

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

ON

MONDAY 4th APRIL 2022 AT 2:00 P.M.

MYCLEARTEXT LTD:

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

Sheryll Holley

Kimberly Shea

Elaine McCarthy

>>: Members who are remote can you hear us? There was a problem with sound. We will start again; we will start a Roll Call again.

(Roll Call taken)

CATHAOIRLEACH: Members vote of sympathy, put forward your votes of sympathy, Councillor Vincent Blake.

>>: Yes, to the Macavoy family, he was a member of staff on the (sound disappeared).

>>: Vincent you are muted.

>>: Sounds gone again.

>>: Chair you are coming up as muted.

>>: I am hearing nothing.

>>: Councillor Blake ask you to start again please?

>>: Just two vote of sympathy to the Macavoy family.

>>: Members can you hear Councillor Blake?

>>: Yes, we can hear him.

>>: To Kevin who is a member of our outdoor staff here, on the death of his sister Katie, died last week and buried on Saturday.

And also... the death of Anne O' Shea, to both families, deepest sympathy.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes...

>>: Kathleen will be sadly missed and in our Wicklow town. Kathleen's husband who passed a number of years ago, was a distinguished town Councillor, George, I would like to convey my condolences to the family.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Anybody else? I will hand you over to Helen now.

>>: Vote of sympathy to our colleague Ann cane. Our colleague, Karen downs on the death of her father. And to our colleague Martina on the death of her sister.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you we will stand for a moment's silence.

(Minute silence)

CATHAOIRLEACH: May the souls of those departed rest in peace.

Item Number 1.

>>: If I could pass on best wishes before you start there, I would like to congratulate Wicklow, Charlie on the, on last weekend and the amount of money and awareness he raised for motor neurones. The whole country here last week, all went out and supported him. I propose that maybe a letter might be sent from Wicklow County Council to him, you know, wishing him we will and congratulating him on making this really, we are more aware of the illness and the fight back from people and maybe, if, if you thought right, we could send a letter from the County Council from yourself.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We will say, all in agreement? Agreed thank you. Okay.

Item Number 1: To consider the disposal of 0.0248 hectares or thereabouts of property in the townland of Little Bray, Castle Street, Bray, County Wicklow comprised in Folio WW6086L being the property known as former Helton Buckley Site at Castle Street, Bray, Co Wicklow by Transfer Order to Silverbow Ltd/Bushnell Investments Ltd, 1st Floor, Block 1, Quayside Business Parkin, Dundalk, Co Louth, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property (as per notice previously circulated).

Could I have a proposer and seconder please?

>>: I will propose.

>>: Seconder.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We all in agreement? Yes. You would like a vote on it? Okay, we are going for a vote on Item Number 1.

>>: Who is speaking?

COUNCILLOR ANNE FERRIS: Was me, Anne Ferris, what are the grounds for the vote, or do we have grounds?

CATHAOIRLEACH: The members are entitled to go for a vote, even though proposer and seconder, it is open for a vote.

>>: Who called for a vote?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.

>>: Second by Councillor Anne Ferris

(Votes taken).

>>: 21 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstain.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you moving on to Item Number 2: To consider the disposal of 0.54 hectares in the townland of Mill Road, Killincarrig, County Wicklow, by Transfer Order to the Health Service Executive (as per notice previously circulated).

Proposer and seconder please. Councillor - seconded by...

>>: I have my hand up.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes, bring in Councillor Scott?

COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Wanted to clarify something as regards the disposal and just I am just wondering where the funds go, do they stay within the district, or they return to the council? What is the usual procedure?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Christine, maybe to come up for an explanation, while Christine is sitting here, I will go on to Councillor Derek Mitchell.

COUNCILLOR DEREK MITCHEL: Yes, I would like to say, I am opposed to this. We were due to get a plan for the overall site here, the overall site is very important, in the centre of Greystones, close to the dark station, I think that putting a centre is not the best use for the site because it doesn't connect properly to the well to the dark station. Two other sites in Greystones which is the council has which are zone commercial which I think it will about better to put the primary health care centre on.

We also have here the largest immediately next to this site, we have the largest film studio in Ireland to be built which will have a road frontage of over 50,000 square foot commercial office building close to here. I think there needs to be integration to what is happening here and on site. In particular, a hundred bed hotel roughly speaking, which will get good trade from any film studio and will put the work for that, but I think that to decide to sell half the frontage, the road frontage of this site before we have an overall plan for the site is a mistake. I don't think we should be doing it. We should be doing it with the plan in mind of Ireland's largest film studio next-door. Need to be significant car parking on this site for the primary health care centre, lots of traffic in and out. I think that will be a problem to cope with and there are already problems in the park and ride site, which is next to here, with the 500 spaces, it can take people who have already spent an hour on the train, 10 minutes to get out. There as lot of peak loading, somehow the traffic needs to be sorted out.

The area between this site and the road is quite narrow, there is a single cycle track and footpath and I think it will need to be widened, if we are to cope with this on the traffic to and from the film studio. I think this is premature to sell this off. There are two other sites, I would like to see, to speak to the HSE and see why they are not going for the other two sites. I think this is definitely a premature thing to do. I am against doing it.

>>: I want to say I am in favour; it is the only site that doesn't have a primary care site. We are in need, the development of which there is a long road ahead of making this happen, if we do vote for this. A lot of work gone into this, I would have concerns and would echo Councillor Scott's question about where the proceeds of the selling that site will go to and if it will about retained in the community to hopefully develop public services further to reflect the huge housing development and increase the population in the area in terms of parking, I am sure that will be addressed in the designs going ahead, we have been waiting for many years, cited since 2015 and 16 for many years now, and I think it really needs, we need to start work on as soon as possible. I do acknowledge concerns about parking, there is a big problem there, we have to look at them overall master plan as we will. But I think for now, it is the dial site thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Gerry Walsh.

COUNCILLOR GERRY WALSH: I will put my mic on, I actually proposed this, I don't know whether you heard me or not. As with the Councillor there, I support this, I know other sites have been included. Look, we have advanced the situation to where we are at now, like Councillor Scott I would like to see noting the evaluation process and the value put on the site, I would like to see proceeds from the site remain in the district. As I said, I propose it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Tom?

COUNCILLOR TOM FORTUNE: Apologies my connection went down there earlier, so I got lost there for a few minutes. I think there is a massive mixed message coming out on this site. There was an article in the Wicklow paper, only last week, talking about certain developments going on it. Now it is before us today for this. So, while I would support the health centre, I think there's needs to about a proper conversation on the site because it hasn't happened. A couple of half conversations, personally I am picking up mixed messages

about it. I don't know whether we should vote on it today, but maybe put it off for more discussion on it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Two issues, one is, as the point has been made, these Primary Care Centres around the county, in fact around the country. But I think it would be fair to say, while the buildings are there, difficulties in getting them staff and required professionals, the whole idea that is a lot of services that you would have to go for hospital for, relocated to other parts of the country, takes pressures off the hospitals. The reality of new Primary Care Centres being built, but there are major difficulties in getting staff for them. I wonder whether the executive of the council are aware of how many staff will actually eventually be working in this building or what type of professions represented.

The second question I have is that the council has any idea, is this site going to be sold on to a developer? Because, with other Primary Care Centres, a developer provides the site, builds the building and then gets a rental for 30 years or whatever after.

So, is the disposal to the HSE or some condition that the HSE is going to sell it on? Clarification on there. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, I will bring in Christine there just to answer a few of those questions.

>>: Thank you, with regard to the money being spent locally, the money, any funding goes into central pot by members may be aware we are negotiating to acquire property in Greystones Community Enterprise Centre, so, one would imagine while the money will go into the central pot, I would imagine it will go towards, but I can't guarantee, that it will go towards the acquisition of such a community enterprise centre.

With regard to the development of the site, I take the point that Councillor Mitchell has made. There is roughly just over 11 acres in Greystones which has been the subject of, I suppose we would more correctly call it a vision statement rather than a master plan but we have been looking at ideas for the development of the acres but it was decided that there would be more practical to separate out the 1.33 acres required for the Primary Care Centre rather than hold it up in discussions about development of hotel, the hotel and the quantum of residential leisure offices because that's part of a much bigger plan. So, for practical reasons, it was decided to separate it out. I take the point about the road frontage etc but, I have had numerous discussions with the district engineer and with the senior planner and advised that that's one of the best locations for the site.

Now with regard to other sites we have in fact examined a large number of sites and properties owned by the council around Greystones and again, this is deemed to be the most suitable site. The district engineer has done an exercise on land within the district and pretty much all of it is either spoken for or unsuitable by means of size or gradient or other reasons.

So, with regard to Councillor Behan's question about primary care centres, I don't actually know the answer to that, I don't know how many staff will be there, but I do know that the Wicklow Primary Care Centre has various services there from a number of GP practices, public and private physiotherapists, dental practices, mental health services and a wide range of services including out of hours doctor's service. Also has a pharmacy adjacent to the property and it seems to be well used, literally 24/7 it seems to be fairly well used. I am aware there is problems getting staffing of course the board, the entire public sector but I can't say how many staff are likely to be there.

Councillor Fortune mentioned a number of discussions we have had, we have had 2, certainly I was in attendance at 2 meetings, at

Greystones Municipal District, in which we had the statement and master plan and seeking out the ideas of the elected members. Some queries following our last discussion and I am waiting for Irish rail to come back to us with regard to their requirements. So, that's it. I think I have covered everything there, Chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you Christine. I will bring in the Chief Executive.

>>: Following on from what Christine said, other sites were examined, and this was identified as the best suit for the primary health care centre. I suppose the key thing, is the provision of the centre would be a great addition to Greystones, the proceeds, we can't put it in the general pot, I would be in favour of using the proceeds as towards, as Christine referenced, any proposal for the enterprise centre in that area. That's probably the best we can do. We can't have a situation where it goes to a general pot but look at ring fencing it. It is a capital disposal and capital acquisition.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There was a question, in terms of the disposal to the HSE, is that where the disposal ends or possibly sold on to a developer? I don't know whether there was an answer to that question?

>>: Apologies, I cannot answer that. Our disposal is to the HSE. It is basically an interest transfer, handled by the evaluation office they have been advised on the evaluation. What the HSE do with that site once they acquire it? I cannot say. I do know it is you know; it is a valuable piece of property. But I can't say what the intentions - yes, sorry, apologies, yes, the HSE have full intentions of acquiring it for Primary Care Centre. But what arrangements they might have with any, construction of the building with the developer. I cannot say what those arrangements might be.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan?

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: That's fair enough, I don't expect Christine to have that answer, but I think it will be important that a condition of the sale is that a health centre is provided at that site. Because as Councillors, Crooksling Hospital was a HSE facility, provided for many older people in west Wicklow, HSE want to put it on the open market and sell it. Move the patients to another facility. Councillor O'Neill has led the battle for that, and I don't want to see a situation, where the HSE estates, because it is a huge part of the HSE, estates manage all the properties throughout the country. We have come against them at HSE forum meetings, I want to make sure that we secure the health centre for that land that we are selling, rather than seeing it is sold for something else if the HSE decide they can't proceed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That might be part of a contract. I will get Lorraine to clarify that if you don't mind?

>>: All the discussion that has ensued in relation to this site has always been, the understanding for the development of a Primary Care Centre, ensuring that is in the contract for sale.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Two more speakers, Gerry O'Neill.

COUNCILLOR GERRY O'NEIL: I share Councillor Behan's concern here, in the west, Primary Care Centres built by independent groups you know, by contractors, they lease them back to the HSE over a 30-year period. But they don't necessarily lease the whole lot of the building, sections let out to a private business, I think we should be clear on this, whether it is the HSE will wholly, will about leasing this entire building or not? It would be unusual because I mean it is, the Primary Care Centres I know on the west Wicklow here, they are not fully fitted out yet and not 24/7 the same 9 to 5 doctors as we had before they ever joined the Primary Care Centre. So still a lot of questions there and still a lot of work to be done to fit out Primary Care Centres.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor, to add my support for this disposal. I agree, I would be concerned if there is any opportunity that this didn't develop fully, there is a need for primary health care services I wouldn't want to see it delayed with the master plan. But I wouldn't want it to be used to anything other than primary care services.

We have two more members, Councillor Snell.

COUNCILLOR SNELL: Sorry, I would like to come in so late there. Just on a point of clarification.

>>: I do agree with Councillor Behan and O'Neil. I think there's an urgent need for a Primary Care Health Care Services, so I certainly wouldn't like to see it delayed with that master plan, but, equally, I wouldn't like to see it overrun with health care services.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell.

Councillor Snell: The Chief Executive answered one of the questions in regards to Jerry Walsh. He said that he would like to see the funding retained for the Greystones municipal district. There's a capital project and a capital scheme. What I've seen in the lifetime of the previous council where almost €800,000 was retained and there was a quintessential path for the council, we voted that it be retained within the Bray district. I supported it at the time. I thought that was the right thing to do. I have essentially discovered that that money wasn't shared out. It was to be shared on projects that the Councillors up there would agree across the board.

That didn't happen, unfortunately. It was money that was spent on projects, but, unfortunately, some Councillors at that time felt they were isolated from spending that money. I just want to make sure that Councillor Walsh understands that the Chief Executive has given a commitment that he would like to see it go to a capital project, but there can be no guarantees because it seems to be that the municipal districts don't seem to get - - there's a lot of money, lots of pockets of land that's being disposed. There's lots of money revenue coming into British Bay and Locke, and it seems to go to central funding. I wanted to make that point.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: If you look at three there, it's supposed to dispose the property to the Health Service Executive. So, would it be possible to add to that line there for the provision of a primary care centre?

Secondly, responding to Councillor's notes, I know the note made about the enterprise centre that's currently under construction, so I take it from the comments made by the Chief Executive that monies realised from this sale will be reinvested into this, again, badly needed health care centres.

I know it was said, but I would like to get further clarity on that.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We've already got clarification on the point of the sale to the HSE for a primary health centre. That's what it's proposed for. That will be part of the contract. I will ask for the chief to come in before the vote.

>>: Councillor Snell is correct that, look, we don't have a system whereby if money comes in in a particular area, that it's spent in a particular area, whether it's LPT or to develop levies. The point I'm making is there's the timing of it. We're looking at an enterprise centre within Greystones. Obviously, we will need funding to that. If we didn't use that, we'll have to find money elsewhere. It just makes sense, in that regard, to use it whereby I suppose we're not changing the procedure and creating a precipice going forward. I think it's just the timing. It just makes sense, if that's acceptable.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you. Final comment, Lorraine?

LORRAINE: Just following up from Councillor Walsh's query. Section three provides for conditions to be added, but it's clear at the disposal in order for the correspondence of primary care will be reflected in the instructions to the agent, and it will be included in the contract for sale.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you. We're going for a vote.

Proposed by Councillor Jerry Walsh and seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald.

(Voting)

>>: 27 for, one against, (indiscernible) not present.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Moving on the to three. To considering the disposal of 139 square meters of thereabouts in the townland of Old Connaught, Bray which consists of the ground floor retail premises comprising approximately 103 square meters and a store comprising approximately 36 square meters to the rear at Richmond Hill, Fassaroe, Bray Co. Wicklow by lease to Mr. Terry Fegan, 27 Killarney Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Seconded by Mary Corrigan. All agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

Item number four, to note the draft Country Council Annual Report.

>>: As required under section 221 of the local government act. It should be noted that the annual financial statement is not to be listed as an agenda item until the May meeting, and the financial information considered to be included in the County Council Annual Report after that meeting. The submission for the performance indicators 2021 is Friday, 29th of April. And the appendix in the annual report which includes the performance indicators will be updated after submission, and the report will be listed to be adopted at the meeting on June 30th.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. So, it will be coming back in June. Everybody agree to that?

Okay. Thank you.

Item 5, to consider the Chief Executive Monthly Management Report March 2022 and to note the Chief Executive Monthly Management Report, February 2022.

>>: Just before we go into the details of the report, I would just like to put forward a proposal in relation to, I suppose, some structure in relation to the Chief Executive Report agenda item going forward. This was brought to the CPG at their last meeting. The proposal was highlighted, the fact that the agenda item of the Chief Executive Report was running to - - one day, it was 1 hour and 45 minutes. It was eating into the meeting time, and it was making it difficult to get through our business. I think the January meeting, we had an extension, and we still had to rush through two presentations at the very end, literally over the course of 10 minutes.

So, a few options were put to the CPG. I think it was - - obviously, the members are here today on that committee. There was a unanimous agreement that it was running too long, and we had to put some sort of structure on it.

So, the consensus was, by the members in question, that we try to limit it to one hour going forward. I suppose it's recognized by the management and by the members that it's a very important agenda item, and we think an hour is sufficient. Also, the proposal will be to

limit people's contribution in order for it to work and everybody to get in, to limit it up to two minutes and make the questions rather than statements will probably help.

But, also to ensure there's fairness, if after the hour, there's a number of people that would like to come in, any of the questions of those members would be emailed in directly to the relevant service for direct reply. Then, at the following monthly meeting, those, whether it's one, two, three people - - maybe there's no people, anyone who didn't get in would be the first up to ask questions at the next meeting.

So, as I said, that was the proposal agreed at the CPG. So, I suppose we just open it up to the members, if they're happy to proceed in that manner.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Before I open it up, I suppose I agree with the Chief Executive. I suppose that for the last eight months, I've been trying to get through the issue of agendas, and there's no doubt that the length of time the Chief Executive Report is dominating meetings - - and it's a very important report, and there's absolutely no question in my view of curtailing people's questions or views on this, but in order to get through the agenda, we have to put some sort of structure on proceedings. I think limiting questions - - sorry - - limiting time that members are speaking for certainly will make it easier to get through the Chief Executive's report, and we've had a situation as well - - I think you would all agree - - you know,

that questions have been answered, and then they've been asked in a slightly different way, and they have to be answered a second time.

So, look, it's with the member support that we're trying to get through agendas. I just want to put that on record before I open it up.

So, first of all, Councillor Edward Timmons?

Edward Timmons: I'm referring to the February report, page 54, already have funding. It says (indiscernible) was appointed consultant, and a tender package will issue in February 2022. There was a package issued in October 2019, to years ago. So, we're very excited to see something happening on the ground rather than just talking consultant fees. So, I would like to know the status of the RDF funding for this. Where do you expect things to be and where is the tender process at?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Before I have comments in, can we have things put forward rather than the report. Does anyone have views in terms of what we're suggesting in terms of the report and curtailing the length of time.

Councillor Behan?

Behan: I don't agree at all with the proposal to limit our opportunity to either ask questions or comment or seek agreement around the table for items we're concerned about. People may or may not be

aware that one of the few, very, very few innovations in the Local Government Act in 2014 was that Chief Executive has a statutory obligation to provide us with a monthly report of the activities of the council.

I know over the years; everybody has been praising the Chief Executive for the great report. In fact, all Chief Executives of all councils are statutorily obliged to provide this report. Now there's no point in providing the report if we can't have time to discuss it or seek clarification because it covers the entire business of the council.

Oftentimes, I've sat here where presentations have been made or presentations have been rushed that we never asked for, that someone at the top table decided that we better give them a presentation on X, Y, or Zed.

We have the right to question the executive. Also, voluntarily tying our hands and saying, Okay. We limit each person to two minutes, and we will only ask questions and not give a comment.

That is just ridiculous and totally antidemocratic. I would ask you, chairman, to go back and look at this and look at the number of presentations that are put on the agenda that maybe we don't necessarily need to have. Maybe we could just get them as an email and look through and then ask a question at the following meeting.

But, certainly, from my point of view, you asked for opinions, and that's my opinion. We should not curtail the discussion of the Chief Executive Report.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

O'Brien?

O'Brien: It's something I look forward to at every meeting because it's a time to get answers to all of our questions. What I've said is the onus has to come back on us as public representatives, not to use as a stage to promote ourselves; to ask the serious questions. It's something I want kept because it's something I enjoy. I want to raise something, though, very shortly that's important, but I think the onus is so get to the point and not grandstand.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Leonard?

Leonardo: I agree. I think this is a very important process. As a female councillor, it's my way of asking and learning about the whole county from the other councillors. I think it's important to be allowed to ask questions.

>>: We've been struggling this protocol since I joined protocol when we handed out committees. We've raised it at every meeting. The general discussion at every meeting was that the presentations were taking too long and going over, and we wanted more time to discuss the Chief Executive Report.

I'm a little surprised that CPG has come back with this. I just wanted to question about the role in this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Neary.

Jodie Neary: I agree. I think we have a lot of presentations that are not that necessary. We're supposed to have taken it as read, but, really, it ends up taking a lot of time to discuss the contents of a presentation and having questions and answers. There's also - - you know, when you have multiple or some coming in multiple times as well, that can extend the debate. What is undemocratic, I believe, is we have not been able to get through council motions. It's now a defunct system when, really, that is a very important part of our job, to bring forth motions. We have not been able to get to them.

While I agree we need structure time and dedicated time, as well, for questions, the report is very important. We do need to look at the other items on the agenda and maybe look at taking back some of those additional items to prioritize the CEO report, but, again, I don't think we can deliberate too long on the report either. I think we need to be very, very strict about time management.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Councillor Pat.

>>: I think tying people to a management time is wrong. I think there's different stages that affect different areas. I think it would be

understandable that Councillors from that area might have different input on that. I think it comes down to the chairman - - it certainly doesn't affect you on anyway, but people that are grandstanding and tying up things, they should be shut down.

>>: Just to repeat, we need to keep things central and front and central of the meetings. I think it's a critical report. In relation to presentations, a lot of presentations here are too long. There should be a restriction of 10 minutes, unless it's something exceptional. As Councillor Behan said, maybe somewhere not necessary to have in the first place.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Jerry O'Neil?

>>: I understand where Brian is coming from. I take a lot of questions and repeat and whatever. We at the HSE, the Forum of Councillor Behan, (indiscernible), and myself, we have the option of putting forward a motion two weeks before, whether it's a motion or a question, and then we get a written reply. Every other delegate there will get a written reply to everyone's question. So, I think it could work to a certain extent, that if we were given the opportunity to ask certain questions and get a written reply, every councillor in the chamber would have a chance to ask questions. I think it would go a long way towards where people are repeating themselves.

And I fully agree with councillors that some go on far, far too long, and I get more out of the report than the presentations.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Councillor Grace McManus?

GRACE MCMANUS: Thank you. I want to add my voice to what most councillors said. I won't be comfortable with having a time limit. All the pages we get, this is the bread and butter. If we said we're going to give that one our month, I don't think that is right. I think there's a good point about the written replies. I don't know why we couldn't have quarterly meetings, if needed, but I don't agree with us curtailing the report at this time.

>>: For somebody who has attended meetings since 1997, I've never seen it any different. I've seen minutes of meetings going on to just get them approved for an hour and a half. Some of the older members remember some of the grandstanding. I think the meetings are much improved since I've become a councillor.

We have people three or four times, if somebody has something to say, let them have their say. People coming back in and back in, that's what holds up the meetings.

Just on presentations and things like that to the council, in my opinion - - and I know technology is a great thing, and people are at home at the meeting, but we've had people give presentations here and have kept the meeting waiting for 15, 20 minutes trying to come in. If they're not here in the chamber, they shouldn't be asked to give a presentation because it's too difficult to give it from outside the

area, as far as I'm concerned. So, I would like the presentations to be a lot shorter. Some of them are going on 15, 20 minutes, as if they're trying to sell themselves to the council. We've engaged them to come in and do a job, and a half an hour later, they're still going on. We're all looking at each other and saying, what's going on here?

If it's an area, it could take up to an hour for one presentation. So that needs to be looked at badly.

But, like, in my opinion, people coming back in and back in is not good. The meetings are a hell of a lot better than they were 15, 20 years ago. I guarantee you that.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Tommy Ainsley?

>>: May I say a number of years ago, my daughter is about 10 years of age. I was going out to a meeting, and every councillor has to go to a meeting. She asked if I had to go to the meeting. I said it's important to the people I go to meet.

People are coming in here to give a presentation. They've been waiting months to come into this chamber. There was a presentation that probably bored the council, but it's very important to the members of that forum to come in and give their presentation.

I do get bored at the presentations as well, and I said at the CPG, Yeah, that's a great idea. Limit that presentation to an hour.

But I also agree with my fellow council members, it's vital, but we should be able to conduct our business in an hour and get your point across.

This conversation, it's been going on. If 16 members speak for 15 minutes, that's half an hour gone. We should limit it to one hour and email your questions in. What I do have - - I also have a problem that I email the housing department, and I never get an answer, never get a reply. So, what's the point. The Director of Housing has joked with me. Now, I don't like answering you, Councillor Ainsley.

Now, that may be funny, but it's not funny to me when I don't get an answer to the question I'm looking for.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Councillor Tom Fortune?

TOM FORTUNE: Thank you. I'm on record of my views on this particular item. I think this is the most important part of our meeting, this particular report. And I can understand the desire to try

and have things kind of controlled and all that, but I think this is what we're all about. This is what I'm on record as saying, that when the Chief Executive brought out this report - - and I noted Councillor Behan's comments - - it was probably the best thing that had happened.

I think we should not be making the report shorter. I think - - I hear a lot of people saying and I hear it continually at meetings that people grandstand, but I can't recall in recent times too many people grandstanding. When people are asking questions, they're asking questions from the people who elect them. That's our function.

But I'm in favour of this report being given every bit of time it needs.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Walsh?

Walsh: Thank you. This is an issue that's been well- aired, the time allocated to the CEO report, presentations, et cetera, et cetera. My opinion that the hour should really be enough, but I wouldn't certainly stick rigidly to it. Generally, not all 32 members are going to speak on that item, but I would not rigidly stick to that. I think we should use the option of the email replies to questions if time does expand too much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Councillor Scott?

>>: Yes. I'm all for keeping people to two minutes speaking. Most of us can get our comments across on this very comprehensive and important report in two minutes. I'm sure there's a degree of flexibility in that, if we're running slightly over the hour.

I said it at CPG and I will say it again, something has to be done with the presentations. I used to give presentations all the time. If you're allocated to 10 minutes, it's very easy to make presentations that lasted 10 minutes. So, I think that really does need to be addressed.

Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Councillor Mary Murphy?

Mary Murphy: Yes. I think the presentations are vital because in some of the presentations, we probably don't know the depth of the work that some of the organisations are coming to. I do think the length of time, I think they're vital. I wouldn't like to see them scrapped at all as well. Especially the in-house ones, it's a way of promoting these organisations, in reporting as well. I think everyone has a right to speak. Sometimes we need to have more structure in the meeting, but I think the presentations are important.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor John Snell?

JOHN SNELL: I wouldn't use the terms limit or restricting people's speaking time. I think it's about restructuring our council chambers and our time in the chambers. The reality is we only meet once a month for full council meetings outside of special meetings. It's three hours long unless we get a period of half an hour of extension time.

We have disposal orders, like considering the draft annual service delivery plan that's coming up later on.

Sitting here and waiting to come in and I don't think it is acceptable. The reality, we can do our business, extraordinary times we are living there through, and it is difficult for this term of office and this council. We can still do our business, by emails and telephone calls. I take on board that times you know, we may get a response to what we want and the like of that. But the offices are open now. We can come in and deal with officials. We can deal with senior management. I think an hour for this section is very, very important and I would hope that there would be a little bit of flexibility. But the reality, if you go back over the Chief Executives report, since it has been implemented, going back to the Chief Executive, very rarely as more than 50% of the chambers spoken. There are an awful lot of council that don't question the Chief Executive, by their own choice. That doesn't mean you limit others. But the reality at times it is not necessary to conduct your business here. How you distinguish, between ground standing, if someone asks a question, it is unfair to say, they are grand standing. They might get a headline or not. They might want the headline, or they don't. They want the question to be answered.

Every public representative is entitled to ask questions, I have asked 2, 3 at most in this format. That doesn't mean that other councils

shower restricted. It is about structure. We are already an hour and 10 minutes into this meeting of a 3-hour meeting we haven't got to the Chief Executives report. So, within another hour and another hour and a half. Chasing your tail and up to to the last 30 minutes of the meeting and still statutory meeting that has to be done, we have a gentleman waiting to present, we tell him to go away and come back next month? Maybe next month will be the same. I think we really have to curtail and realistically, if it is important, if you feel it is an important question, go for it. For me at times, if I feel I can get an answer, should the normal function and a role of a public representative by picking up the phone, sending in an email or coming into this offices, 5 days a week, because at the end of the day, that's what we are elected to do. I am not restricting anybody's time; I am calling it restructuring

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, Councillor Anne Ferris.

CLLR FERRIS: I want the to support the proposal you put at the beginning of the conversation, one hour is enough. I don't often raise things in the Chief Executive report, I go through its page by page. The problem is that people will repeat other Councillors, you know, because they want, put maybe repeat what they say in other words, but I think that's the problem. I think that if you go through the report, and you have questions, you know, if you jot them down at a note pad and say them, you will about we will finish what you want to say in a couple of minutes, 2 or 3 minutes, I think an hour is long enough. I have a note of the motion as you know Cathaoirleach, the first note I tabled in July last year, it has been on the top of the agenda for I don't know how many months, when Councillor chaired the meeting five weeks, we got to it. But only 3 or 4 minutes left of that meeting. I didn't fare for anybody with notice of motions to get it through in 3 or 4 minutes. I would welcome if the Chief Executive report could be finished in an hour, and as you said and as the Chief Executive said, if people's lights are still on, they could about first to

ask questions on the report, the following month and I think that's fair.

I can't see you know, this kind of stuff happening around a Board table in private business, where people can you know, just go on and ask questions and come back in again and back in again and back in again. As Councillor Snell said, it is not fair to the likes of the Chief Fire Officer or anybody else to be sent away and come back. I think last year, and I agree with Councillor Miriam, that the in-house reports are very, very important. It is our staff working on issues who are compiling the reports and putting them to the members for us to see what exactly is happening. I think they are very, very crucial and should not about cut back in anyway. I think if we need to organise the agenda much better, I do support your proposal Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Fitzgerald.

Councillor Fitzgerald: I was going to say what has been said. If I have a problem, I email or phone and that's the way I always did it on in my years on the council. There is a lot of repetitions on the contributions I know what Councillor Ferris said, the important motions to people who put in. Hanging there 8 months, a lot on there from December, 3 or 4 months, but, I just feel genuinely, that there is repetition and if people took the opportunity, Councillor to contact people that help them in, rather than waiting until the Chief Executive's report coming around, as I say, it is a good report we don't need to ask hundreds of questions, we can do that outside of the chamber.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, look, we have listened to a lot of contributions from members, what I will propose to do, if it is acceptable. Back to the CPG for a further discussion, I mean in fairness to us, mixed contributions so I think it needs to go back to the CPG, we will do that. I intend to get to motions today. We had a short enough agenda. Bring in the Chief Executive to speak a bit on his report and I will open it up to the floor then.

Chief Executive: Thank you, in relation to that point, I want to be very clear, we are certainly not trying to be antidemocratic, we recognise the problem and trying to come up with a solution, we take on boards the points made about the presentations and numbers, only one presentation today but in relation to while there is a statutory obligation as part of the departments circular, only certain amounts of information required for the Chief Executive, the financial data that is provided each month already, progress on the LCDC and progress on the local enterprise office, you can see obviously we provide a lot more than that. So maybe, it will creators of our own problem, because of the information each month. We do that, we recognise it is an important document. Maybe as the Cathaoirleach will say, we will take it back to the CPG and try and get structure on it going forward.

Before we go into the questions, might take the opportunity to give the members update on the Ukraine situation, obviously a lot going on, you think it is probably opportune, I just bring up a few facts and figures in relation to it.

This is unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the local authorities asked to take on board a lot of the work and front and centre with it at the moment. Just to give you a few statistics in the average, numbers increasing a couple of weeks ago, between 30,500. So jumped up. The percentage of people seeking accommodation, risen from 63 to 80% in recent days.

March it was estimated that approximately 18,000 Ukrainians had arrived in the country. The current trends indicated this could rise to between 31 thousand and 45 thousand, by the end of April. You can see that's going to put a lot of pressure on the system. Of the majority of the arrivals coming through Dublin airport, 84% and I suppose, the big pinch point is going to be Easter weekend, the hotels we have been working with, they have a lot of bookings obviously, schools are off, people made bookings for holidays. That

will create a lot of pressure on the system, in relation to the response from Wicklow County Council and the accommodation, last Thursday an urgent request. Provided and sourced 75 beds across a number of accommodation providers, the previous Sunday, provided 66 beds, other accommodation in the county has been sourced directly from IPAS with the hotel providers and also as you are aware, the leisure centre has been fitted as an emergency accommodation centre since last Thursday.

We have been notified that a group will be arriving this afternoon from DunLaoire we won't know the numbers but approximately 35.

I suppose I just want to place on record, my thanks to the Wicklow County Council staff and civil defence, who put in trojan work in preparing the centre. It is not ideal, this is what we are facing, every local authority is providing similar facilities. To address this unprecedented event and to to the lack of traditional accommodation that's out there.

I suppose in relation to other accommodation, (inaudible) looked after my Red Cross and obviously there is a fast-track vetting system that the Gardai's are bringing in, to address private homes where rules are being proposed and pledged by members of the public, vacant properties pledged as well. They are being examined on behalf of the Red Cross to see if they are suitable.

The response from Wicklow County Council. We have set up internal response team that I am chairing, and I have to 3 directors of services on it. Michael Nicholson and Joe Lane and Lee... and it shows the seriousness of the matter and the emphasis on it.

Established community of response form, also chaired by myself, the coordinate the community led response to assist the refugees as they are accommodated throughout the county. We had meeting last Friday it was an excellent meeting. I think we had about 20 different voluntary organisations on it, whether it is the partnership groups, we had Red Cross and HSE, department of social protection,

all the organisation that are inputting into this and I suppose there was people, other people here on the call and have to say it was very heartening to see the amount of work that is currently being done already by these groups.

I suppose the commitment from people across the the board, everyone wants to put their shoulder to the wheel. We have seen the images on television, they are harrowing, these people are coming off boats and planes with nothing but the shirts on their backs, they are not sure how the family is in the Ukraine, whether they survive or whether their home will be there when they go back. It is important to do the best we can, that community form will be meeting on a weekly basis to keep on top of everything, we will try and coordinate. I suppose that put a structure around it and we will be looking at putting up a web page on our website to try and get information as regards to the services that each of these groups provide and provide contact details.

Also highlight the fact that there's two hubs being established by local Ukrainians, to help out and assist, one in the Bridgwater and another one opening up in the old Wicklow Library in Old Wicklow Town. That's the position we are at. This is, it is unprecedented situation, changing on - I wouldn't say a daily basis, it is an hourly basis and staff of Wicklow County Council has to react to that over the last couple of weeks and just like to put on record that I am proud of the work and the response of the staff and the civil defence, shown huge commitment in relation to this you know, the work bank holiday weekend , Mother's Day was gone for a number of people. Dropped everything to help out. As I say, this isn't going to I suppose stop in the next couple of weeks, it is an on-going issue, we would appreciate I suppose the support of all the members going forward in relation to this, any help is welcomed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will open up for questions, both on the Ukrainian situation and the CE report.

First up Joe.

>>: Just to thank the Chief Executive and staff for the work they are doing, to assist in a tragic situation, my topic is a different one, M11 we agreed, a month, if not 2 months ago now, write to request a deputation, to meet him to look at wastage of millions of euros by stopping the work on the M11 project. I ask, have we received a response from the Minister? And could the response about read out please?

Could I also ask if the Chief Executive has had his promised meeting with TII and any progress has resulted from that meeting if it has taken place?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Dunn.

>>: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I want to thank the staff for the Ukrainian situation, we will done.

Something that has been battering me, when the council takes estates and charged and it is great that the council are looking after the estates. I feel we are not; I feel a lot of the own estates and in my area especially we don't seem to be looking after them. Sometimes footpaths are trouble and some it is as simple as road markings, and I feel that I am not too sure whether we have a budget for this type of thing? Maybe we do and the, I am not expecting an answer here today. I feel it is something we need to look into. As time goes on, a lot of the estates are getting older and older. I also feel that we have to create sort of a park's workman within the council. Because you know, with all our new you know, open parks and you know, different things, we need men to go into these places and cut grass and thing likes that. In my opinion, you know what I mean, we are asking the district to do it. It is something we need to do. I don't expect an answer from the Chief Executive. I would like to discuss it a bit more with him or whoever the relevant people are. I feel it is something going forward, it is going to get worse and worse and the

more estates we take in charge, especially, we will have to come up with money to fix them and come up with a crew of people to come in and do that work.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Paul O'Brien.

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, the Chief Executive will have my full support. For the Ukraine and people. ... (Inaudible) the work being carried out by the biodiversity. The officer gave the members a fantastic update on the fantastic work. As I said, the residents feel ignored, and during the summer and forgotten about in the winter. Councillor Dunn he has placed his - the support the area needs comes from the County Council. As you know, Cathaoirleach we don't benefit from... unless you are driving in Bidas Bay, driving around is treacherous, I would like you to look for the proposal for the path. Most important is the school. I want to see to ask for your support with the campaign to engage with local residents' group, we want to make it the first beach in Ireland as a plastic free zone. We can't ban them from the beach. But we feel a campaign would be a huge benefit, not just to the area but running costs and maintaining the beach. Similar campaigns been successful in Cornwall, and I would like to see it here. Campaigns alone will not work, council must play their part in installing facilities including public can refill water bottles, I have spoken to Councillors, and I have got full backing. So can I ask for the Chief Executive's commitment he will work with us the residents on such a campaign and provide the necessary resources that Bidas Bay and the surrounding areas deserve. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Director Nichollson, were you here for the question on Councillor Timmins?

>>: Only dealing with the library section of that Cathaoirleach. But I will try and find out.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Chief Executive to answer the questions from the M11 and Councillor Dunn and O'Brien.

Chief Executive: In relation to the M11 a meeting has been arranged for the 8th of April, myself and I am meeting with the Chief Executive of TII, and John Bowes is also attending, frank, our Chief Executive, it is a joint venture. So that's scheduled for the 7th of April. I suppose it was difficult to try and get everyone around a table at the one time. But that has been set.

In relation to the letter to the Minister, that was issued to the Minister Councillor on 14th March, have received a response back, basically States on behalf the Minister for Transport, I wish to thank you for your meeting, the diary schedule is hectic and asked officials to meet with you, they will about in touch with you to discuss this.

So, we are awaiting a date from the officials in that regard.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes just, going bring Councillor - that is a shocking response, my mine, a Minister is too busy to schedule a meeting, this is no disrespect to our Chief Executive; but I think that is absolutely shocking personally, Councillor Behan.

Councillor Behan: This was something we agreed to about led by yourself Cathaoirleach. For the Minister to stop the funding at a strategic project for the county and say he is too busy, it is not acceptable. In the last if you days, the Minister has backtracked on a couple of other rural funding projects that he had included with us in more or ignored or stopping the funding because of pressure from local TD's, he changed his mind and the funding reinstated. We shouldn't give up. We should work together on this. Because it is an issue for us as public representatives could I ask that we keep it on the agenda as an item on the agenda, I did suggest this at the last meeting. Has the Minister come back? We should write back and say, we are not accepting the answer is not good enough.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I intend to follow that up. Sorry, continue with the Councillor Dunn and -

>>: Look, from my point of view Councillor, no problem with that. As I say, I think we are altogether in that, should be fighting a united front in relation to the M11 and we will update the members on the outcome off the meeting on the 7th of April.

The budget, there is none for estate management, it would be smaller budgets in the district for each year. In relation to a separate budget for parks and open spaces, I suppose look, the bulk of the expenditure in relation to the maintenance of parks and open spaces is payroll. It is members that work. I suppose if we are looking at a separate park's spaces section, we would be looking at taken staff from the different municipal districts to separate parks and open spaces separately. Whether that is best thing to do or leave it within the district, it is something we can look at. If you are looking for a separate parks and open spaces and looking to keep the outdoor staff allocations, as is, we will then we are looking at generating additional funding. Look it is something we can look at as part of the budget proposal for the coming year.

In relation to the points raised by Councillor O'Brien, in relation to footpaths, as I mentioned before, we are introduced I suppose a rural rose programme, I suppose in response to the NTA allocations which were focused or so on the urban areas, so, the details of that I am agreeing with the road section and there should be something sent out to the municipal engineers in the next week or so, perhaps that might be the best avenue for that. In relation to the plastic free zone, in principle I don't have a problem, see the proposal and the costs. I wouldn't be able to definitively commit to that here in the chamber meeting, but I am happy to look at proposals in that regard.

CATHAOIRLEACH: ...

>>: Page 61. Water upgrades apologise for the late notice. We had a water clinic before the meeting, asked on a number of occasions about the small town and village growth programme. 2.7 million allocated to us assured by the previous director of services deliver up to 4 projects. Which are urgently needed for the progression of housing in this county. At the meeting before lunch, confirmed to us, myself and Councillor Blake. The cost 758,000, to over 2.7 million. Which is the full allocation for the 2020/24 small town village programme. Which is shocking F that's the case. That was Irish Water, that would put it risk the other projects. I know you might not be able to answer this question. Only this morning confirmed the first time it was confirmed that the costs grown to that extent.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor McManus.

>>: It is my understand that there was additional staff in the housing sector, I wonder if the Chief Executive would give us break down of where the additional staffing went. I think there is pressure at the moment on the homeless section, wondering if that would be provided. In housing adaptations for people with disabilities and older people. Given, that what grants will be given for 2022, wondering if there are problems with inflation and cost of works and support given from the housing department for that.

My third question, do we have our targets for housing first for 2022 because as you know, housing first looks after our most vulnerable and wondering the targets for this year? Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Connor.

>>: Two questions first on the solar panel car park on the county buildings, wonder if the Chief Executive can go to the problems for that, energy crisis right now and I think we should have a commissioned as soon as possible because we will save money for the taxpayer. Especially during times like this.

Then secondly, I was wondering to send a letter to HSE about they own a house within the village, which is owned by them and abandoned for the last few years to say have a meeting with them. It has been abandoned for a long time, in the housing crisis we need to take as many approaches as possible to try and fix it thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Laura Scott.

>>: Just a couple of questions here, one on the Town Teams review, the results presented, nearly 2022. I was looking for an update on that, since we've moved into the second quarter. I just wanted to support Councillor O'Brien's proposal, and I hope it will be supported by the council. It's important.

And regarding the forum to Ukraine, I think the response Forum worked well during COVID, but I would ask that the Cathaoirleach of each would be members of that response forum because there's a lot of community work going on. You refer to homes, and there's established homes up in Greystones. So, I would like to see the Cathaoirleach be involved in the great work being done by the authority and the work on the ground.

CATHAOIRLEACH: On the housing questions, the housing staff numbers, DPG grants and housing first?

>>: The first, housing force, yeah, we were given - - I think it was two years ago now - - we were given a target of nine. We've achieved that. There are a number of applicants. We have not gotten accommodation, but we have achieved the targets as provided.

DPGs, there was correspondence recently.

I'm not sure if it was giving us the full grant. Just couldn't find it in the last couple of seconds. I vow to our members that if it's just correspondence, I think it's in the (indiscernible) and perhaps we may talk that we are identifying and are interested in a whole lot of houses for a whole lot of purposes. I think that might be in register. We'll talk to you in the short term to take a look at that, but we would be interested in meeting with any forum and to help out.

There was a couple of units a couple of years ago, and we were given first choice. We bought at least two of them. We'll be keen on meetings just to talk to you. I think it may be already - - the DPGs, not sure if there was an allocation. Looking for an allocation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will hand it over to Councillor Mulligan and Councillor Scott.

>>: Just in relation to the Irish border, would you mind if we look into that and get back to you? I also meant to point out earlier that our elector of services is not here with us this afternoon. She would normally take that question. She's down in the sports centre dealing with the civil defence in that regard.

The Community Response Forum there's a number already on the forum and the refugee settlement group, that was reconfigured. We can look at the structure already, but I think most of the MDs are possible covered already at this stage, but we'll take into account your suggestion, Councillor Scott, and revert on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you.

Councillor Scott, we're going to try to get you an update on the town team review. Okay? We'll come back to you on that?

>>: Just in relation to that, we hope to have something in May on that. That's being finalized.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Mitchell?

>>: I would like to strongly agree that not enough force is being applied particularly to get the minister to meet with us. I think that is disgraceful, but what would mid- last week was that the 133 bus, which traditionally goes down along the 11 and used to go to the airport before the pandemic, the NTA has decided, in the middle of last week, that that will stop in Busaras and the people going to the airport could transfer to the 101 in Busaras, which is an infrequent bus service. This is going to increase the time and uncertainty in going to the airport, which they need certainty.

On the one hand, the Minister for Transport is saying with need to get on the public transport, and then he's cancelling the transport. The time these buses take from Greystones or Willow Grove is almost the same as Belfast to Dublin Airport. I think the minister should be concentrating with providing Wicklow transport rather than talking about reducing the rail time to Belfast. These are conflicting policies. I think any lobbying of the Minister, it should be

pointed out that the 133 is no longer going to the airport and is in direct contrast with the upgrade.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Glennon?

Councillor Glennon on second? Go ahead.

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

Look, I would like to join my councillors in thanking O'Brien.

I feel the N81 is forgotten about by the top table. I see there's some work done on the seize of the report of N81. We do need our rollout there. I hope the united front also applies to the N81.

I ask a question about the bus stop at 81 and Hollywood. We paid for a consultant's report over six months ago. I thought we would have movement on it by now.

It's complained that the 133 is not going to the airport. We can't get the 133 to stop. So, we would like to be able to get on it in the first place.

I hope it doesn't take 40 years to get a bus stop at Hollywood.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Neil, I'm sure you agree with those comments?

>>: Absolutely. Absolutely. I won't be long.

I just make inquiries about the same thing, the bus stops, but at the lamb cross a couple of years ago, there was approval. The lamb cross is between blessings and Tala. School children use that in the morning. They're ferried from the villages or wherever to that spot, and they have to stand out in all sorts of weather. The TAA gave the go ahead a couple of years ago for the bus stop to be erected there. The council put in approval for this almost a year ago. There was a grant a year ago for bush shelters. They have erected some in the area, I believe in Bray and Baltinglass, but I would like to check the condition of these things. We were told that they were, I believe, a full stop. In Bray, I believe they're falling down before they get them open. Now they stopped erecting them altogether.

In Baltinglass, parts of them have fallen down. I checked with my district. Collin informed me this morning they won't be erecting them. They have been bought and paid for by Wicklow Council for some time now. They're sitting in the council yards. I don't know what's happening.

Mr. Colin informed me this morning that they're a biodiversity type of shelter, that you can grow grass on top of them, but, however, they're in a bad way. The sooner, you know - - I would like to know what exactly is the situation. Huge money has been spent on these bush shelters throughout the county and, I believe, throughout the country, but they're far from the top of the range bush shelters. You can see them here in the west falling apart. The reason I'm raising

this today, I'm frustrated. I know our administrator is frustrated. There's a lot of people frustrated.

We still don't have a bush shelter, but the state of things is unreal. They're embarrassment to put up in any part of the country. I asked years ago that maybe we could build our own bush shelters, maybe from a discretionary fund or whatever. I mean, we have quarries here. I would love to see those type of shelters being built. There's beautiful shelters built in Wicklow and throughout Ireland. Maybe it could be something that could be considered.

I would like to know how much money is spent on these that will never go up. I believe it's a disgrace altogether. As they put them up, they keep falling.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Cronin?

CLLR CRONIN: Thank you. My question was raised on the bus stops. I will await your discussion on that.

It's great to see such emphasis being put on the meeting with the minister. I can see the huge disappointment of our cancer colleagues in the east of the county. I would hope that we would get the same support and encouragement for the west of the county here as we continue our efforts to arrange a meeting with the minister.

On numerous occasions, we were told to meet officials, which we did, on the 22nd of December. On that meeting, we expressed

concern that we would like to meet the minister. We were told the request would be put in by the officials. We're still awaiting on a reply. It's April.

I would hope that the time and effort that's going into the N11 will be put into the N81 and hope that we will also get our meeting with the minister.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. John Bowls, are you on the line? Can you hear me?

>>: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If you could take those questions on the N11 and N81, if possible?

>>: The question on the bus stop at Hollywood Cross, that report has been completed on behalf of the MD councillors. They've come back with comments on it. Their request is for an offline bus stop. We are in discussions with them really to come to some sort of an acceptable solution on it. So that's a work in progress at the moment.

The bus stop at Lamb's Cross, that's approved by the district whether that's erected or not.

CATHAOIRLEACH: You know we're looking for a meeting with the minister.

>>: We're looking for a meeting with the minister. His officials came back and said we would be meeting with them rather than the minister. A date has yet to come forward from them as regards to that, but we'll keep the members informed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, John. Thank you.

Councillor Leonard.

Leonard: I would like to thank them for the work they've done. I know it was immediate and things were not ideal. Ultimately, I think it's been a great success. Just one suggestion, and I've had a lot of reps with people willing to offer accommodation, but they're not sure what happens after six months. Maybe we could do a communication piece on that, and we may get more people pledging. It may ease the stress on the council.

In regards to the economic development section there's just a couple of things. It's partially in connection with the Ukrainian centre and the displacement of small businesses in the centre there as well as the parade groundworks in Wicklow, it's very welcome, but it has impacted the small businesses on the town on the main street.

In light of the last few years of COVID and since my initiation onto the council, I know the small business voices and the small units, service businesses, and the lack of communication with the council to them and the lack of financial supports to them and communication when projects like this are being implemented, this

project, the playground project came during COVID when these were started and was almost on their knees. I don't think there was an economic plan put in place to engage with them. They're really suffering. They're on their knees.

I had a meeting with them one evening last week, and some of them had never even actually met each other. I just think there's a huge piece of work that could be done, probably with not too much financial input in it to strengthen the town centre economies and all these small businesses not just there but throughout the county. Is there something that could be allocated to that, resources?

And then has the Wicklow Council had any further information requests on that? And just the status of the maritime business development committee, we have a lot of growth happening on our coast. I'm on the maritime business development committee. We have not had a meeting for a long time. What is the status of that committee? Is it gone?

Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Jerry Walsh?

Jerry Walsh: Just a quick question. 320,000 allocations in relation to the businesses that return the documentation and the ones that are still awaited, there's an extension to May 11th. Is there going to be more time? I just wanted to acknowledge the success of the litter and waste. The issue around individuals handing over waste to unauthorized collectors, I know there's been fines issued and costs,

et cetera, et cetera, but I take it those fines were issued to the actual households or other people who hand over the waste to these operators. Because the message needs to be delivered that this is not an acceptable practice, far from it.

I asked for communication directly on TIA. As you know, that project is included in the document. I look for an update there in March. I was told that it was actually raised with the TIA as a mass implementation group meeting at the metropolitan area strategic committee. There was a positive response given at that meeting. I just hope that the meeting that the Chief Executive is having on the 8th of April will receive a positive response because there was an indication that funding will be advanced, and they will have to relook at that.

That's the message I got from the emirate meeting.

We've been negotiating with landowners for some time to move the walk inwards and improve the drainage condition. Is there any update on that as we're fast approaching the summer season?

>>: I wish the staff well indeed with the Ukrainian disaster out there at the moment.

Just a couple of quick points. First of all, what Councillor Mulligan has said, we probably need a meeting with yourself and Helena. Maybe we can meet to go over where we actually are because we were led to believe all along there was funding available for what it looks like has all been eaten up into one product.

Just a couple of quick points as well, in regards to the public lighting, that public lighting, just one particular item in Beechwood Drive, for the last two years, there was a light that was damaged. The ESR, they don't know which, it was taken away. There's a very dark place in a small area. And we've been frustrated if it's ESB or electricity. Two years have gone by. It's absolutely frustrating.

I know Graham has tried his best to try to have that rectified. It has not been rectified. I don't even know who we need to contact at the council as well. There used to be a contact in Decklin O'Brien. It was very frustrating from the resident's point of view, from my own point of view, and from Durham as well.

In terms of playgrounds and parks and so forth, we did have a discussion at the last SPC. It has been discussed in the past as well about funding. It's on the agenda at the next SPC meeting, whether we do it on a county basis. Hopefully, we'll be able to come back at the next meeting.

Thanks, chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

A few questions there.

Mike, can I bring you in on the update on the cliff walk and the funding for the parks? There's a few other questions there.

>>: It's been very frustrating, Cathaoirleach, trying to finish the negotiations. We have planned and still plan to have it open by the summer season.

I'll check with Rory, but he's been with the landowners. We still hope they're open by the summer season because that's a very important time for us.

There's the setting up of the parks department. Really, as the Chief Executive said, that's just taking stuff from the MD and putting it somewhere else. It doesn't mean more staff. So, I don't think it's more work. It's just pulled in a different area.

We will compile and bring back. We are getting more and more pieces of land to obtain, and it's becoming a full-time job for some MDs just to cut grass in the summer season. We lose staff by just keeping the grass cut.

Unless we decide to create a whole new department and take on more staff, I don't see a solution. That's going to cost a lot more money.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I might bring in the Chief Executive. There are a few points there is from Councillor Leonard and Councillor Walsh.

>>: The outdoor review is currently in progress at the moment. As I say, it's across the board. It's going to cover all five municipal districts, not just Greystones. It's in progress and commenced by HR.

With regard to Councillor Blake and the lighting, we have (indiscernible) that's replaced Decklin. So, if there's an email address, we can send it on to you if you want to submit those details, and they can follow up on that.

If there's no joy at the district level.

In relation to the streetscape projects, they're being looked at at the moment. I can find out where we are and the final allocations on that in relation to the number of applications coming in at this stage.

Just in relation to Councillor Leonard, I suppose, look, there has been a town centre first policy that was launched this year. That will look at the regeneration of the town centre and dealing with all aspects of that. That's complicated. The local authorities are front and centre in relation to that matter as well.

I think in relation to the full schema, I might hand it over to Bray beside me.

>>: Councillor Leonard, just to say we're still waiting for (indiscernible) to come back. We won't know until they've made that decision. As soon as we hear anything, we can let the councillors know.

>>: The first point of call should be the municipal administrator in keeping in contact with those businesses and then the municipal district could get in touch with the economic development team, and the businesses could be assisted for issues.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If I could ask you to be brief because I really do want to move on, Councillor Corrigan?

>>: Thank you. I will be brief there. Just in relation to all the planning that's been building in Enniskerry Village, can I ask that a traffic plan be looked at.

(Audio is cutting in and out)

>>: There's a huge amount of planning being proposed. The village really can't sustain it. As part of what was done a year ago that, came up, that people would like to see a proper traffic plan being done. Speed reduction really needs to be done coming into the village. A lot of properties have been on about damage to their properties. So that needs to be looked at before further damage to the properties.

Just talking about property damage, I actually went in and went into the HSE houses in Enniskerry. I met (indiscernible) with the estates. I will pass that information to you. They're presently uninhabitable due to damage to the buildings.

I just want to commend the council on the Ukrainian crisis. I give all support to you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Murphy?

>>: I just seen in the CEO's report about the ground policies going to be viewed again. I'm just inquiring about which we've had a lot of requests from families who want to (indiscernible) for families that have been cremated. I know Bray was a project area, a designated area, and I think that's been successful, but I know that there are financial costs, but I'm wondering if that could be included in the review as well of the need of that because I think, as we know, it's gotten very popular.

I think, as districts, we need to be, I suppose, supplying these.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

Councillor Mary Kavanagh?

>>: Thank you. Just one thing that Brian mentioned there was the change of personnel looking after the lights. I just want to know - - we mentioned this before - - an organisation chart, if one could be sent out to councillors to deal with who's in charge of what. It's

reached the stage that it's potluck who I contact. I ask them to direct me to whoever is in charge. I know there's been an awful lot of changes in the last couple of months after 50 members of staff or something like that retired. So, it would be nice to have a fresh organisation chart sent to everybody with contact details and just kind of a very brief summary of what they look after so we're not chasing after everybody and sending emails to the wrong people.

So, it would be great to get one of those.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Ferris?

ANNE FERRIS: Thank you. I just want to ask the Chief Executive if he's heard back regarding the Bray sustainable bridge? They were supposed to report back in the beginning of February. We have, certainly in the district here, in Bray, not heard anything back. I just want to get clarification on that. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I'm going to bring the Chief Executive back in, but just to answer Councillor's question, I've spoken to Helen about a chart for each section in terms of email addresses and phone numbers and so on. You're quite right, Councillor Kavanaugh, it's hard to know who you're dealing with in each section. So, it's under way, if that helps.

I'm going to bring in the Chief Executive now.

>>: I will look into the traffic plan and see what resources are available. In regard to the Bray sustainable bridge, I will ask John Bose or Michael Flynn to come in on that and confirm whether we've received anything back at this stage.

>>: Yeah.

>>: Sorry, Councillor Murphy? I missed part of what you were saying? It's in relation to the column burial?

(Overlapping speakers)

(No discernible speaker)

>>: Yes, it is. I feel that we had looked into this some years ago, and then I know Bray was one of the first to get it. I'm wondering with the review, would that be included in that? I think there's a good need for it in each district. I know we've had a lot of inquiries.

>>: We could add it in. It's become more popular.

>>: We'll bring it in.

>>: Councillor, we'll look at the funding. There may be provision in the capital account. We can have a look at that. I do recall a number

of years ago there was funding allocated at the time. It was a few years ago, you're correct. So, we'll follow up on that.

>>: Just putting pressure.

>>: It's annoying to see people digging graves to insert ashes into the grave beside a loved one.

We were promised we were next on the list. We went to meetings with the Red Cross. Bray was next. We've suddenly disappeared into the sunset. I'm in the graveyard several times a week. That's what I hear. When can we put our loved ones to bed appropriately.

>>: We'll look into that. There was a plan a number in of years ago for all districts - -

>>: The point is we were number two on the list.

>> Granted. Okay.

>>: Bring in John Bowls there. John, can you answer that question first?

>>: Michael Flynn here. We were due to have a response on the 4th of February in relation to the river - - the bridge. That didn't right. We had correspondence on that. It's delayed by a number of

months. We do not have a timeline. It's going to be a couple of months.

>>: Okay. Thank you.

>>: Moving on to time number six to consider the draft Wicklow County Council Delivery Plan 2022, copy attached.

Helen, can you give an update.

Helen: Under the form act 2014, each party is advised to develop a plan. The purpose of the plan is to set out the objectives and standards for the delivery areas in 2022. The plan is the high-level goals related to the corporate plan. It gives a budget landscape for 2022. It also details appendix two sets out key baseline targets, the 2021 and 2022 targets. It requires the adoption by the members. So, a proposer and seconder.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Are we happy to propose? Proposed by Councillor Fitzgerald and seconded by Councillor Glennon.

Agreed?

Agreed.

Number seven - - Lorraine k you give us an update?

Lorraine: The elected members did receive a presentation on the strategy, and it was considered by our SPC back 14th of March.

So just to give a brief outline, the strategy contains 35 recommendations over six headings.

That's all I hear, get my husband and wives ashes down with dignity. It is urgent Chief Executive.

Chief Executive: We will look at the plan, for all districts.

>>: We were number two on the list.

CATHAOIRLEACH: John, would you answer that question for Councillor Ferris?

COUNCILLOR FLYNN: Michael Flynn here. Councillor Ferris, we were due to have a response on 4th February in relation to the swan, the river, the bridge. But that didn't arrive, and we have had correspondence that it is delayed by a number of months, haven't been given a timeline but it will be a number of months.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item Number 6.

>>: Adoption of the delivery plan is under the government reform Act, each local authority is obliged to have plan, the to perform as standards for the delivery areas for 2022, has regard to the high-level goals within the 5-year corporate plan also gives overview of the budget landscape for 2022.

Also details appendix 2, sets out the key baseline targets, the outputs for 2021 and the 2022 targets, requires adoption by the members, proposer and seconder, or any questions on it as we will.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, are we happy to propose, Fitzgerald and seconded by McGlennon. Agreed.

Item 7, to note the the County Wicklow Screen Sector Development Strategy.

>>: Yes, the elected members did receive a consultation and it was considered by our SPC pack on 14th March, to give a brief outline, strategy contains 35 reack enemy additions over 6 headings, screen Wicklow, skills development and attaining, domestic screen content creation, foreign investor investment and screen tourism. This sector is very important to County Wicklow, the actions underway, currently is the rebranding of the film office to screen Wicklow, dealing with our, the Netflix to use promotional materials for Val Haler, show case County Wicklow to the world, the update. On the enterprise hub. Good progress has been made with the insulations of floors, walls removed and structural developed. Foundations poured for the new building and the main hall work is underway, and the refurbishment of it. The second floor to office accommodation commenced also by the taking out of the ceilings etc etc.

So, just to mention also, the east coast crew development had you been, Claremont enterprise hub, CLG, 300,000 euros for the screening training courses and under the development had you been initiative at screen Ireland and recruitment of a manager to develop that hub took place last week.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Everyone happy with that, that's grand, we are noting that anyway.

Thank you, Item Number 8 a report on the full-time fire services presentation by the Chief Fire Officer, first of all, apologies for keeping you for 2 meetings at this stage. Unfortunately, we are trying to get through agendas, I will hand over to yourself.

>>: I have a short presentation, a lot of slides. This is the update of the operational review of fire cover in Bray. Made similar

presentations to the SPC and the Councillors of the Bray Municipal district on.

You see the reviews taken place in the past, 200 draft feasibility report and then in 2014 for the first time, a review undertaken based on national standards which was independently verified, asked to update this in 2020 and was submitted in June. This has been delayed, this current has been delayed due to Covid.

The process involved carrying out an area risk categorisation, using statistics from external sources, such as the eastern regional control centre and the and the central statistics office.

Having identified the area risk categorisation, involved looking at the operational response, independently reviewed by Dr Brian Sweeney.

In the next slide you will see an extract from his report, said that the main national fire safety and policy document entitled keeping communities safe published in 2013. Introduced a system of national standards against which fire services could benchmark their service provision, the process, to require an area risk categorisation, each individual fire station was reviewed through a consistent national approach. On the next slide a further extract says that keeping community safe introduced the concept of external review of the risk categorisation process by an externally validation group.

The first carried out in 2014 and 15 and provided a report, providing the risk categorisations for every single fire station in the country based on benchmarking the services across the country.

Then, in the final extract in this section, Dr Sweeney said the reviews undertaken in 2014 and 2020 confirmed the validity of the processes used to arrive terrific categorisation.

Together with the underpinning evidence.

The inputs to the process were consistent with the approach recommended.

So, the next slide we see the 9 categories under which the air risk categorisation is taken, looking at, numbers of dwelling houses, incident types and risk categories.

The next slide shows a map of the Bray fire station area, in relative terms a small geographic area, a high population in Bray and smaller populations.

The populations in each fire station area within County Wicklow's, Greystones has the largest using the census.

Greystones at this stage, at the time of the statistics was growing at nearly twice the rate of Bray.

On the next slide you will see how these figures are mapped across the 9 categories how the medium risk category is obtained in the right-hand column on the next slide shows the C1 or medium risk categorisation requiring a fire engine to travel in the first 10 minutes to the incident location, the second to about there in 20 minutes and third there in 30 minutes. What Dr Sweeney has said, based on the inputs to the process (reading from screen).

On the next slide, it shows the towns in which Bray is now in a similar category.

At Athlone, (names quoted on screen).

On the next slide, an analysis of towns in Leinster shows that the station areas with the largest population are Naas (on screen).

The next slide shows how these responses are supported by the firefighters on Bray. Turning out mobilising from the time the alerter is sounded from the time the engine leaves the station, with an average of 5.34. This is the 6th in the county. It is improvement of seconds.

It is achieved by alerting 10 fire fighters for each incident in order to get a crew of 5. If some are delayed in responding to the station, the

station can achieve the mobilisation time shown calculated by the eastern regional control centre.

In the next slide we see, from the time to alert, to time in attendance is 13 minutes - achieving 90% of incidents in less than 20 minutes. The 4th best in the county. Bray is receiving the same standard of response, as part of Dublin are receiving from the spread of full-time fire stations in Dublin.

On the next page, for comparison purposes we see that the HSE in terms of life threatening cardiac or respiratory arrest, tending 80% of those in incidents which make up 1.5% of incidents. Attending 60% of other life-threatening calls within 19 minutes, so the attendance achieved by the Bray firefighters far exceeds by what is achieved by the ambulance service.

On the next slide we see, incidents distributed unevenly over the day, the greatest number and those that are of usually the most severe, occur after 5:00 p.m. in the evening up to 3:00 p.m. There asks a lull when people are away and away at work.

The the following slide, full time fire service. (Reading from screen).

Annual cost depending on the system of crewing that was considered.

On the next slide you will see that this debate took place in Dun Laoghaire in 1994.

(Reading from screen).

That has any other yule cost of 16.3 million to Dun Laoghaire County Council. The next slide, said important work should be done and should be the focus of attention. That is the domestic smoke alarms being fitted in can domestic properties as the greatest fire safety tool and that will save the most number of lives. I have represented this in the diagram in the next slide, shows on the left the work of the building control section and the sections which come under the fire

service and deal with the built environment, new and existing and on the right-hand side you have the response of the full-time fire service, the retained fire stations within the county. In the middle we haven't been working, we haven't been going out fitting smoke alarms for vulnerable within the county and we propose to do that this year, start it and have it in place by the end of the year, we have had funding for vehicles from the department, we have stock piled smoke alarms during the Covid pandemic and we are now going to work with partners to identify as we see on the next slide those that are most vulnerable. The high-risk individuals, the elderly living alone and people in areas of high deprivation, these are maps. The one shows the dark brown areas the most deprived areas calculated. The one on the right, a further example, which has high deprivation and wider deprivation across its hunter land.

We also as we see on the next slide look at remote rural areas, we have towns like round wood, they are more than 20 minutes away from the fire station, that should be an area that should be factored into the overall fire safety scheme. The next shows all white areas more than 20 minutes from the fire station, many of them in upland areas in low population, but those people, those residents of County Wicklow are on the greater risk and therefore would get the attention of a community fire safety scheme.

Then finally on the last slide, the the welfare of staff is constantly prioritised and monitored. (Reading from screen).

The survey completed and responses compiled. Thank you for your attention.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you that was a clear presentation, I must say to the members, so much easier to have a very clear presentation here in the chamber, rather than trying to listen to

someone remotely. It makes such a difference to us, thanks for that. I will open it up to the members for questions. Councillor Joe Behan.

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I don't mind waiting, I just want to thank Aiden again, probably the third time making his presentation. It is his third time and for his patience in waiting to make the presentation here in this chamber and I want to say what I said before that I have the height of regard for his professionalism and service to the county. I would say, I have the height of regard for any off the firefighters across our county, who put their lives at risk to ensure the safety of all of us in this county, as we all know, so sadly, two of those firefighters paid the ultimate sacrifice in 2007 when attending a fire in Bray. We have to remember, and we should remember their families and their sacrifice when we discuss issues such as the fire service.

The calls for a full-time fire service just so, I don't want to bore everybody, but when the headquarters was built in the 80's, when Liam Kavanagh was an effective Minister and a former county manager from this organisation, Brian Johnson was one of his advisers and entire fire headquarters was built which included the capacity for dormitory accommodation. Many people in that area at the time saw that there would be and felt and thought and believed there would be a full-time fire service because the building was there, it was constructed. Everybody just assumed it was going to happen.

Very short if you years lair. In 1989... died in a house fire. If you were to walk to the fire station, would take less than 1 minute. On the day in question, at that time there was a fire call out, a person manning the fire station, and the people were actually up at the window of the fire station knocking on the glass.

The family were dying in the house.

Now, since then, there have been a number of other tragic deaths in that estate. Let's say one of the estates closest to what we thought was going to be fire station, suffered the most casualties and the most fatalities.

So, you can understand that it has become extremely emotional and vital issue for people in Bray and particularly people in that community. I don't make any apology and I know you are not expecting me to make an apology and I am sure none of my colleagues will make an apology, to make sure we rectify this situation in the best way we can.

While the Chief Fire Officer made a lot of statistics, he hasn't had time to dwell on, which is a fact. There is a serious crisis in the recruitment and retention of retained firefighters, not only in Bray, but throughout the county and throughout the country.

That is evidenced by the fact that the government has decided to conduct a review, which Aiden referred to at the end of his presentation, to have - about present terms and conditions, the reality, between the devil and the deep blue sea. They get a certain amount of retainer and get a certain amount when they attend a fire. It is not enough to ensure a stable income. So very often what happens and what the fire officers I am sure throughout the country do, is they try to make mix and match to let's say, have opportunities for retained firefighters maybe to do extra work such as the fitting of smoke alarms as you mentioned and other things, not exclusively relating to fighting fires. But in reality, because of the rising cost of living, there are going to continue to about difficulties when it comes to recruit amount and holding on of firefighters, I would like Aiden to indicate. Let's say over the last 3 or 4 years, how many firefighters recruited in the Bray fire service and how many stayed?

He can confirm and I think it is correct, Bray is supposed to have 2 pumps, 2 fire engines basically in service at any one time. For the last number of years, we have only managed one. What's happened is

the Greystones fire service, the retained fire service are used constantly to augment that service. You might say, well that's great, great that you know you are getting additional help from Greystones, wasn't what was planned. But it means that the Greystones fire service, they will about stretch if there is a fire in Greystones and Bray.

It is the case in Bray at the moment. The construction of high-rise apartment blocks we have seen a number of them and many more to come which caused increased danger for residents. Another question I would like to ask the fire officer is, what equipment have you got or what preparation have you been able to make in the event of a fire in a new high-rise apartment block currently under construction. My understanding is that you don't have the requisite ladders to get to the top of those and you would have to source them from Dublin. If that's the case, it is an indictment of Wicklow County Council if we don't have the correct equipment. We have a hydraulic platform, which was supposed to about in Bray but now in Wicklow.

There are a lot more in Bray than Wicklow town. I know the geographical explanation for this. I am sure the fire officer will give it to us.

There is a crisis in recruitment, there is a crisis in retention, that means nobody request rely on the statistic, because of the traffic problems in Bray, takes on average it takes 10 minutes before they can get out in the engine. The figures in 2020. That was during Covid. A lot less traffic on the roads.

I think if you tried now get to the station from the other side of Bray, you would struggle to get there in 10 minutes, at certain times of the day.

So that's my logic Cathaoirleach for saying we need a full-time fire service. I know there are costs, there is a half-way house here, there is something we could do to make the service better and I think it

would make it better for people in Greystones as we will as Bray. If we were to look at the concept of day manning, it is where for a certain number of hours in the day, the staff are paid a full-time wage.

On that basis, they could do the fine work already mentioned by the fire officer, Fire safety work, could be checking out high-rise buildings, to ensure they are ready for eventuality to say occur. They could about check fire hydrants, in my experience, a lot are not checked in Bray, and they need to be checked on a systematic basis. I think that's the area I think we should progress this discussion and I would be interested in the fire officers reply to that particular suggestion as we will Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you for the report, I would like to express my thanks to the Bray service staff for the on-going work and the personal support they gave myself and my family, when dealing with a tragic suicide attempt. That is the issue, they are not just dealing with fires but the whole wealth of situations and they do so with huge professionalism.

I welcome the work that Aiden has presented and that has been outlined. With regards to the on-going prevention work, I think this is an area that needs stronger focus, I welcome that being mentioned. But concern is, due to the increase in population and the change in the building that is are being constructed in the area.

We have some concerns about the figures that have been presented not that they are inaccurate, I am not suggesting that at all. But the time in which they were recorded. As Councillor mentioned, significant recruitment issue here. Outlined as a category C, medium risk. I really, I suppose I don't apologise for wanting the best response time for my community.

I really don't we are a community that has had more tragedy when it comes to fire, as Councillor Behan has laid out. It is an emotional issue and a big issue within the community. That big an issue that all of the Councillors in Bray municipal district has come together on this issue. It is not owned by one particular party; everybody has come together united, and I think that should show the strength of the issue at hand.

What I would say is, that you know, the figures Aiden has presented there, and you know, Bray being referenced as 6 quickest response time. I would say to the other districts to look closely at Aiden's report and look at the response times for your own districts. We have suffered the tragedy and I am sure the other districts have, but I mean if we are 6, that means somebody else further down, I think you should really look at those response times and maybe it is about time we looked for a review of the fire service across the whole of Wicklow, as Councillor Behan has outlined, this will cost money, but we shouldn't let the cost of a service to stop us looking at what our community needs, thank you Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Dermott O'Brien.

COUNCILLOR DERMOTT O'BRIEN: Thank you for the presentation, I think it is important that we recognise behind the statistics and the number crunching as people as well.

CLLR DERMOT O'BRIEN: I'm not going to repeat the content that's come out, because as our Cathaoirleach said we are on the same page in this regard. I'd love the chief with all his experience behind him, and maybe this is unfair question, but ask him what his sense is

of this model, retained model, is it at breaking point at Cllr Joe Behan has described?

And if it is at breaking point, then, how do we imagine a future for your fire service?

Considering our strategy today, that we looked at, it said to "provide an efficient and effective fire response, save lives and save properties" if that's our ambition for our service, and I wonder what the chief's view is when he looks at the history and looks into the future as the model fit for purpose?

Will it serve us in this regard?

Because I certainly and think members agree, there's no service critical front line response service that says do you want to be a firefighter, you have to live down the road from the fire station in order to be a firefighter?

So, are we getting the best and the brightest, and the most motivated, most equipped?

We're not if they live too far away, as a model we're precluding, eggs included and preventing maybe the people most motivated and inspired and that's a deficit and again, the current model doesn't really account for that. If you tell someone you can be this, have this role but also have to have this, you are going to have to get another job to sustain your existence as Cllr Joe Behan mentioned again, within the cost-of-living crisis. We done the county development plan, it represents growth, our proposed areas of growth are ambition in terms of growth, so our services, must grow, in response to our ambition, as a county. And again, this service, I think is under severe pressure and if we look at, if we put the value for money in terms of training and again, I'm sure the chief would say, the most outstanding staff are there, but you need to have a balance the veterans and the new staff, and how can they work together. If we lose veterans, one, maybe, or two, it would be a catastrophe for the

service and we need to have that balance so if new people come in, I'd hate to think we're training people up and then they realise this is not sustainable for me and that cost is wasted when we lose them. And maybe it is hard for the chief is justifying the existence and I know there's a financial dimension to this, there always is, if they look into a future, what would be his vision for the fire service, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr Erika Doyle.

CLLR ERIKA DOYLE: Thank you Cathaoirleach, and I won't repeat what my colleagues have said when we meet in Bray at Bray Townhall, we're opposite the firefighter's memorial and we have the family of those killed outside and we have done for many years. As I would be sure mix. It is on a slightly different note I wanted to ask the Chief Fire Officer, thank you for the presentation, and it is a representation I've had from firefighters themselves who say that they would like to join with the cardiac first responders, they say this could be done on a volunteer basis and at no extra cost and that proposal is not heard at the moment. I'm wondering if we could get a background why that doesn't seem to be an option, thank you Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Grace McManus.

CLLR MCMANUS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach and thank you to the chief for the presentation, very much appreciated. Yes, obviously I agree what most of my colleagues have said. So, I just wanted to add a couple of questions. Just in terms of you having to do so much with all this data and answer and look at some of the aspect of the service, is there scope or do you feel equipped or is there, do you feel it is fair for us to ask about future-proofing. When I think of the Strategic Housing Developments for example, I know there's a comment from the fire service for each application but is there a

chance for you to Zoom out and look at all the applications coming on stream over the next couple of years as one. The number of units the fire service will have to deal with, or is it not structured that way?

Again, is there scope for exit interviews when we lose some of our staff or look at people who might be interested and don't go further with the training S that data collected or is that something you'd be under pressure do?

Finally, you said about the national survey that's done, so, what is the plan then, for the local response to whatever is said in that national survey?

But again, thanks very much for your time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Avril Cronin.

CLLR CRONIN: Thanks very much Cathaoirleach, I won't delay I just want to say to the Chief Fire Officer I had my own experience of needing the emergency services a number of months ago at a road traffic incident and their professionalism and the way they handled the whole situation here in Dunlavin was just remarkable, these are guys doing it on a part- time basis, and guys I see every day of the week walking down the street or the football pitch and I never really understood the experience the professionalism, and the huge work that they do, it is only when you see it first- hand and experience it first- hand you realise the huge amount of training that goes into these positions that they hold. I just want to acknowledge the huge work they do. As I said many of them have doing it on a part- time basis and making a huge difference in our communities. I also want to acknowledge the efforts that they made during the COVID, their COVID response as well. And I know here again in my own community the fir service was doing a lot of deliveries as well and I want to thank them for their huge help in that thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I want to say in relation to the Greystones service which we get I'm satisfied with what is happening at the moment in Greystones. I think it is a good service. But there was one point mentioned there about tall buildings and there was a number of seven storey buildings being built in Greystones at the moment and I'm wondering do we have as asked the ladders and equipment to get up to the top of it?

That's one point. The other point is, I had heard there was a new full time fire station in cherry wood which the developers are building, I'm not quite sure if that's the case or if that's relevant to this, but do they provide, would they provide any pour sore not thank you n Cllr Anne Ferris.

CLLR FERRIS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Cathaoirleach, I want to add my support to everything that has been said by the members of the Bray municipal district. I was Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council the year in a our two very brave firefighters lost their lives and you know, visited the family homes with the county manager at the time and the Chief Fire Officer at the time and I remember it, it was like yesterday, I will never forget t and I think Cllr Joe Behan has made, he has outlined the other tragedies that happened before that. I think with the I suppose explosion of population in the area, there is no doubt in my mind that we need a full time fire service, I want to pay tribute to the firefighters that we have, and that we did have in the past and just to say that this as Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy said, this is was a motion passed by all the members of the council and it is really, really important and I think we should continue to fight for full time fire service, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much.

That's all the members sorry one more, Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: Sorry I want to concur with fellow colleagues and just to add that the explosion as Cllr Anne Ferris just mentioned is only just starting, there's so much planning, or being proposed in Kilmac, Enniskerry and Bray area and I would be very concerned about that and agree with fellow colleagues we do need a full-time service thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks members, I will hand you back to Aidan to respond to some of those questions.

AIDAN: Thank you Cathaoirleach. Cllr Joe Behan, I would just concur with your terrible tragedies that have happened in Bray. The only small bright light is in recent years, nationally and throughout Wicklow the number of deaths due to fire has reduced for various reasons and we hope through community fire Saturday to maintain that extend it in the future. We've always had difficulties with recruitment and retention, but we've always managed to fill our stations to keep the standard that's required in each station, as laid down by the national standards. Bray is currently a one-crew station which achieves the national standard but was previously a two-crew station, and when we have sufficient trained and experienced firefighters to guarantee two crews all of the time, taking into the account to provide a reasonable work/life balance for the firefighters we will go back to the two-pump configuration which we hope would be sooner rather than later, we're advertising for recruits at this time, and we would ask all councillors to let that circulate that and encourage their people in Bray to come forward and serve in the fire services. The reason we keep, we turn out on a lot of the time, enough personnel to two crews from Bray. But we can't guarantee that all the time and it is too dangerous to fluctuate so we keep it at the guaranteed level we need to achieve for the moment. And we'll return to the higher level at a future stage. And the recruitment and retention issue are correct. I don't have the figures, but it could be in

the region of 30- 40% of new recruits after a short, a year or two will leave. But we have doubled the number of firefighters in Bray in recent years and we have further to go. We're getting applications in, in between our advertising campaigns so I'd be hopeful that we will see another increase with the next group of recruits that we take in. High rise buildings are a particular risk within the county. We have a strategy to deal with them. When the initial recrew took place in 2015, we were asked to recrew the location of the hydraulic mat form that we use for fighting fires in high rise buildings. It was located in Bray, very close to the hydraulic platform in Dun Laoghaire, and we asked Dr Sweeney to consider it, and we felt that the risk across the county was best- served by moving the hydraulic mat form to Wicklow Town. Dr Sweeney agreed with our analysis to provide the necessary cover for all of the Municipal Districts. And we engaged with the firefighters in relation to that move and the emergency tender from Wicklow was moved to Bray and the hydraulic platform was moved to Wicklow Town.

The hydraulic platform can be used to rescue somebody from a balcony or window, but it does so very slowly and wouldn't be able to take more than one person at a time. And that is the standard across the rest of the country except for large cities like Dublin, Limerick and Cork.

So, as I mentioned the building control section ensured the buildings are built to, the high-rise buildings are built to comply with the building regulations and therefore, we, they're designed to allow people to escape when the alarm goes off, down by the stairs within the building so that all the occupants of the building can escape. We will have hydraulic platform there within the earliest possible time to support the firefighting efforts and carry out rescues, if necessary, of those people unable to leave their apartments for whatever reason.

The idea of day- manning is UK system that has never been used in Ireland. It is used in the UK in certain full-time stations where there

are large fluctuations in population between day and night. In the centre of cities where the population reduces significantly at night, one or more of the full-time fire stations might not be staffed at night and that station is then referred to as a "day-man station" as the graph in the representation showed we get few calls between 9- 5pm during the week, average of 1- 2 calls per week. Which wouldn't, so we're not experienced volume of calls at those particular times that would require day manning. What Cllr Joe Behan has said about providing more work for retained firefighters within the station at busy periods, would require a small budget increase but would overcome some of the difficulties that are being outlined. In relation to some firefighters turning up in ten minutes, that is, and can happen but about I am having ten on call to achieve five means that we're turning out in the five- minutes and 33 seconds. Those statistics are gathered by the eastern regional control centre, they are updated quarterly, the most recent ones being December 2021 and we were still achieving the 5 minutes and 33 seconds response time or thereabouts.

Cllr Dermot O'Brien is correct the people are at the centre of our retained model, to say it is at breaking point - I don't think it is. It is under strain, breaking point is where we cannot get retained, people to join retained fire stations and achieve the national standard. We're not at that point. We maybe at that point at some stage in the future. And at that time, I will be coming back to the chamber calling for a full-time fire service if we can't achieve it with the retained model we have. For those who live too far for the station the retained model is unfortunate reality of life. In order to achieve the quickest turn out time we have to have people living close by and it precludes people who live further away. But the most enthusiastic have moved close to the station. This is a model that is replicated throughout the UK and in a volunteer status throughout most of Europe. And they're experiencing the same pressures but managing and we're in the same space.

Turnover is wasted, wasted resources but I think we send people out who are, will be always better contributors to the community having served in the retained fire service. Our greatest loss is two full time jobs in Dublin fire brigade, airport fire brigade ambulance service and Cork fire service, so we do lose people. We lose people because their family circumstances have changed. They have children or more children, they have childcare issues, and that is an unfortunate reality. We recruit basis, and we are never disappointed with the standard of people forward and numbers that come forward over a certain period. In relation to Cllr Erika Doyle's question, there was a request from the HSE to would it be possible to mobilise fire stations across the country to cardiac arrests?

At a national level, the local management Government agency said that they would consider it if they were to be reimbursed for that service and the HSE were unwilling to pay for that service.

Whenever we are mobilised for a cardiac arrest or other medical emergency we mobilise, whether it falls within our core responsibilities or not. The issue with the voluntary cardiac first responder group in any of our towns is that our people can only be on call on one panel at a time. If they're on call for the fire service then they, for the hours they're on call for the fire service then they can't be on call for the cardiac first responders because then they wouldn't be available and would let down the other group. And similarly, if they're on call for the cardiac first responders, so they can join both. But they can only be on call at any one time to one or other service. And, Cllr Grace McManus, the national standards take a picture based on the census, we're at the further most point from the census in 2016 and we've all completed our new census forms as of last night, so, that is the only method that the national standards for fire services allow. So, the next census when it is published will give an indication in terms of population dwellings and dwellings as to the size of all of our towns and fire station areas which cover the entire county. I'd like to thank Cllr Avril Cronin for her kind words

and hope that my answer in relation to tall buildings has answered Cllr Derek Mitchell's question in that regard. Our policy is to, and we are at the leading edge in this, we commit our personnel to the large buildings, generally they will be smoke-free even in the event of the fire because modern buildings should contain the fire within separate compartments and areas. If it doesn't our personnel carry breathing apparatus but carry breathing apparatus for the public so if we have to have go and rescue someone, we can rescue them out of the building more quickly by providing them with breathing apparatus, rather than by putting them at risk to step over a balcony or through a window on to a hydraulic platform. If a new fire station is built in cherry wood and I heard it muted, in various quarters, that would increase the operational response to Bray because it would, if it is built on the M50 they would be quicker to the Bray area, than the current fire station in Kill Avenue hopefully my answers answered Cllr Anne Ferris and Cllr Melanie Corrigan in relation to their comments thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks Aidan and thanks for comprehensive report and answers. I suppose just before we let you go, I just want to on behalf of the members of the council here to thank you for your sterling work that you do in keeping us safe, and indeed maybe you might pass on our best wishes and thanks to you, and all the members of the fire service across the county. We're indebted to the members who dedicated their lives to the fire service and thank you for that, and maybe you'd pass on our best wishes. Thank you.

Members we have about, ten minutes left, Cllr Anne Ferris are you happy - sorry, correspondence first and notions of motion.

HELEN: Three quick items, public joint policing committee meeting on the 4th of May at 7.30pm in Newtown, details circulated to all the members but just to let you know. To note that minutes of the CPG of the 31st of January have been circulated previously and the protocol meetings of the 10th of January and 7th of February,

minutes circulated also. We will be in contact with the councillors this week, in relation to the submission of receipts for the first quarter. So, something for us all to look forward to and learn from and we can see how that goes and take it from there in relation to further training. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Anne Ferris are you happy to take your motion, we only have about eight or nine minutes or do you want to leave it and discuss it at length at our next meeting?

CLLR FERRIS: Well, I will take a vote by 5.00 if it takes a vote after, by 5.00.

CLLR FERRIS: Right, OK, then I think - the same thing happened when - I know. Well, I think a lot of members want to come in on this topic. And we'll probably get time for me maybe to say my piece, well it wouldn't take eight minutes, but you know what I mean, we may not have time to take a vote before five because I know some members oppose it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If it is any help to you, it is my intention to have a special meeting before I conclude to try and deal with whatever notice of motions are here. So, we'll hopefully try and do in the next meeting but if not, we'll have a meeting to finish them off, if you're happy to leave it for the moment.

CLLR FERRIS: I did have a meeting with the Palestinian ambassador and she's very interested and thanks for the support of the members are putting down this motion. But I think, really, we should leave it until we've proper time to discuss it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK thank you.

CLLR FERRIS: Thanks for that Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Number two, notice of motion in the name of Cllr Mags Crean Wicklow County Council webcast council meetings in the interests.

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CLLR CREAN: I would prefer to defer this, and I'd like to hear members on this, I'd prefer to defer it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK, all the motions will be left then if that's the case

CLLR FERRIS: I think so.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Number three. In the name of Cllr Miriam Murphy. Do you want to take this notice now?

CLLR MURPHY: Mine is very quick.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I'm going to read it out OK. In the name of Cllr Miriam Murphy proposed and seconded by Martin Allen 82 children with spina bifida or hydrocephalus currently requiring urgent orthopaedic interception this was brought to the attention of Stephen Donnelly in December 2020. However, no action has been instigated to the Minister for Health to resolve this matter and these children continue to deteriorate. Lack of surgical intervention caused their limbs and bodies to become deformed and maimed. Some of these children's legs are so badly affected that the soles of their feet permanently rub together causing open sores and bleeding. Children have, who have the ability to walk are ae losing or have lost that ability due to the absence of timely surgical management. Others who are manual wheelchair users due to the same issue are unable to self-propel themselves effectively leaving them immobile. The

lack of timely surgical intervention means effectively these children end up requiring more complex surgeries and failing that, amputation of limbs. I'm calling on the county council to write to the Minister of Health and fast-track these children for surgical review as a matter of urgency. We're calling on the Minister of Health to ensure the provision of services are made to disabled children in elective hospital settings to avoid a repeat of this situation in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Helen do you have a response for that?

HELEN: This is matter for elected members to consider.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Miriam Murphy do you want to come in?

CLLR MURPHY: Can I come in there for a minute? And thank you. You have just been given out the background to sit there and I'd like to thank Pier Leonard. 32 families suffer in pain, but I want to tell you a story of a child born in the 60s, parents were told that in the four months the child would not walk because of a virus, the doctor told them at different stages of their lives, that three operations would take place. One at twelve, 18 and 21 years. And this would mean the operation would strengthen the child's body through the early years, and the child's feet in the meantime became turned, one worse than the other. And also, they developed scoliosis of the back, just like the children of this motion we're talking about today. These conditions happened, because the operations did not take place. The young child of the '60s, never had those planned operations, still today, the adult cannot wear shoes or summer footwear, or the adult is shorter in height because of the vital operations that never took place in their lives. And I just want to bring you back to the day, 2022 with parents fighting for their beautiful children, having to do a campaign, and having to ask each county council to put a letter for the Minister of Health to allow their child to have a vital operation to take away the suffering of pain, to let their child live a normal life,

without the shame of their bodies. And please, show your support in this motion. And the child of the 60s, was me. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Very well put Cllr Miriam Murphy. Cllr Leonard.

LEONARD: As the mother of three healthy children, I just think this is so upsetting in this day and age, seeing the fantastic health sisters built and developers making money out of them. Beautiful buildings and hospital built for billions of pounds, what's the point of the buildings if we can't ensure that people don't have to fight, not to be in pain, in this country. And I just, I'd commend Miriam for putting this notice of motion forward and I think we all are in agreement that Miriam is a testament of something that just puts us all to shame. She's inspirational and I think being a councillor is a tough job, but Miriam has obstacles to face every day and she's inspirational and I hope this motion gets support today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK, I'm just running out of time, so I need to assume I am everybody's in agreement with this?

Cllr Miriam Murphy you are an inspiration to us all and we thank you for that, and look, you know how we all feel about you. Cllr Gerry O'Neill before we conclude.

CLLR O'NEILL: Briefly, I wanted to say well done to Miriam and I'm a parent of a girl with spina bifid and hydrocephalus why and I know throughout the years she's a young woman now, I looked on spina bifida being an ailment left behind by successive governments, well done to the two ladies there for highlighting this now, well done, good girls.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We've already agreed this, but Cllr Pat Fitzgerald come ahead.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Some time ago I wrote to the minister about this and got a response and got another response, so, I'll pass it on to Miriam and counsellor Leonard if you want it, it gives an update so, whatever that means, if they want and Miriam is a separation to me and to other people. And dangerous to be raise her.

CLLR MURPHY: This motion is not about me, and I don't want anyone to think about that, it is those people who should be given a chance to live their life like I did. It is not about me. But thank you for your comments.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you members. Appreciate your efforts today and that concludes the meeting thank you. We have protocol directly afterwards. So, protocol members stay on the line please.