla Finn.

2 COUNCILLOR FINN: Hi, good evening at this stage and thank you very much for
3 your patience and all the information you have given us. My question you may not be
4 able to answer immediately, so I don't mind if you want to get back to me over the next
5 couple of days. Basically, it was announced three or four days ago by some various
6 TD, actually, and also our Taoiseach Simon Harris, that Bus Eireann would be placing
7 an additional bus on route 133 from Wicklow via Rathnew to help with the high
8 demand for the service. That bus was actually due to start this morning.
9 However, I had a look at the timetable last night on the TFI app and didn't see any
10 additional bus added to the timetable. So my question is, has this extra bus actually
11 been added? Did it start this morning? If yes, at what time has it been added for?
12 Thank you very much.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. If you don't mind I have two
14 speakers that want to come in, that have already spoke. So I am giving you 30
15 seconds because we're coming up to 4:00. I might just put them all in then. Is that
16 okay? Councillor Stapleton.

17 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you very much. I appreciate we have
18 contactless payment in the Leap Card, but I don't have a Leap Card. I'm an infrequent
19 user of public transport. The 6.3 million tourists that come to Ireland each year
20 probably don't have a Leap Card. I know you understand the importance of it and you
21 said it's a number of years away, but is there any date you can give us for when we will
22 have true bank contactless payment?

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. And Councillor Miriam Murphy.

24 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I just want to come
25 in on two issues. I know you have people with disability sitting on your national
26 policy committees and I am just wondering are they all, you know, probably from the
27 city or whatever. I think disability has to come through to rural and urban Ireland and
28 it hasn't. And how strong is your policy across the board for people with disability in
29 your policies? Thank you.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I will hand over to yourselves there
31 to wrap up.

32 MS GRAHAM: So Hugh might start with areas outside Rathdrum.

33 MR CREEGAN: Yeah, so basically we do have knowledge of the growth areas in
34 various counties. We get information both from CSO data and local authority

1 planning data and do try to plan for the future. In terms of park and ride at Rathdrum,
2 the analysis we did didn't require a strategic park and ride site, but from memory we
3 didn't consider the possibility of a local park and ride provision, and that is something
4 that could be explored further. But in terms of a large strategic park and ride facility,
5 the other locations that we identified appeared to better fulfil the need and it would be
6 more of a local park and ride facility that could be developed at Rathdrum if that was
7 decided to go progress with.

8 MS GRAHAM: And then Councillor Mulhall, just on the BusConnects, so I will get
9 back to you. The idea in terms of the delivery of BusConnects was not to
10 significantly downgrade services to any area, but we will get back. It is available on
11 our website what is proposed in terms of delivery and the frequency of the peak
12 services, but I will point you in the right direction in relation to that.

13

14 In terms of what has occasionally and does occasionally happen if a service doesn't
15 operate for whatever reason, whether it is driver or vehicle issues, or if it gets caught
16 up in congestion and they need to cancel a proportion of a service; it is the obligation
17 of the operators to take that service off the realtime information. So at the moment it
18 will show it as a scheduled time when it was due to arrive, but in the times when they
19 had very significant reduction in services because they had so few drivers, we know
20 that they weren't cancelling to the extent that they should and that led to a lot of
21 concern around what are considered as ghost buses. But now that things are much
22 more stable from a driver recruitment point of view, we do need to ensure that they
23 start cancelling those services so that the information is much more accurate to
24 passengers.

25

26 You have some suggestions around, you know, different services, so we will certainly
27 have a look at that. But given that we have a huge programme to deliver, it may be
28 that we won't be able to get to that immediately but certainly we continue to try and
29 improve the services for Wicklow.

30

31 And then Councillor Finn just asked about route 133. So what was introduced today
32 was just what is called an auxiliary bus at the same time as the service would have
33 been operating. So it is around just having a contracted bus with a driver that runs
34 alongside and at the same time as one of those services or maybe two. But I don't

1 know the exact times of those, I will find out what they were. Really, the timetable
2 doesn't change, it is just around providing additional capacity on that service.

3

4 And on the Leap Card and moving to next generation ticketing. So I am not going to
5 give a date because we will be held to a date when we come back here in terms of
6 delivery. We're still at the very early stages of the planning.

7 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Come on.

8 MS GRAHAM: No. But I don't want to say that we are going to have it tomorrow
9 because it is a very big project. It is replacing all the equipment in the greater Dublin
10 area. We are very much aware that we are a bit behind in terms of what is an
11 available in other countries, so we want to deliver it as quickly as possible. But given
12 that we are investing the State's money in this project, we have to ensure that we are
13 getting the best value for money as well. So we have to be very careful and project
14 manage this well on behalf of the State and get the best delivery as quickly as possible.
15 But no, I am afraid I won't put a date on it at this stage.

16 MR CREEGAN: Then Councillor Murphy on how strong our policy is for people
17 with disabilities. So we're aware that public transport and indeed active travel
18 schemes are of vital significance to many people with disabilities, so we do have a lot
19 of policies around it. We do have a lot of guidance around it. And we do put a lot of
20 effort into considering those needs and making sure they're catered for as best we can,
21 in both the provision of the infrastructure and provision of the services. For instance,
22 when bus fleets are being bought, there's enormous effort that goes into the design of
23 the bus from an accessibility perspective, the same with the new DART fleet and
24 indeed the same with the various infrastructure. But we are pretty sure nothing is
25 perfect and we're not perfect on this, but all I can say is that it is something we are very
26 conscious of. We have a Transport Users Advisory Group, that there are a number of
27 people with disabilities, representing people with disabilities, sit on that feed into the
28 work we do. So it is something that is high on our priority agenda.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I think you just have one, Councillor Langrell.

30 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: You never got back to me there on the Roundwood
31 route.

32 MS GRAHAM: Sorry, yes. I'll just go back to my... so we have a planned new
33 regular service from Roundwood to Bray. It will be in our Connecting Ireland
34 documents. It is planned for quarter 1, 2025.

1 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Okay.

2 MS GRAHAM: Next year.

3 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Anne and Hugh. I really appreciate
5 you giving up your time here today. As you can see, it was a very important topic for
6 us all. I think 20 Councillors spoke today and, to be honest, some for the first time
7 which shows the importance of the topic here today. I want to thank you. As
8 Councillor O'Brien said, I don't know how you have the stamina. Fair play. Now I
9 see why it is once a year.

10 Thank you very much, again, and we look forward to your replies through Helen and
11 Teresa.

12 (Applause.)

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Members, we have suspension of standing orders
14 now. I am going to go to Councillor -- sorry, Councillor Danny Alvey and seconded
15 by Councillor Mark Barry, and I will ask Helen to read it out and I will switch your
16 microphone on then. Okay.

17 MS PURCELL: The first suspension of standing orders is that: "This Council
18 agrees to write to An Taoiseach and the Minister of Heritage and Electoral Reform
19 asking the State to examine purchasing 197 acres of land currently for sale in
20 Kindlestown, Delgany, that connects Kindlestown Woods to the Glen Of The Downs
21 Nature Reserve in line with our obligations under the Nature Restoration Law and
22 thereby bringing this land into the ownership of the State as is the preference of this
23 Council."

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I have switched on your microphone now.

25 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Look, I won't go on at length
26 as I know there's another suspension of standing orders and the Chief Executive
27 Report to get to as well.

28

29 As co-founder as ReWild Wicklow, this is a subject I am really passionate about and
30 very eager for this to be my first motion presented to this Council. First of all I want
31 to thank Paul Byrne and the Greystones Guide for bringing this opportunity to all of
32 our attention. I also want to thank my six fellow Councillors in the Greystones
33 Municipal District for raising this at their district meeting and passing a similar
34 motion. And also to thank local TDs Jennifer Whitmore and Steven Matthews who

1 have been campaigning on the issue and lobbying the relevant departments. This
2 motion builds on the work of several local community groups and keen
3 environmentalists and conservation in the area who have been campaigning for nature
4 restoration for many years.

5
6 Exactly one month ago today the news broke that 197 acres of land had been put up for
7 sale adjacent to the Glen Of The Downs Nature Reserve. The land in question
8 contains 100 acres of conifer woodlands, with the remaining being agricultural fields
9 that connects right up to Kindlestown Woods which is which is currently just one 1
10 kilometre from the Glen Of The Downs.

11
12 The Glen Of The Downs, which I am sure everyone here knows, is an iconic fragment
13 of ancient woodland. One of the very few remaining here in Wicklow, and indeed
14 many believe it to be an even rarer example of temperate rain forest. However, at just
15 140 acres it is a comparatively small nature reserve. For this reason we think this
16 opportunity to purchase forestry and agricultural land adjacent to the reserve is one
17 that cannot be missed and even further to this, that these lands would offer the
18 opportunity to create a woodland corridor connecting both The Glen and Kindlestown
19 Woods. The land is currently being offered for sale at quite a high guide price on the
20 basis that it would be ideal for development for, according to the brochure, a golf
21 course, a hotel or housing. However, it is currently only zoned or agriculture, so we
22 feel this guide price is very presumptive and if the State takes urgent action to
23 negotiate with the landowners, we can ensure that this once-in-a-generation
24 opportunity is not missed.

25
26 This Council was the first in Ireland to declare a biodiversity and climate change
27 emergency. The word "emergency" suggests this call to have one of our -- sorry, the
28 word "emergency" suggests we need to take urgent action and that is why I hope all 32
29 Councillors will take this call to have one of our iconic nature reserves expanded.
30 This piece of land is clearly beyond the ability of our Council to afford the purchase of,
31 and why I am asking you all to support this motion to write to An Taoiseach and
32 Minister of Heritage urging them to examine the State purchasing this land and
33 restoring it for nature. Thank you.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Just before I invite speakers in. Just

1 to bear in mind that the Chief Executive has agreed on this motion and what I would
2 look for, unless -- I know Councillor Stokes wants to comes in, but after Councillor
3 Stokes if we're all in agreement we can move onto the next one and then we can get to
4 the Chief Executive's Report. Councillor Stokes.

5 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh math agat, Cathaoirleach. I just want to thank
6 Councillor Alvey and Councillor Barry for bringing this forward. There's great
7 enthusiasm in the Greystones Municipal Districts and you know we had a joint motion
8 of all Councillors at district level in support of this. Local people really wants to see
9 more local amenities, so I would encourage as much energy behind this as possible.
10 Go raibh math agat.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Unless there is any dissent, if
12 anybody is in agreement? So we're in agreement with that motion thank you very
13 much. And thank you, Councillor, for bringing that to the Council here today.

14

15 We have a second one here now of Councillor Peir Leonard and seconded by
16 Councillor Joe Behan. I will invite you now -- I am going to get Helen to read it out.

17 MS PURCELL: The second suspension of standing orders: That this Council
18 request the Chief Executive write to the EPA to request an emergency environmental
19 and human impact assessment be carried out on Ballinclare Quarry, Kilbride and
20 environs, due to concerns from the local community around presence of asbestos and
21 the quarry's recent water drainage operations and the risk of contamination into nearby
22 lands and water and air quality.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Leonard.

24 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Okay, thank you. Firstly, I would like to thank the
25 local community around the quarry for their input and their research and a lot of what
26 I prepared here today was on their submission to me.

27

28 So as many people are aware, Kilsaran Concrete Unlimited Company, Kilsaran,
29 intends to lodge a planning application in autumn 2024 for a strategic infrastructural
30 development at Ballinclare Quarry, Kilbride, Co. Wicklow. The proposal from
31 Kilsaran, if permitted, would be the first major landfill developed in Ireland since
32 before 1996 which is located below the water table. This in itself has major
33 implications on potential water quality issues and assurance is needed that these
34 operations will not adversely affect the water quality of several wells in close

1 proximity to the pit. A large number of the local community and residents who live in
2 close proximity to the quarry have major concerns about the proposals and the effect it
3 would have on their lives and surrounding environment. Aside from the local
4 community's concerns about the overall pending application for potentially the largest
5 infill site in the country, their most immediate and very serious concerns are in relation
6 to the recent dewatering and drainage operations which have been undertaken by
7 Kilsaran.

8
9 In 2016 the Ballinclare Quarry was very suddenly shutdown because of naturally
10 occurring asbestos which had been found in the pit. Materials from the quarry which
11 had been sent out to various building sites and projects across both Dublin and
12 Wicklow in the run up to this discovery were all recalled and these were buried in the
13 corner of the quarry pit. As locals, the presence of asbestos in the quarry was not
14 news. The presence of asbestos has been known since at least the 1990s. Since the
15 closure of the quarry in 2016, the quarry pit filled with water which has the triple effect
16 of covering and making safe any dust.

17
18 Over the last year Kilsaran has dewatered the pit and thus have exposed all of the pit
19 and workings again, increasing the potential of dry dust potentially contaminated with
20 the asbestos being made airborne by wind and reaching land and homes in the near
21 vicinity. This was completed under the permit of their previous old planning
22 permission which was granted prior to the officially known asbestos find.

23
24 Although Wicklow County Council have overseen this dewatering and have tested the
25 water leaving the site before it enters the Potters River which exits at Brittas Bay, the
26 local community are seeking confirmation from Wicklow County Council as to
27 whether the testing for asbestos was part of any safety measures implemented, as these
28 works would have focused on water quality issues. The only testing of asbestos that
29 the local residents are aware of has been carried out by Kilsaran themselves, and that
30 has only taken place in a few spots within the quarry grounds.

31
32 Therefore, it is felt by the local community that external statutory body such as EPA
33 should carry out rigorous testing both in the quarry grounds, in the neighbouring lands
34 and along the watercourse all the way to the coast of Brittas Bay.

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On behalf of the local residents and community, I would also like to ask if Wicklow County Council have had any meetings with Kilsaran in relation to this future proposal and if so, could the minute of such meetings be available for the local residents and the public to view.

I personally would like to thank the residents who have given this comprehensive information to all the members today. They circulated a lot of emails to everybody. I think they got much more information than I have just read out there in relation to potential traffic and other impacts on their day-to-day quality of life and the environment.

As somebody who lives in Arklow on the Avoca River, we need to learn from the past legacy and choices that we make. We're making choices now for our future generations. I sit on a river that is not used by local community because of the pollution in it, the leaches, the heavy metals, all which will take generations to clean up. I think we have got a choice now to make the right decision and ensure a good and safe future for the people that live in the locality at the moment and the future generations. So we need to stand strong and remind ourselves of our declaration in 2019 where we, as Wicklow County Council members, declared that climate and biodiversity emergency and we also signed the Climate Charter that year as well. Our choices now will be felt for generations to come, so let's make the right one. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Just before I bring in Councillor Behan who seconded this motion, I am going to ask the Chief Executive to answer the question that was asked in that, and again to reiterate that the Chief Executive has agreed to this motion in terms of the letter going out. But there was a specific question asked that I want to get answered for you.

COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes.

MS O'GORMAN: Just to say, as the Cathaoirleach has said, I have absolutely no issue with the Council writing in the EPA and requesting that study be done. There have been no preplanning meetings or any engagement with Kilsaran on this. As you know, their application will be straight to the Board for strategic infrastructure development. So they are not obliged to engage with us at this stage and they have

1 not sought any meetings with you at this point, so I can tell you that.

2 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.

4 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I would like to thank the Chief Executive for that
5 response, but I just first of all want to pay tribute to Councillor Leonard for her
6 consistent pursuing of this issue. Herself and former Councillor Mary Kavanagh
7 intervened at a very, very crucial point in the last application process, where we as
8 Councillors then were informed 24 hours before the deadline for submissions to be
9 sent into An Bord Pleanála on the last occasion. And as far as I can recall, and the
10 Chief Executive can correct me on this, on the last occasion Wicklow County Council
11 planners indicated their support for that particular proposal. We weren't told at the
12 time. We only discovered it at the very last minute.

13

14 So now we know that at this point in time there's been no meetings. So, therefore, I
15 assume there's been no letter or there's been no comfort given to the applicants with
16 regard to this application, because that's something that's very important for the
17 residents. As we have seen, all of the submission that is have come in from residents,
18 really genuinely concerned residents. Because this, if it is approved, will be a super
19 dump. Make no mistake about it. And while it may be, at the moment the proposal
20 is for what they call, I suppose, material from construction industry and so on; who is
21 to say that in five years' time, ten years' time, maybe that mightn't change either.

22

23 I was at the public consultation process meeting that was held in August and a number
24 of residents have indicated in emails that generally speaking, a lot of the community
25 weren't aware of it. It was a, kind of, fairly much on the surface type of consultation
26 on the night. However, the company were there I think, including their chief
27 executive, indicating the importance they attach to this particular plan.

28

29 But we have an opportunity now as members of this Council to ensure that every
30 single step on the way to this particular project being considered by An Bord Pleanála
31 is rigorously tested. I think this particular request that Councillor Leonard has put
32 forward so eloquently here is what residents are asking us to do on their behalf.
33 Particularly when one considers that this, if it goes ahead, the floor of the old quarry is
34 underneath -- is at a lower level than the water table, which is going to be quite unique

1 if that is what is going to happen in a landfill, I think. I'm not an engineer, but I have
2 never heard of that before.

3

4 So this is extremely important for the residents of that area and therefore I am grateful
5 to the Chief Executive for agreeing to write the letter to the EPA, for confirming that
6 there have been no meetings with the developer with regard to this and I assume, and
7 maybe the Chief Executive finally will confirm, Wicklow County Council planners
8 are not going to give a letter of comfort to this particular proposal, because as far as I
9 can recall that's what happened on the last occasion. And only that Councillor
10 Leonard and Councillor Mary Kavanagh intervened at the last minute and put in a
11 submission representing all of the Councillors at the time, there was unanimous
12 agreement on it, I think we might have had a different situation.

13

14 So well done Councillor Leonard, but if the Chief Executive can confirm you're not
15 going to give a letter of comfort when this particular application goes to An Bord
16 Pleanála. I think that would be very helpful. Thank you.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. The Chief Executive does want to
18 come back in there.

19 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach and Councillor Behan and Councillor
20 Leonard for the motion. My understanding is that the strategic infrastructure
21 application has not yet been made by the applicant as yet. You know, if they do make
22 an application, the planning authority are required, we shall submit a report within ten
23 weeks of the making of an application to the Board under this action. And that has to
24 set out the views of the authority on the effects of the proposed development, on the
25 environment and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area for the
26 authority. In doing that, any report has to come before the members for your
27 approval. This is part of the strategic infrastructure development guidelines.

28

29 So we will not be making any submission without coming back to the members on it.
30 So I want to give that assurance to the members. It is part of your role to seek out the
31 views of the members on this proposal if the development gets submitted. Then the
32 planning authority, the members of the planning authority may by resolution decide to
33 attach recommendations specified in the resolution to the report of the authority where
34 the members decide those recommendations and they shall be attached to the report

1 going to the board. So if the members, when an application is made, have particular
2 views and particular recommendations around the application, this body here can
3 adopt a resolution to send those directly to the Board.

4

5 So I just want to assure you that is the process that we will follow, should an
6 application be made. As I said, it is my understanding at the moment there is no
7 application before the Board but I do expect it is imminent. But we will be back and
8 keep in touch with the members on that.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Snell.

10 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I want to thank the Chief
11 Executive for being frank and honest with the information that you have available to
12 you. If and when that application is made, I would urge you that you would call a
13 special meeting, because that was one of the reasons that was given here before; that
14 the availability of dates to bring it to the members left it with 24-hour notice, which
15 was unacceptable. So at the earliest convenience you will bring it to all the members.
16 At that time we had to convey a number of meetings ourselves between the Wicklow
17 Municipal District, the Arklow Municipal District, because we were all caught offside.

18

19 And just to give an indication to the members of how big a scale this is, I know it's
20 been referred to as a super dump and that's obviously the sensational headlines that it
21 will get, but the reality is there's no nothing super about this. This is bringing
22 articulated trucks every four minutes on a really rural road network, every four
23 minutes. And that's how often we're talking about this small rural area will be
24 affected. And that was all part of the previous planning application.

25

26 I honestly don't believe that there's an appetite for this in our county, in our area, and
27 certainly not in this local authority and I would hope not. There was all sorts of
28 innuendo the last time that there was prior meetings. There was lots of engagement
29 with various sections of the local authority. But the truth is, thankfully, we are where
30 we are now and that's why I would urge you that we will be notified as 32 members
31 very, very quickly and let that be a special meeting. I'm sure we'll all be available.
32 Because for the lifetime of this Council, we don't deal with anything more urgent than
33 what we're discussing here today. This genuinely affects lives. Thanks,
34 Cathaoirleach.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. And thank you, just to wrap up there,
2 I want to thank Councillor Leonard, Councillor Behan and Councillor Snell for his
3 contribution and to the Chief Executive for the simple reason, as a Councillor I am the
4 one that lives closest to where this could happen. I live in Redcross. That is why I
5 stepped back and let you speak yourselves. Can I thank you on behalf of myself and
6 the community, because I talked to a few of them up in that area. I live literally a
7 five-minute drive from where this could happen. So all I can say today is, you have
8 my full support as well. And if a special meeting needs to be convened, I certainly
9 have no problem doing so with the Chief Executive. Councillor Kennedy.

10 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: I actually attended that meeting with Councillor
11 Leonard out there at the -- quite close to where the landfill is being proposed or
12 rumoured to be proposed and I have met a lot and talked to a good few of the
13 neighbours out there, there is a huge concern, so there is. And I did outline at that
14 meeting I was concerned about the fact that the water quality -- because most of the
15 people out there are on wells. I outlined at that meeting that I would be concerned
16 because the bottom floor area of that quarry is below, most likely, a lot of the well
17 base. So I would be concerned about that. I would also be concerned in relation to
18 what Councillor Snell has just outlined. I think he is a hundred per cent right. I want
19 to thank Councillor Snell for detailing what he just said. I also want to acknowledge
20 and thank the Chief Executive's response here, he's being very honest. So thank you,
21 Cathaoirleach.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neill.

23 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I want to wish you the best of
24 luck with this, Councillor Behan. And, you know, we need transparency, you know.
25 But I envy you in one way, because I tried time and time again to deal with the biggest
26 scandal probably in the country, and that being the issue of Goldstein and the building
27 of 65 houses in Kippure.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neill --

29 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Just a second.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: No hang on a, Councillor O'Neill. Councillor O'Neill, we
31 have had this.

32 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: We were told only two weeks ago that these were being
33 brought to the high court. The same day these crowd in Kippure, they put in an
34 application for retention of it. How can you retain -- how can you go for retention for

1 65 houses when you don't even have a planning number?

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neill, we're discussing the motion that is before
3 us.

4 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: I travelled the Wicklow Mountains today, I'm day in and
5 day out here to bring these issues up here, and I'm told I'm out of order, I'm out of this,
6 I'm out of the other.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: You're not out of order, what I am trying to say --

8 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: And I'm out of order again, and we still can't get this on
9 the floor. And I say fair play to Councillor Leonard and Behan, you have it in here
10 today. I tried it there the last time and the time before and the time before. And I
11 can't for some reason or other -- I can't get this discussed at all.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: And we won't be doing it today because there is a procedure,
13 Councillor O'Neill.

14 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: We don't discuss this. I am sure you will lead us back in
15 here next month and the month after, the month after. Will you not. How can
16 anyone get away with building 65 houses, putting a percolation area in, a septic tank, a
17 massive job on the site of the River Liffey and no one says boo?

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We're going to move on.

19 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Okay --

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, I am not trying to be rude to you. I am trying to
21 be fair to everybody here.

22 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: I would like to get some indication what is going on?
23 What's going on, when we're told at the Municipal meeting here only two weeks ago,
24 Councillor Glennon came outside the chamber and said to me that he has information
25 that they are being brought to the high court. Now there is no mention of that
26 whatsoever. Instead of that, they are looking for retention on something they never
27 got permission for.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neill, we are discussing a motion that went
29 through the right procedure. We've done it. We discussed it.

30 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: I would like some guarantee.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: You can talk to us after, but we are not going to do it in a
32 wrong manner.

33 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Most of the Councillors here are honourable people and
34 they should be anxious to know what is going on, what is going on in the county?

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neill, I was fair enough letting you in thinking
2 you were going to be speaking about the topic in question, so we are going to move on.
3 Okay. So if everyone consents to the motion that was before us, I have asked the
4 Chief Executive to send that letter. Okay. What we are going to do now, we have
5 half an hour. I know there's a couple of motions on the agenda as well, that's very
6 important to the members that submitted them. So what I am going to say is, we have
7 the Chief Executive's Report now. If you really need to ask a question, by all means
8 ask it. If you feel you can send it in by email, please send it in by an email. I'm going
9 to take the first three, then I am going to ask Councillor Corrigan to come to the chair
10 because I have to sort something out with IT. Then I'll come back. Okay. And
11 there are a number of speakers here. So, Councillor Patsy Glennon.

12 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. It is an issue raised here
13 many times by my colleague, what is the update to position with Baltinglass, RDF? It
14 is going on and on and nothing is happening and people are getting very impatient on
15 the ground.

16

17 The second thing I would like to ask the Chief Executive, a number of people in
18 Stratford Grangecon are greatly upset about some of the assertions that were made
19 here last month. I know from the transcript at page 52 Mr Nicholson was to look into
20 the matter. The community are very anxious to hear what his findings were and
21 hopefully some of the misinformation published will now be corrected.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Edward Timmins.

23 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Yeah, just one topic, we don't have time; I raise it here
24 at every meeting as you know. Councillor Glennon has kindly raised it as well.
25 Baltinglass RDF has come to a stop. I just think, I don't want this to go back out to
26 tender, it is going to delay it more. I would ideally like our crew to work on it. I
27 know there are issues they may need some support in. I think it is very important that
28 our crew gets backing working there ASAP. This saga is calling into question
29 Wicklow County Council's ability to deliver projects from national funding. And I
30 know, Chief Executive, you have been very, very supportive and I completely
31 recognise that, and that is completely acknowledged and I very much thank you for
32 that. I have been raising it for a number of years before you came on board last year.
33 So thank you for your support on it. But just we really need to move this.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Joe Behan.

1 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Two quick things, Cathaoirleach, relating to the N11.
2 First of all, work has started last week on investigations related to the proposed bus
3 priority plan for the N11 from Loughlinstown to the Glen View, to the Glen Of The
4 Downs.

5
6 People in the last Council may recall the huge public opposition in the Bray,
7 Kilmacanogue area and Enniskerry to this ridiculous plan to close off the entrances
8 and exits out of those particular towns to facilitate construction of bus lanes on the
9 hard shoulders of those areas. Now, what I want clarification from, from the Chief
10 Executive and it can only come from the Chief Executive, thousands of objections
11 were sent into this Council. I personally thought that was enough, that that would be
12 it, that this plan is not going ahead. We were never told it wasn't going ahead. But
13 what we have now been told is, investigations are starting as a preparation, yet we
14 haven't been told what is the result of the public consultation. So when this notice
15 appeared in the paper or online last week, residents are asking me is this closure thing
16 going ahead or is it not going ahead. I emailed the engineering staff and what I got
17 was, it's only investigations. But it seems to me like we're moving along on a twin
18 track. We're not saying we're not doing it, we're not saying we are doing it. I don't
19 think that is good enough. I want to ask the Chief Executive the same question, and
20 don't forget the Taoiseach is on record, and Minister, they are all on record against this.
21 The Taoiseach was making representations to the Council about this, even though his
22 colleague the Minister for Transport is the one pushing it. Can the Chief Executive
23 here publicly rule out the proposed closures of the Herbert Road and the other major
24 roads that were planned to be closed as a result of this plan? I think I would like that
25 message to go out to people today and it would be grateful if the Chief Executive could
26 give me that clarification.

27

28 And the second point is: Residents who live near the garage where the new parallel
29 road was constructed in Kilmacanogue have waited now for at least three years for
30 noise mitigation measures to be put in place. We see the same report at every Chief
31 Executive's Report about what's happening, prices have been got, this is happening
32 and that, but actually nothing has happened to actually put in those sound mitigation
33 measures. Could somebody tell me when is that actually going to happen? Thanks,
34 Cathaoirleach.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Just before I ask the Chief Executive in,
2 Councillor Corrigan, second time I am asking today, would you mind coming up so I
3 can do my IT this time?

4 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you, members. Councillor
5 Glennon and Councillor Timmins, I suppose I will address Baltinglass RDF together.
6 I am extremely frustrated, as you know. We did some site investigations and some of
7 the services under the ground are very complex and require, I suppose, detailed works
8 to get them moved. And we ran into some issues, I suppose, with the capacity of our
9 own staff to do that. So, to be fair to both Joe Lane's team and the Lenora's team
10 under the RDF side of things we have been looking at the most expeditious way to get
11 work back on ground. I want to commit that we will have work on ground in October.
12 I am very, very conscious that we are not far from Christmas. I hate mentioning
13 Christmas at the start of October but I don't want to discommode the businesses in
14 Baltinglass either. So, our intention would be to get back on the ground this month,
15 get works done, probably come away for the Christmas period and then probably go
16 back on, if necessary, in January. But I am fully committed to getting this work done.
17 I want to, I suppose, pay credit to our Town Regeneration Officer for the amount of
18 work that he has been able to do in the short period of time in terms of getting
19 documents and drawings and the necessary technical documents from our consultants,
20 which has proved quite difficult up to now. So we will press on. That is my firm
21 commitment to you; that we will get back on site this month. And we are looking at
22 the most expeditious way to do that. I do not want to be incurring additional costs. I
23 certainly do not want any more time delays, because Baltinglass have waited long
24 enough at this stage. But I suppose some of the public ground works have been done,
25 the playground has been done, the park has been done. So there are positives, but I
26 know it is not enough and we are committed to getting that work done.

27

28 I will ask Michael to come in on Stratford in a moment.

29

30 Councillor Behan, on the N11. Yes, investigations are about to start. Site
31 investigations. I cannot tell you that those roads will not be closed. I cannot say at
32 this point in time that those roads will not be closed. The only way a bus corridor will
33 work is if it has unfettered access along the route, and if there is traffic egressing and
34 ingressing onto the road at that point the bus corridors will not work, and we will not

1 get that modal shift from the private vehicle into public transport. That being said,
2 the position we are in at the moment is simply not good enough. We have been
3 fighting, as you know, with the Department around ancillary routes and link roads to
4 allow the free movement of people in the Bray area, and Kilmacanogue and other
5 areas, that they can still go about their daily business, because a lot of the movement in
6 and off the N11 is for local traffic. So you can't close off access to the N11 to
7 prioritise a bus and at the same time say you're not going to facilitate the local people.
8 And that's the difficulty we have been in. But I want to be very, very clear with you:
9 At the moment we cannot say that those roads will not be closed based on the need for
10 a dedicated route for a bus corridor. I fully accept the public outrage and the feedback
11 that has been received about the proposals to close the roads. We have taken that on
12 board. We are working with TII. Our preference is for ancillary routes to be
13 delivered so that people can still move about Bray and the constituent areas as freely
14 as they can. I can't be more straight to you than that, Councillor. It can't be ruled out
15 at this stage.

16

17 I might get Joe just to mention the noise mitigation at Kilmacanogue there, but I will
18 go to Michael first please.

19 MR NICHOLSON: Yeah, Cathaoirleach, this was raised at last month's meeting.
20 And following that, I sent out two members of my staff and I went out myself the
21 following week to find out exactly what was going on, and we found absolutely
22 nothing strange. This is an exceptionally good group that have built this fantastic
23 facility in the village of Stratford on Slaney. And those of you who know Stratford,
24 there's not much in Stratford. Well, there is now. There's a fantastic community
25 centre. And there's going to be a cafe as well. The frustrating thing was the reason
26 why it wasn't completely finished was they were held up with the ESB. The wires
27 were there but just hadn't been connected. The community hall has been used by
28 every group and association. A sewing group -- I have a list here as long as your arm
29 of all the groups that have used it: Tidy Towns, yoga, bridge, arts and crafts,
30 homework, book club, IT hub, defibrillator training. You name it, it has been used.
31 It is a fantastic facility. Unfortunately the cafe couldn't be opened because it needed
32 three-phased ESB, and that was the hold up. I am pleased to report, on the 1st
33 October, following intense pressure on the ESB, the cabling has been done and all
34 they're waiting on now is a meter box to be fitted which I believe will be done this

1 week. The group itself are very, very committed, have done tremendous work.
2 They got two grants: the town and village grant and a leader grant. They have spent
3 the money very wisely. My job was to find out was the money spent wisely. It was.
4 Have all the receipts been collected? All the receipts have been collected.
5 Everything has been done right. The lease is in place. We are now working with the
6 committee to buy the building because obviously we'd rather buy them a long-term
7 lease. A long-term lease is fine, a lot of our projects are long-term leases, but it
8 makes far more sense to have ownership of it, and we are looking at ways and schemes
9 to find that money. But certainly, it is a fantastic facility. I would encourage all the
10 members of the Council, if you are ever passing through Stratford call in and have a
11 look at this. It is a credit to all those involved, a fantastic facility. It'll be the
12 makings of Stratford. And I think it will be used by so many groups, which is exactly
13 what the application was for: to have a community room used by so many groups.
14 Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

15 MR LANE: I am sorry but we still don't have any prices in on those mitigation
16 works. We find it is the quickest way of doing it rather than an open tender process
17 but we don't have any update on the price. I will ensure we have something or else we
18 will have to go a different route at the next meeting.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor Pat Kennedy.

20 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thanks, Chair. I have two things I want to bring up to
21 the Chief Executive, and one of them is probably slightly unusual, Chief Executive, so
22 I apologise for putting you on the spot here, but I have been contacted by the collective
23 group of shareholders who graze on the Brockagh Mountain, right? Now, part of
24 grazing on the Brockagh Mountain is the control of live vegetation. In other words,
25 heather. And I have in my possession a letter from Coillte, who have no issue with
26 the burning of strips of heather on the Brockagh Mountain. It is part of farming, it is
27 part of controlling the heather and it is part of how the mountains work. Now, I also
28 have a letter from the National Parks and Wildlife, and they have no issue with the
29 farmers burning under regulation and under supervision of the Gardaí, Coillte and the
30 National Parks in relation to vegetation management on the mountains. There are
31 other practices that can be carried out but there are areas on the mountain where the
32 only way of controlling heather is by burning. Now, they have applied for a permit
33 here, and I am just wondering, they applied on the 1st September and they haven't
34 received that permit yet. But time is running out. They need to be able to manage

1 the heather on the mountains. It is a practice that is going back for generations. It is
2 done under the control of the Wildlife Act. It is done in conjunction with all of the
3 permitted guidelines from the Department. I am just wondering, Chief Executive,
4 would you look into that for me, please, because it is something that needs to be looked
5 at and I would like a comment on that, if you don't mind.

6
7 The other thing I would like to bring up, Chief Executive, is I have been contacted by
8 the chairperson of Beresford Terrace in Arklow in relation to the pathway on the North
9 Beach. It needs maintenance. Hundreds of people walk that day in day out. We all
10 know the importance of walking by the beach. There's scientific evidence to prove
11 the importance of being able to walk beside the sea. Myself and Councillor
12 Fitzgerald did secure funding a few years ago for maintenance. This is underfoot
13 maintenance, Chief Executive. And I would hope that somewhere along the line that
14 yourself and our own district manager would find some amount of money - I don't
15 think we are talking about very big funding here - to see can we carry out some
16 maintenance on that walkway.

17
18 The other part of that, but I don't want you to comment, just maybe a yes or no, I know
19 there was a legal issue there, I am just wondering is that still progressing. I don't want
20 any detail on it if it is. Thanks, Chief Executive, and thanks, Chair.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: You're welcome. Councillor O'Neill.

22 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, yeah. I was just wondering,
23 there's two issues there, I was going to raise the issue of Stratford again. Just to make
24 it very, very clear. I don't know where Councillor Glennon is coming from with the
25 misinformation. There was no misinformation at the last meeting whatsoever. The
26 people of the community of Stratford have come to me over the last while. I raised it
27 over a year ago at the local municipal meeting about what was going on there.
28 There's a lot of money gone into the project at Stratford and it was still not open. And
29 it still is not open. I have a letter there from the committee themselves - so I don't
30 really know where Michael Nicholson is coming from there - that the place is not
31 opened yet. So it is not open. And there's a lot of money and a lot of concern there.
32 The only misinformation I would have had there really: I said there was two Fianna
33 Fáil meetings held there. They were the only meetings that were held there. I was
34 wrong, and I apologise. There was one meeting. There wasn't two. Just to explain

1 to the people in the chamber here, this was an old building. It was built in the
2 seventies. It was a house. And it is on a lease of ten years. According to the people
3 of the area who attended a public meeting in Stratford last week, where about 70
4 people, which is about one-third of the population of Stratford, they attended this
5 meeting in Stratford there last week, and Councillor Glennon wasn't at that meeting,
6 there were three other Councillors at it with me, and it has been explained very clearly
7 that this half million has gone into the building. It was actually nearly demolished as
8 such, it was a house and it is rebuilt, it is rebuilt now and the least is up now in about 12
9 months time. So there's no guarantee with all the money that's gone into the place
10 that this will be kept for the people of Stratford. I would be hoping so. But this is a
11 concern of the people of the area. Exactly what's going on. So we just have to be
12 honest about it. The only reason I brought it here is it wasn't because of any Fianna
13 Fáil meetings or anything, the people are very anxious. The people of Stratford will
14 be in touch with Wicklow County Council to ask what is the situation, the exact
15 situation on it. It doesn't seem to be working at the moment. It is not working at the
16 moment. I have talked to -- I mean, for example, the committee as such, the
17 committee that is running this hall are the one family. There's no outsiders on the
18 committee. Bar one. So that's questions people will ask, Councillor Glennon.
19 Why is it that there only one person from the community on the committee?

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can we go through the Chair, please.

21 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: This is a concern that is going on. Anyway, I will let
22 them elaborate a little bit further. We'll all hear more about this as time goes on.

23

24 And could I just say, Cathaoirleach, if I could ask the CEO, you know, what is the
25 situation in Kippure Lodge? There's a retention gone in there and they're basing their
26 arguments on planning which wasn't granted back in 2017 by the look of it. I was
27 informed by the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal Districts after our meeting there on the
28 23rd that we were bringing, the Council were bringing these developers to court.
29 Now, instead, I hear they put in an application for retention of something that there's
30 no planning file number on, and they then withdrew that the following day, the 24th,
31 and they reissued another one, a more elaborate one, the following day for retention of
32 65 houses, a percolation area, a septic tank, that there's no permission for.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

34 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Again, I bringing this into this chamber --

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Councillor. I understand what you are saying. A bit
2 of respect here, please.

3 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: And I don't want to hear anything about sub judice or it is
4 before this court.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, I am doing my best to get through the agenda here,
6 but I am trying to let other speakers in as well who feel they want to ask questions.
7 Councillor Silvester Bourke.

8 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I raised this at the last
9 meeting and I didn't get a response yet from the Chief Executive. It's in relation to the
10 vacant property grant. I have had another query from somebody who wants to apply
11 for it, and they have a property which is a second property on the one folio. They
12 have got their own dwelling and they have got a farmyard with an old house, and I
13 have been warning they be careful because it has been rejected by the Council in
14 another case. Can we get clarification on that as to exactly what is permitted and how
15 do they go about it? Because there's probably a lot of cases like this out there waiting
16 to come in.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

18 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Councillor Kennedy, in relation to the
19 Brockagh Mountain, yeah, that's normal practice, you know, to burn back heather. If
20 there's an application in since the 1st September I will check with Michael and the
21 colleagues in environment and just see where that is at, and get a response out as soon
22 as possible.

23

24 The North Beach footpath, we will certainly look at what we can do there.

25

26 And yes, there's still ongoing legal matters there.

27

28 Councillor O'Neill, I will ask Michael to come back in again on Stratford. In relation
29 to Kippure, as you know we served enforcement notices on the owners of the
30 properties. They were not complied with. The next step is to go to the High Court,
31 which we have done. They're entitled to make a planning application and they have
32 done so. They had made an application directly to the board for a section 5
33 exemption. We had objected to a section 5 exemption here. So they have now done
34 that and now they have made an application to Wicklow County Council which will be

1 looked on in due course. But we are still taking proceedings for noncompliance with
2 the enforcement notices that were served on them. And I can't say any more on the
3 matter than that.

4
5 Councillor Bourke, if you want to give me the particular details of the two properties
6 in question. We have to be very careful when we're looking at folios. I mean, it is
7 not unusual for there to be more than one property on a folio but that shouldn't
8 discriminate against the applicant, but if you want to come and talk to myself or
9 Michael with the details of it we will see how we can forge a path forward and have a
10 policy maybe or a procedure in place so that at an early stage an applicant, we know
11 what the situation is so it doesn't go against their application for the grant. Thank
12 you.

13 MR NICHOLSON: Thank you. I feel, Cathaoirleach, as though I am living in a
14 twilight world and maybe there's two Stratford on Slaneys, and I'm only aware of one
15 of them. But the hall that I visited after the Council meeting has been open since
16 February. 21st February, development association; 27th February, Fianna Fáil
17 meeting; 6th March, development association; 20th March, development association;
18 3rd April, development association; 6th April, sewing group; 21st April, sewing
19 group; 1st May, development association; 15th May, development association; 29th
20 May, development association; Tidy Towns, 10th June; development association, 12th
21 June; information morning, 20th June; development association, 26th June;
22 information meeting, 26th June; Tidy Towns, 27th June; sewing group, 7th July --

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Michael, I do trust you but I am just conscious of the
24 time.

25 MR NICHOLSON: I know. But he did ask, Cathaoirleach. So yes, it is open. It's
26 been fully used. There was 350,000 allocated to it; 200 under lead and 150 under
27 town and village. As I say, exceptionally good, exceptionally well. The bizarre
28 thing is, you know, Councillor O'Neill himself was at a meeting the same day I went
29 out. So I mean, to say it is not open is bizarre. I don't know, maybe it is just me,
30 Cathaoirleach.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Alvey.

32 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Thank you. Just a quick one on public lighting that came
33 up at district meeting --

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: I knocked everyone off. It is getting to half 5.

1 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: I will be very, very quick. Public lighting came up at our
2 district meeting. There's a lot of public lights out in the area. I see from the report
3 there's 114 faults in our district alone, including large areas of Wicklow Town. And
4 Killadreenan, for example, there's two or three lights in a row that are leaving the
5 whole area in darkness and people can't walk from one area to another. I understand
6 that there was an issue with the contractor, and I see there is a new contractor expected
7 to commence works imminently. I wanted to know is there any update on that and if
8 we can get some assurances that some of those lights will be fixed before the darker
9 days come around. Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

11 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Cathaoirleach, just
12 one item, and it came up at the Bray Municipal Districts and thank you to my
13 colleagues for the support. It is in relation to the out of hours service for individuals
14 contacting Councillors who are homeless. We are looking for a written document on
15 that to outline what needs to be done. I know it has been on the agenda of the housing
16 department for some time, and I do appreciate it is not a straightforward matter. So
17 even, the Chief Executive I'm not looking for a response today but maybe it could be
18 followed up on and we can get a one-pager on what action we can take. Thank you
19 very much, Cathaoirleach.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Stapleton.

21 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I am wondering can
22 someone update me on when the tenants for Ard Darrach social housing in Shillelagh
23 will be given their keys and let me know why there has been a delay in hand over of
24 keys. People were initially communicated that this would happen at the start of June.
25 A lot of people handed in their notice and are now couch surfing for over 12 weeks.
26 And obviously the disposal notes relates to Ard Darrach and an ESB substation, and I
27 am wondering is this going to delay it further, and if we can have a best estimate of
28 final date. Then just quickly to highlight that over the summer there was a severe
29 shortage of tourist accommodation across southwest of Wicklow and across the
30 Wicklow Way, and I was wondering is there anything the Council can do to encourage
31 the building and planning and development of one-off kind of tourist pod
32 accommodation on people's private property.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Chief Executive.

34 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. I will ask Joe to come in on the public

1 lighting, the new contract and the timing of those, Councillor Alvey. Yes, Councillor
2 Flynn Kennedy, we will get a one-pager to you to map out the process for you. Joe
3 will come in on Ard Darrach as well. In relation to tourist accommodation, this is
4 something that has come up before and I know we had a discussion with Councillor
5 Timmins as chair of the SPC that we would have a look at how we look, how this
6 Council responds to applications for tourist accommodation. It is a key objective of
7 our development plan. So it is something we are waiting on the new SPCs to be
8 formed and we will do that through the planning SPC. I think it is really important we
9 address it head on. Joe, if you want to come in. Maybe Leonora might.

10 MS EARLS: Just to say as well, Councillor Stapleton, that we actually have a
11 meeting with Fáilte Ireland because they have done an accommodation audit for
12 County Wicklow, and now we are doing the next phase: how do we develop tourist
13 accommodation across the county.

14 MR LANE: On the public lights, there should be a circular over the next couple of
15 weeks, but you might circulate the particular ones you have there because I will follow
16 through on it myself. A number of Councillors were asking regarding Shillelagh
17 houses. There were contractual issues, just procedural issues in completing those.
18 That is sorted out. Within the next four weeks when the keys will be given over, give
19 or take. Okay.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Stapleton, very quickly.

21 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Just to come in quickly because it might be helpful
22 on tourist accommodation. What I am seeing is that at the moment we're kind of
23 waiting for tourist accommodation to be developed in towns and villages, but maybe
24 that's not making commercial sense because of costs, whereas people are very happy,
25 it is a cheaper alternative to put up a pod in their back garden. It is not necessarily a
26 blight on the landscape. And it is a demand that is out there from the public. So the
27 supply is there, the demand is there. It just needs to be facilitated.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Leonard.

29 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I have just to two public lighting things as well to flag
30 with Joe. Just Aughrim Oaks in Aughrim, and there's a light that has been out since
31 April in Arklow in front of the St Vincent de Paul shop and I think the lady thinks I am
32 lying to her every time I tell her, trying to explain the difficulties around the
33 contractor. But if that could be prioritised, thank you.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Stokes.

1 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh math agat, Cathaoirleach. Firstly could I thank
2 Michael Nicholson for his very long service to the Greystones Municipal Districts and
3 wish the very best of success to Marc Devereux as the new District Manager. Could I
4 congratulate Wicklow County Council on a very successful bulky waste collection
5 here. It was so successful that they had to stop taking donations or drop-offs, and I
6 know that people had travelled from Greystones and were left disappointed as a result.
7 It shows that there is huge demand for bulky waste and dealing with that. And it will
8 be no surprise that I say next that I really think we really need to re-emphasise the
9 importance of having a recycling centre in the Greystones Municipal District. I think
10 one that could handle bulky waste, especially because Bray can't. I think that needs to
11 be kept on the agenda.

12

13 I would like to ask specifically about the Charlesland dual carriage; what is the update
14 on that? The NTA were here today, they didn't seem to have a clue as to what is
15 happening on the ground. There 1.2 million allocated. We had another crash last
16 week into the railings. Again, as I said earlier, about every two months. I really
17 think this is something we need to get on with now. I would ask for a decisive update
18 on what is happening with the Charlesland dual carriage upgrades on the five
19 roundabouts.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor John Snell.

21 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Could I ask the Chief Executive in anticipation of the
22 budget meeting in November, just if we could be circulated with, I don't expect you to
23 have the answer today of course, but just in regards to the collection rate on
24 development levies. Development has never been as prominent as it has been on the
25 east coast for the last at least eight years. A huge amount of development levies
26 should have been recouped by this local authority. It is just to get the figures on that
27 prior to the budget meeting. And I also think it is timely that we have a look at the
28 development levies in the whole scheme because the public in general feel that we as a
29 local authority are letting them down because development levies don't seem to be
30 ring-fenced back into the capital projects that they would like to see come to fruition.

31

32 And certainly if you talk to most people that while, yes, you have capital projects to do
33 with roads and footpaths and big infrastructure, but a lot of people want sports
34 facilities, they want their campus-type sports facilities of which we seem to be

1 neglecting them all the way down. I have no doubt it is in the east, the south, certainly
2 the north of the county will say they have facilities. But they don't. They don't have
3 enough for how quickly the population the spiralled.

4
5 Again, just in regards to your answer on Kippure, I want to commend you. I know
6 that you have given an answer as best you can. But when we look at the reality of 65
7 houses without planning permission, and again the development levies that would
8 have been incurred had it went through the proper procedures. But, you know, to say
9 that the world is watching would be an exaggeration because the world has an awful
10 lot of things going on at the moment and it wouldn't be top of their priority, but I can
11 tell you now the people of Ireland are watching what's going on in County Wicklow,
12 certainly on enforcement from this local authority. And I would have to say that we
13 shouldn't be brushing it under the table and I am not saying we are. It is a pity I wasn't
14 here to support Councillor O'Neill on the day that he tried to have a conversation about
15 this, because I think all 32 Councillors should be very aware of this. It's in our
16 county. It's somebody who has come in and given two fingers to everything,
17 including planning law. And for that I say that we have to be very vigilant. It is our
18 duty irrespective of if it is in your Municipal Districts or not.

19
20 So I commend the Council in the work they've done to date on this. I hope that you
21 keep putting the shoulder to the wheel on this, because, as I say, an awful lot of
22 counties throughout Ireland are watching what is going on here and we certainly don't
23 want to be a soft touch for anyone coming in just because they have loads and loads of
24 money. So thanks, Cathaoirleach.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I have one more speaker so I am
26 going to invite Councillor Orla Finn in there. I might ask something myself, then.

27 COUNCILLOR FINN: Thank you very much. It is a very quick question and it is
28 really an environmental issue actually. It's in relation to people who have contacted
29 me and actually sent videos about the number of rats that are mainly at The Cove in
30 Greystones but also going all the way up to what is known as The Mens, so between
31 The Cove and The Mens. There are really, really quite an awful lot of rats in that area
32 and it seems to be an ever growing number. I am wondering what is the protocol
33 around this issue, and what if anything can be done. There is a lot of greenery in the
34 area, but from a biodiversity point of view, I am not sure that it is the kind of greenery

1 we necessarily need. So can it be cut back what can be done, please? Thank you.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I am going to ask one question
3 myself, very quickly today. Obviously, we have a tenants' handbook. I appreciate it
4 has to be there because we have to have guidelines. We're also dealing with some of
5 the most vulnerable in society. There seems to be a hard steadfast that windows and
6 doors are responsibility of tenants, but unfortunately we are dealing with some of the
7 most vulnerable in society. They just haven't got the money to fund, let's say, new
8 locks or new doors. Not huge expenses but would mean a great huge deal to them. I
9 am just asking can the tenant handbook -- I'm not looking for a grey area, I am looking
10 for some consideration when we are dealing with some of the lowest income earners in
11 our county. Thank you.

12 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Joe has taken note of your particular
13 issues, Councillor Leonard, about the public lighting. Councillor Stokes, I want to
14 extend the same and yourself, my thanks to Michael for his work in the Greystones
15 Municipal District. Yes, bulky waste collections are always hugely, hugely popular.
16 The Greystones Recycling Centre is on the agenda. As you well know, we had a long
17 discussion about it. It is a matter of funding something like that and how we would
18 do that. There are options, but it is not for discussion here today around it.

19
20 I might get Joe to come in on the dual carriageway, on the roundabout upgrades on
21 that. Councillor Snell on the collection rate on the development levies, we can
22 certainly bring -- get a note out to members on that. That is not a problem at all. We
23 have been in discussions internally about the development levy scheme and, again, it is
24 a long time since it has been reviewed or looked at, so it is probably timely that it will
25 go through the SPC to do that in due course, and at that point, you know, members can
26 decide to reallocate and re-portion the percentages that go to the capital type projects
27 there.

28
29 We'll certainly look at the rats in Greystones. I mean, that is a public health issue. If
30 there is anything that we can do at MD level in terms of vegetation and overgrowth, we
31 can certainly look at it. We might also talk to our colleagues in the Public Health Unit
32 about it too. The tenant handbook, yeah, we can certainly look at it. Councillor
33 O'Brien might ask Michael to look at that maybe through the housing SPC.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

1 MR LANE: I am going to take the advice, or the follow up of the NTA, Steven, and I
2 am going to make sure we get a comprehensive report rather than just one that I'm not
3 a hundred per cent sure. Okay. I've a little issue on that one. I will have that out to
4 you next week.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Joe. Thank you, members, for your patience
6 today. I think it was a worthwhile meeting. I have two very small announcements if
7 you don't mind.

8
9 The first one, obviously, we are here next Monday at 2 o'clock for LPT meeting. And
10 the last thing from a personal point of view, on behalf of all of us I would like to wish
11 Councillor Gail Dunne -- I did look for his permission before I said this today -- I want
12 to wish him well just in case he's not here next Monday. As we all know, Gail has had
13 some health issues, and he's going in for a major operation towards the end of the
14 month. So I just want on behalf of all of us to wish him the very best of luck in a
15 couple of weeks' time and we look forward to having him back here in good spirits and
16 health sooner rather than later.

17
18 So thank you very much again and we will see you next week. Thank you.

19
20
21
22

(Meeting concluded at 5:33 pm)

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