

ORDINARY MEETING OF
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

ON

MONDAY, 3rd OCTOBER 2022 AT 2:00 P.M.

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Jen Sinnamon
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**TRANSCRIPT OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,
OCTOBER 3rd 2022:**

CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, good afternoon, members, thank you very much for attending and those at home. You are more than welcome if you are remote. Hope everyone is keeping well. Can we start with the agenda and go through protocol with Helen, please first.

HELEN PURCELL: To welcome everybody to the meeting, the press and public and those present in the Chamber and remotely. I ask for mobile phones to be switched to silent. If we lose connectivity with remote, contact us and we will get you back into the meeting. Speakers should keep camera and microphone on when speaking. Now to the roll call. [roll call taken] thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK, Helen, thank you.
Sorry, sympathies first, please.

HELEN PURCELL: We have a number of votes of sympathy for relations of members of staff for Anne Mourn, mother of Claire Lambert. [inaudible] Belcher, Nigel Shaw. Lily Milia, and Pat Mulhall.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can we stand for a minute's silence. Sorry, did you want to come in, Councillor Cullen?

CLLR CULLEN: To pass a vote of sympathy on the tragic passing of Peter Bourne. A young man, 39 years of age. Lost

his life last week. All right felt condolences to father, John, Esther, and sisters, Bernie, Mary and Sarah. Sadly missed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Two other councillors showing. Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Also, sympathy to the Mulhall family. Our co-ordinator in the district for a number of years and the father is the father of Jason Mulhall and here on a number of occasions to receive rewards with tourism and recycling. Thank you, Chairman.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien Brighton?

CLLR O'BRIEN: To be associated to the condolences of Anne Mourn. She bore her illness with great dignity and will be sadly missed by her husband and daughter. And to pass condolences to the family of Stephanie Kinsella, who passed away due to Motor Neurone Disease. It was an emotional ceremony, I know that Stephanie would have loved to have been here but sadly did not make it. To express condolences to three sons, Owen, Anne and Mark. Thank you.

CLLR O'NEIL: I would like to be associated with the condolences for Pat Mulhall and for his son. To be associated with Pat's death.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Patsy Glennon?

CLLR GLENNON: It has been covered, Cathaoirleach but Cllr. Vincent Blake and Cllr Gerry O'Neil but to be associated with the Mulhall condolences, Jason played an active part within the community.

CLLR KENNEDY: Also, to pass a vote of sympathy to the [inaudible] family in Ochram. The family were involved in the community. And also, in the GAA. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We will stand for a minute's silence.

CATHAOIRLEACH: May the souls and all the souls of faithful be departed. Rest in peace, amen.

Thank you. We have a number of suspension of standing orders. I will ask Helen to read them out.

HELEN PURCELL: First. Proposed by Cllr Gail Dunne, seconded by Cllr O'Brien. To suspend standing orders to discuss the ongoing situation in Wicklow harbour.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK.

Proposed by ...

HELEN PURCELL: Cllr Gail Dunne and Cllr O'Brien.

CATHAOIRLEACH: All agreed? Thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Second suspension of standing orders proposed by Cllr Mary Kavanagh and seconded by Cllr Joe Behan to request suspension of standing orders to discuss the sudden closure of Ashford Community Park. As discussed yesterday.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we agreed. Cllr Irene Winters is first.

CLLR WINTERS: Thank you, collate. I agree with Cllr Joe Behan and Cllr Mary Kavanagh that the closure of the park is worrying. But until we have all of the facts, I really don't think we should be discussing it at a public meeting. I would propose that it is delayed until the Municipal District meeting to allow us the time to actually establish exactly what is going on and talk to all of the various parties and that the Municipal District can discuss it at their meeting in two weeks' time. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Irene Winters. Cllr Shay Cullen?

CLLR CULLEN: Cathaoirleach, to agree with Cllr Irene Winters. I think this news only broke last night. We do not have all the information to discuss this issue today. I think it is a sensitive issue. There is a lot of issues surrounding the closure and until we have all the relevant information, I don't think it should be open for discussion. Like Cllr Irene Winters, I would like to have it discussed at our earliest convenience probably the next Municipal District meeting if the information is put forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I bring in the Chief Executive, sorry, Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. We had a corporate policy group meeting this morning. And they raised the issue at that.

So, I would put on record, that, you know, until we have the information and the officials have an opportunity to investigate, there is not much point in discussing something that we have not given our local authority officials the opportunity to look into. The Chief Executive and the Director of Community, Culture and Social Development knew anything about this, prior to this morning. So, I think it is only fair that they go out and look into this, as they have already started the process. I would ask the officials to, as you go along, if there is a day, a week, whatever, that you send an email to all 32 members to keep us updated on where it is at. And obviously you have the relevant information for our Municipal District, that will be fine, that we can discuss it

there. But I do believe that it is a bit premature to bring it here today, when the officials, unfortunately, are as much in the dark as we are as elected members. It only came to late last night. To hold up the meeting, which is a big agenda, to discuss something that really we don't have answers to yet, so I would concur and ask that maybe this would be withdrawn in the interest of allowing us to go ahead with our agenda that is in front and to allow the officials to gather the relevant information and come back to all 32 members and we will all have the same information together. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Sylvester Bourke, is it related, no? I will bring you back in. Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you. The reason for brings this was because it happened so suddenly, it was really basically to ensure that the council was 100% on board trying to get to the bottom of it, not with the intention of trying to discuss in detail as we don't have the facts but to drive home the point it is a vital piece of community infrastructure that in a place of huge, an area that has experienced huge population growth, it is the kind of place that can't be done without, basically. To ensure that we get to the bottom of it ASAP. It has a lot of, apart from being a park, it is a memorial park with a couple of memorial bench, it is beautifully laid out with a lot of funding that went into it so I don't mind waiting to discuss it but to drive home the point it really is very, very important it is dealt with ASAP.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. So, we are not putting in a suspension of standing orders. Are you happy with that?

CLLR KAVANAGH: So long as the message is out to the couple, to the Chief Executive.

CLLR DUNNE: To agree with colleagues to leave it until the next meeting until we have the information. I feel there are moving parts, so we would like the proper information to go back to the members of the public and for the public, and for ourselves so to leave it until the next Municipal District and to give the officials the time to find out actually, what has gone on here.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Gail Dunne. Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: I agree with Cllr Shay Cullen and Cllr Irene Winters, as the Chair of the Municipal District, I will be following it up and the 6 of us can discuss it properly, and when we know the facts rather than a knee-jerk reaction.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK. Thank you very much. All agreed this will be left up to the Municipal District. And we will keep our eye on this one, this will be left to the municipal Council?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I am happy with the approach. It has been confirmed we were only made aware of it late this morning. So we have started to look into the situation. But agree with the members' contribution, it is a bit premature. It is important we get all the full facts in front of us before we start discussing the matter. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Sylvester Bourke, I will say it is a congratulations you are coming in with, although I am not telepathic?

CLLR BOURKE: To congratulate the County Wicklow LGFA, putting on a marvellous exhibition of three county finals, the junior section won by Arklow Rocks and [sound drop] and a

tremendous day of entertainment and massive skills on display, it was tremendous and a huge crowd, enjoyed by everybody, so congratulations to all of the teams.

CATHAOIRLEACH: How many daughters?

CLLR BOURKE: One of my children is on the Rocks Team. If I didn't get it over the line, I would be in trouble.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I was there as well. That is why I put you in first. and Cllr. Vincent Blake is next.

CLLR BLAKE: I would like to congratulate the girls. We are talking about the girls in sport, this is an opportunity where excelled.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: To thank the Chief Executive and his staff for arranging last Monday. I know, speaking to Charlie after it was an emotional day not just for Charlie and the family but anyone who witnessed it, very emotional. But worthwhile. To add my thanks on record to Helen Purcell and Teresa Byrne, who worked behind the scenes, to say well done to all for making the effort. I do appreciate. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Brien also to thank Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, for reading a speech as I was unable to read it, so, thank you, Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy. You have done us all proud and as did the Chief Executive and the corporate team, so, Teresa, Helen, well done, it was a great event. I was very proud to be a part of it. Now on to further business. Sorry, Helen?

HELEN PURCELL: Item 1. Section 140 motion Local Government Act 2001 in the names of Cllr J Behan, Cllr M Kavanagh, Cllr P Leonard and Cllr T Fortune. Under powers

granted to elect the members by 140 of the Local Government Act 2001. We the elected members of Wicklow County Council direct [sound drop] Wicklow County Council to continue to provide the recycling services at the recycling centres free of charge. To desist from including a charge in the Wicklow County Council Budget 2023 and subsequent. [sound drop] held on Monday [sound drop] we have received legal advice, I will read out the legal advice, that has been circulated to all the members.

I've been instructed to advise on the validity of the above section 140 motion. In order to be valid, a section 140 motion complies with all provisions set out in the legislation. There are exceptions to apply to the use of the section, one is that subsection 10 a resolution under the section does not apply or extend A to the performance of a function of a local authority generally. Furthermore, the proposed charging scheme falls under provisions of local Government financial provisions number 2 act, 1983 as amended. The charges does not fall within the remit of the reserve functions of the members and remains within the powers of the executive. For the reasons above I am of the opinion that a suggested resolution is one that is legal unsound and invalid and in breach of 140/10 and a decision regarding the operation of the recycling centres remains within the authority of executive as a function of the local authority.

Therefore, a resolution passed under proposed motion to contravene the section, is void and unenforceable. That is from Dorothy Kennedy.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Firstly, thank you for the members for agreeing, I think it was a wise decision to defer until today as we had the Development Plan to discuss and also to the Chief Executive for committing publicly not to do further preparation work on the plan to introduce charges at recycling centres. I want to respectfully but strongly disagree with the legal advice received today.

On a number of counts. People who have been here for a while will know that the Section 140, replaces what was called Section 4 of the Local Government Act. And the purpose of that, was to balance, to counter balance the powers given to county managers when the local government system was set up originally. It is a counter balance. It does not mean we take over the job of the Chief Executive every day. But at certain occasion, if we have a particular point of view we are legally entitled to express that point of view and issue direction. When the law significant says it does not apply to performance of the function of a local authority generally, it is not what this is about. We are not saying that the local authority cannot charge for any service across the board but this specific initiative put forward by the Chief Executive to charge what was a free service at the moment, it is something that we fundamentally disagree with.

When she says her other, pillar of advice, if you like, that the question of charges does not fall within the powers of the members but in fact falls within the powers of the executive, this is a Budgetary matter. It is not provided for in the

Budget of last year. But it cannot go ahead if not included in the Budget for next year. We as elected members of Wicklow County Council, we decide the Budget. Not the executive. So, what I want to do, what my colleagues want to do is to give a very simple direction to the Chief Executive not to bake in a recycling charge into the Budget.

Because we want to express our views, that I hope it will be a majority view that we do not agree with it. It is also a policy matter, the policy of Wicklow County Council from the beginning were the recycling centres were established it was the policy of the council that the service would be a free service to encourage environmentally friendly activity. What a success it has been. Everywhere the service is provided within the county, it has been a magnificent success and a few service left free to use by the general public. Something that the people get for their property taxes and all of the other taxes paid to the exchequer. So, this is our business. Why are we doing it? Because we have one of the worst cost of living crisis we have ever experienced in the country. Government last week produced a Budget of 11 billion Euros to help people to pay the bills that they are struggling with at the moment. We are also in a climate crisis. One of the first councils to establish a climate change committee, SCP. In the forefront of that activity throughout the country and here we are now faced with a proposal by the executive that today we may lump an additional charge tonne the hard-pressed people of Wicklow County Council at a time when they do not have the money and to introduce a system to disincentivise them to use a very, very good environmental

service. Apart from the plan, Cathaoirleach, I will finish on this, as I know that the members have views on this, I have a strong concern as to where is this project actually leading to? I want to specifically ask: Has the Chief Executive been lobbied in any way or spoken to in any way by any of the private waste management in the country about the fact that we are providing a free service to this Conti? And in any way, shape or form, a kind of suggestion coming from that sector, that actually, well, maybe it is better if we start charging as they have to charge as well? I hope not. I certainly look forward to the Chief Executive putting that particular thought to rest. But the other point I would have to make and something I have only learned recently, is that similar services throughout the country are now being handed over to private waste operators to operate themselves on behalf of the councils.

So, is this another step on the way to another privatisation of another council service? Time will only tell, Cathaoirleach but I hope this proposal does not get further than today. I appeal to each one of the 31 of my colleagues to support on this and to give a strong message to the Chief Executive, the people of this county do not want this charge introduced. and if you wanted evidence, we got it from the public participation network, in the last few days, where they have their own consultation process, throughout the last year, and one of the points that they made is that they believe that charging people to use the county's recycling centres will not lead to the target of the national climate action plan to be made and not encourage a change in behaviour for those who do not

currently recycle and crucially for me causing added financial burden to those trying to do the right thing. So I rest my case on that, Cathaoirleach. Appealing to colleagues, to please support the motion today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Joe Behan. Cllr Tom Fortune?

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you, I fully support what Cllr Joe Behan has proposed. and I will not repeat what he said, I basically agree with it. But making very, very important points. The main one for me being that it is a Budgeting matter. And also a policy matter. As I understand the role of a public representative, that is our responsibility. I know we have been given a legal opinion through the law agent but we as members don't have a legal opinion. I think that is a deficit within the system that legal opinions are rolled out to us from time to time, and we don't have in retort to that, we should be provided with an independent legal opinion if we differ in what is put to us.

Again, I would concur with what Cllr Joe Behan said about the PPN. I got an email from them as well. I will read the centre paragraph: We have run consultations with the communities and the subject of waste management brought up. The message we heard was that recycling must be encouraged and more opportunities to do so. That we think applying charges could disqualify people from recycling. Now I think that is significant. It is a reflection of what the public have been saying to the PPN. I would strongly advocate to the members, that they would fully support Cllr Joe Behan's

motion which myself and Cllr Mary Kavanagh and Cllr Peir Leonard are fully behind. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you, yes, like my two colleagues I also disagree with the lawyer's interpretation of the wording. We only have one legal opinion here and the courts are full of conflicting opinions which is why we have judges. The reason why I disagree with the lawyer agent's interpretation is down to the wording, the opening paragraph, the Act itself states that the councillors can ... hold on a second ... it is to do with the fact that they can give a specific direction. Now that use of the word "specific" it is very important there. Section 10/A the point that the lawyer quotes "extends to a function of a local authority generally" so the point I make is that why we could not make a ruling or a direction on a general point such as the raising of funding through taxes, such as noted tax or local property tax we can make a direction on a specific, which is what this Section 140 today is about. It is a specific instruction not to introduce recycling charges. I will not go over everything that has been covered. We are living in unprecedented times of inflation and fuel costs and other uncertainties such as the war in the Ukraine and contacted by the PPN with their very detailed email on the matter. One sentence that struck me was "applying charges to use recycling centres will not incentivise people to recycle waste and could be a false economy should possibly lead to increased dumping, a huge cost of clearance and more importantly people stopping recycling all together and then putting recyclable materials in with the general waste

and we would fail to reach recycling targets. A great shame as so many were on board. When it comes to personal finance, the ideas go out of the window." Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I was disappointed there wasn't any proper engagement with the elected members, especially with The Climate SPC, about this topic. I sent a few emails and I got no answers to the emails requesting more information about it, we are the people on the ground and we are the people trying to actively encourage people to come on board with changing their habits for the environment. We are the face of the decisions that are being made. I understand that this is an executive decision, but I think that at various different meetings throughout the years and over the last few years I would have thought there was some sort of mutual respect between the councillors and the executive and the directors.

I just feel really disappointed that that respect seems to have been thrown out the window and our opinion doesn't seem to be very important. Our ability to find solutions and to tackle things that we can bring the community on board with and find solutions to some of the issues at hand. Another thing I wanted to know was, the investment in the recycling centre itself, I did send emails about this and I got no answers in return. The quantity of money for the investment in the Arklow Recycling Centre I have heard second hand it's 800,000 for a new roof. I would just like a clarification on the cost of the investment needed for the recycling centres and why wasn't that implemented in the Capital Investment Plan.

Also I want to ask the question, are there any other charges going to be implemented going forward that the councillors aren't aware of in the next few years. I know, we have outstanding, looking at the capital investment plan, there seems to be quite a large amount of money that I don't know where we are going to create revenue for the Whitestown remediation going forward. How is that going to be paid and how are we going to tackle that? Are we going to look at more charges for more things going forward? And maybe we could get some clarification on that. Thank you, Cllr Leonard. Cllr Edward Timmins.

CLLR TIMMINS: Thank you, Chairman. We have already raised this matter at this council meeting. It was first brought to my attention on the 24th of May as chairman of the Planning SPC. At that meeting, a presentation was made on the recycling centres, but the presentation was entitled.

'Investment In Upgrade of Recycling Centres'. There was no flagging before that meeting that there was going to be a charge. Anyway the presentation happened and I completely imposed the proposed imposition of a charge on that day back in May.

A couple of main reasons: One is we all know about the cost of living crisis. A completely inappropriate time to be look at charging extra to people. It makes no sense whatsoever. It's just another bash to people, regardless of the amount of money involved. Just that idea of coming in with, inventing a new charge at this time, it just shows a really divorce from reality with what the real world is happening out there.

Secondly, at that meeting, we were presented with the idea of a three million investment for various projects which are all worthy projects and we were told that it would raise approximately one million. Now, if someone says they will raise approximately one million, I want to know where that one million is made up of, because it's a very round sum and I am suspicious of it, I really question whether it would raise one million, apart from the fact I am opposed to it in any case.

Secondly it was brought to our full council meeting on the first Monday in July. It was put down at the end of the agenda and the title of it was, 'To Receive a Presentation on the Proposed Investment in and Upgrade of Recycling Centres', again, no mention whatsoever of charges.

Presentation started around 4.45pm, there was a break at 5.00pm to deal with Notice of Motions. It came back then, members were only able to make contributions from about 5.20pm, I spoke at that time, vehemently opposing it at that stage. But again, I feel it wasn't presented to us in an upfront manner, some of the councillors had left because it was after 5.00pm, for very good reason. I just think the whole way it was done and presented was wrong and it was almost like just let it go through. I think it's obvious here that the vast majority of people are against this charge and it will form, it can't be divorced from the budget. We all have the budget here in whatever the end of November and this is going to be a number in the budget, so I am certainly opposing it. I have made that clear from the very beginning, four- and- a- half months ago and again in July and I think other members may have joined me in that meeting in July, at the beginning of July, opposing it. So I would just like to make crystal clear, wrong time to do it, also not convinced with the finances on it. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Timmins. Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I suppose for me there is not enough information to be able to make a decision. There is a couple of gaps. We have had a polluter pays principle for a long time and I generally agree with it. One of the difficulties for these charges is that

and we discussed at the at the Bray Municipal District is you have people who will pay, people who won't pay and people who can't pay. It's the can't pay element that I suppose I am most concerned about. We don't have the array of recycling facilities that other counties have. It's clear from the presentation that we got back in July that some of those counties are actually paying for those services. So there is an issue for us here in that we want better services, we want to be able to recycle more, but we are not paying for them. But it's the how we pay and who pays that I think we are a little bit lacking in detail. So for me, that is the area of concern. If there was a commitment giving that a poverty- proofing exercise would be carried out as part of any proposals I would very much welcome that. Something that would look at those issues, that isn't going to discourage people from recycling the general stuff that are already recycled like the bottles and stuff like that. I don't believe that someone who dumped a mattress in the uplands is going to be deterred from doing that type of behaviour because they are going to be charged €3 or €4 into a recycling centre. I think if you are that way inclined, you are that way inclined that. Is a totally separate issue. But there are some other separate areas of recycling that I think we need to look at to see whether a charge will affect that. Timing is an issue, as my colleague has raised. Right now is probably not the best time for us to be looking at something like this. For me, it's really about the detail. I think we need the detail at hand to make an informed decision. My colleague, Cllr Behan mentioned other local authorities are moving to private operations, I like the detail of that, rather than a statement that they are doing it. So I would like to know who exactly is moving in that direction. I think sometimes we can make statements about stuff, but without the actual detail we can't really make an informed decision. So if Cllr Behan has that information I would love to hear that in the chamber, who exactly is doing it. But they are the concerns that I would have, thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Firstly, I accept the fact that the Resolution 140, okay that would be void and unenforceable. On the other hand in relation to the timing of the proposal to introduce charges could not be worse, as Cllr Behan quite rightly pointed out, we are in the midst of a cost of living crisis. We are trying to encourage people to be responsible in their recycling activity in the middle of a climate change crisis, so it's not the time and I would impress on management to take this off the table when we are preparing for budget 23, because I don't think it's applicable.

Again, like Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy, there is not enough detail around this overall proposal, how it would work and how it would impact on individuals, they are trying to combat illegal dumping and encourage

people to be responsible, so as I say, we are sending out the wrong message by introducing charges at this point in time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Walsh. Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I will be brief. Again I spoke on this before. I don't think there is any question mark about the value of looking at our recycling were provision and seeing and having a desire to upgrade it, to enhance it, to see how it will serve us into the future. I think that is really important. But I think beyond that it's about really our principle, or the ideology that decides who should pay for that investment. I think that is where we have to really take time to consider that question mark, because if the principle or the ideology is such that the people should pay and that is our start point, then we have to trust that that is a truth. So when I, as Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy said, when I first looked at this, I thought it was an interesting thing to go and wrestle with and to discuss with the public. In my mind I thought there probably are people who can pay and are willing to pay. There are probably those who are able to pay, but don't want to. Then there are those who can't. So I thought I would go out and ask people and I couldn't find anyone who can pay and is willing to pay. That is a principle stance that they have. So I think we have a lot of work to do if we believe that there are people out there who see this as something they are willing to buy into.

Finally, I do appreciate that the motion has a clarity around the budget dimension of this. I think that really makes it clear for me, that if we were instructing. If this motion is instructing us not to have this on the budget agenda, then for me that is really clear and that is a positive.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Brien. Cllr Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: Thank you and thank you for the other members commenting on this. I use the recycling centre in Wicklow. There are a lot of people using them, a lot of older people using them. When these were brought in, we were encouraged to go and use the recycling centres. Different people talk to us about different issues, this has been a major issue for me, people at these recycling centres, they don't want to pay anything. They think they are doing good for the community. They think by going to the recycling centres, they are helping their environment and I have to say it's a major issue. In my opinion, why are we trying to charge people for trying to use a facility that we should be doing in the first place? It doesn't make sense to me. It's something that I can't support, because I feel we are trying to encourage people to recycle and you shouldn't be charged for it, it's what we are trying to do. I have to say I am pretty, I am worried with the legal implications here. Something that the members should be taking on board, or are going to be told by the executive. So I just want to make it quite clear how I stand. I do not support charges at the recycling centre, absolutely not. But I am wary of

the Section 140 and the legal implications. I think we should be very careful what we do with it. I hope Cllr Behan understands that. That there is, you know what I mean, the executive have executive decisions to make and I have to respect that as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Pat Kennedy.

CLLR P KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. You know, Cathaoirleach, I have just been thinking about this since Cllr Behan put down the motion a couple of weeks back. It's not just about charging, to be honest. I think we have to look at the detail of what is happening here. In 2021, there was over 800 individual dumping sites across Wicklow, with a total tonnage of 144 tonnes of illegal waste. That is 144,000 kilos, that is a phenomenal amount of waste dumped in our countryside. Since 2008 there has been a 67% reduction of illegal dumping in the Wicklow uplands. Overall there has been about 3,490 tonnes of rubbish collected in the uplands. A lot of that is collected by volunteer, on the weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, evenings. By people just giving their time to keep the countryside clear. We want to promote Wicklow as a tourism county, as a county whereby people can come and invest, live and rear their families, where films can be made that will help market the county around the world and yet we are talking about bringing in a charge on recycling. I think if we do this, it will be a step backwards. Because people are fed up and I for one am completely fed up to the teeth of getting phone calls and going out with the jeep and trailer and collecting rubbish and cleaning up rubbish that other people have come in and dumped. I think it's the people in the uplands that will suffer the most if we bring in a charge, no matter how small it is, we will be the ones that will suffer the most. Because we are the ones that have to go out in the hail, rain and sunshine to pick it up. We don't want to be doing it, to be honest with you, by do it. So I would ask the Chief Executive and the management to think of the county and the people and not bring in a charge, no matter how small, because we do have the recycling centres and they are working well and it's not costing, it's not breaking the bank to run them. So I would ask them to rethink what they are thinking at the moment. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Kennedy. Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Yes, thank you, Cathaoirleach. I spoke at length on this the last time, when it was raised before the council meeting and I have been thinking about the motion lots since Cllr Behan put it on the agenda. The more I think about it the more slightly confused I get as to, again really, and a couple of other members have said it. It's back to the detail. First of all, I 100% support the notion that we need to invest and upgrade our recycling centres, what we have and I use the local one here in Bray very regularly, is very well- used, but it desperately needs to be invested in. There is no doubt that we need an additional recycling centre, particularly

over in the west of the county as well. But I suppose, as we are talking about recycling,.

I would have liked, I suppose the executive to take a more holistic approach to looking at this. Like recycling is down at the bottom of the five Rs of recycling, so we are starting with refuse, reducing what we are using, reusing what we are using, repurposing and then recycling. I would have liked some discussion from the executive, whether it was linked in with this charge or not, about how we can encourage our citizens to reduce what they are using, to reuse things and repurpose things, instead of going straight on to the recycling and charging for that. I would like, again, I suppose the way this is being brought about, I don't really agree with. Particularly taking note that Cllr Behan pointed out that this is a policy change. I do, on reflection, think that is true and I really should have gone through the climate and biodiversity SPC as well as the Planning and Environment SPC for further discussion.

I have questions and I remember from Mark's presentation, that we are, if not possibly the only county that doesn't charge for recycling at the moment. But what I like to see is more of a breakdown as to what is being charged and what people are gaining from those charges in other counties. If what Cllr Behan is referring to that that is leading to privatisation, I would have serious concerns about that and I would have questions around that area. The other thing I would like more clarity on as well is we are talking about a car charge going into recycling centres, but I would like more detail on what is remaining free? Is everything being charged for, are we still providing free recycling of card board paper and glass bottles.

So that is the detail that is missing and that is the detail we need to go back to the members of the public with and encourage recycling and recycling more goods, as well as the centres are upgraded. If something were to be brought in and this is, I understand the executive's decision, I would strongly urge that it waits until next year, so that we get through this cost of living crux and there is a commitment made that the fee is A ring- fenced towards the recycling centres, it's not siphoned off to something else and B that the fee is frozen for a minimum of five years. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Scott. Cllr John Mullen.

CLLR MULLEN: I will try and not repeat what others have said. First of all I was struck by Cllr Timmins' fairly accurate description of the process we went through on this. Whatever about the Section 140 which might be sloppy and mightn't be the way do it, I do think that the process of how the executive carries out its functions is very critical here. To the public

outside this room, if we bring in recycling charges, whether it's an executive function, reserve function, it's going to be said, "Wicklow County Council brought in recycling charges." We, the representatives of this body are going to be asked and accused rightly by the public, when did you find out about this? What did you do to stop? And why are we doing this? So the process of introducing a charge to the public in the middle of a climate and biodiversity crisis and a cost of living crisis, I don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that that should have been taken very cautiously and inclusively with everyone invested in the process. Not just us as elected members, who have a function in local Government, but also the PPN, which is established by legislation to be the voice of the community and voluntary pillar. The first they heard of it was when, as Cllr Timmins points out, when it was brought to our attention at the end of a July meeting, not even headlined in writing that that was the purpose of the presentation.

So the process itself here was deeply flawed, at best. At worst it was disingenuous and tried to sneak it through and we will do the argy- bargy afterwards. I don't think it's a healthy way for the executive and ourselves as elected members and the PPN and outside bodies, who all have to work together. Because the idea that there is somehow a public model of recycling and/or a private model of recycling. That there is the dualities here, that is also not true. There is a social enterprise and community partnership model which I raised at the last meeting and which we have been successfully involved in with ye. But it's a partnership. I know one of the partners said, "Sure we fund that." But the public in Tinahely who have run that sector with you and it's a successful model that works. When we are introducing charges in recycling which is a very sensitive areas and the centres we have, do need to be upgraded. I am not disputing the fact that they need upgrading, but how we do that should be done in an inclusive manner. The process in which this was handled was very flawed and needs to be reflected on.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Mullen. Cllr Grace McManus.

CLLR McMANUS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I agree with a lot of the points made about the concerns of these charges at the moment. Also, Cllr Mullen put it very well, even the way that this is being done is really concerning. I have a question in that regard. So the issue of poverty- proofing was brought up at the meeting in July. I would like to ask the executive if anything has been done about that since? That was a key issue, that not just myself, but others raised as well. So has anything been done since those issues were raised in July? Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Patsy Glennon.

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I am going to be brief on it, because a lot has been spoken already. When this matter came before the SPC, the Planning SPC, it also had plans for having a recycling centre in Blessington. So it was all interconnected, i.e., that some charges would have to come in to create facilities elsewhere in the county. So I am just wondering if everyone is, the view that has been expressed so far prevails. Does that mean that a large portion of west Wicklow is left without any facilities?

Now, I do know and I expect the Chief Executive knows on his own right that this would be a bad time to implement a charge, considering the cost of living and the budget that was recently announced where people were trying to cushion the public against the cost of living charge. I just think that it's important to remember the parts of the county that have no facilities. And we want facilities out there, you can, there is facilities in Tinahely and Baltinglass. There is nothing from Dunlavin and Hollywood. The whole way along there. I know it was presented by the planning region or team, included the creation of facility in Blessington, which is badly needed, so I just wonder what is going to happen with that if this thing just grinds to a halt as is being suggested? I also accept the view of, I am not endorsing or confirming it, I am accepting the view of the legal officer in regards to Section 140, therefore I will be abstaining on the same.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Glennon. Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and I will be as brief as I can. I don't think Cllr Mullen could have put it any better to be honest with you. I have to say well done on his contribution. I am in here three years and I have rarely seen so unanimous support for one subject. There is 32 of us with different agendas and different political parties and backgrounds. It's rare that we all come together to voice our opinion. I do remember in the meeting in July. I think the word I would use would be shock. At protocol, after the meeting there was a long discussion about this as well and a lot of the disgust, not so much with the charge, but the way it was handled and introduced to us was complete and utter side show that we were blind-sided. We are living in a cost of living crisis. There is no point in denying that. We are also living in a climate and biodiversity challenge as well. We stopped the motion earlier on because we didn't know the facts and we agreed to put it off and I think Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy has summed it up very well. We don't know all the facts here today and yet here we are discussing it and we have a budget next month. I like to know more, I am against charges at the moment because of the cost of living crisis but we can't get away from the fact that we need investment in our recycling centres and there is going to have to be money found for that.

Unfortunately what is going to happen is all of us will have to come together in an agreement to get that funding. But I like to see some common sense and courtesy extended to us and proceed to the next agenda item, because I would like to think that the executive have the respect for us that we have for them and that we draw this and we have a further discussion on it, when we know more of the facts. I also have to agree with Cllr Dunne and Glennon in terms of the advice and I think we have to be careful on that. Thank you very much, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to say, while I am not keen on charge, I am keen to encourage recycling. I do listen to the legal advice that we don't seem to have a vote on this, which is surprising. Anyway. I would also like to raise the fact that any plan for development of recycling facilities should provide for the development of a recycling facility in the Greystones Municipal District, which is the only Municipal District which doesn't have one at all. It is the fastest expanding district by far at the moment in the last census period. It is rather strange that there is no recycling facilities there. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Erika Doyle.

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, Chair. A lot has been said. I see this as an investment in recycling services. It's, as was referred to earlier, we had a long discussion on this in Bray Municipal District. At the time I was talking about, as has been said, the way recycling is at the end of, or should be at the end of a number of options that come before that, which are currently free in terms of how you can recycle cans, glass, clothing, electrical items. You can recycle almost everything for free at the moment. What I was wondering about is I remember years ago, if you were a local authority tenant, you were provided with bags, you were provided with rubbish bags that you could put out and they were free to you if you were a local authority tenant. Me, myself, I don't have an issue with those who can afford to pay, paying a small amount to use the recycling centre. Like others have said, those who can't afford it, is there a way we can do something so that those people who are local authority tenant, who are unable to pay can receive some kind of a, I don't know, something linked in where they have a certain amount free or something like that? Because I do feel that those who can afford to pay should pay. It is an investment and I would be happy and I know a lot of people would be happy to pay that small amount so that other areas of the county could be provided with recycling services. I am in Bray and we have a lot here, but I am aware there are a lot in the county, particularly in the west don't have that. So I am wondering if that is something that would be possible do?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Doyle. Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: The recycling centre, recycling started in Arklow in 2007 and I know that the Director Michael Nicholson was very helpful at the time. We had two vans or trucks to take away the stuff. Over the years we got the recycling centre and it is hugely popular. I see a lot of people coming from the neighbouring counties to recycle. They drive €10 worth of petrol to save maybe €3. They are always welcome in Arklow. It's a difficult situation because the recycling centre in Arklow does need a revamp. Where the funding for that is going to come, I don't know. Last Saturday, I go up there every Saturday the place was packed and something has to happen up there because as I say, it is totally unsuitable for the needs of the people who are coming there. So I am against charges, because I don't think, in the current climate, I think it's not a good idea, whether into the future it's a good idea, I don't know. But I asked some people up there last Saturday and I wouldn't be prepared to say what some of them said, it wasn't in the dictionary!

HERE ... I headed out there as soon as I could. But it is the wrong time to be honest. We are going through a difficult time in this country. I think any extra expenses should be kept to a minimum. But I emphasise that service will need worked on over the coming years as they are coming in, out, sometimes there is a queue. I think it has to be looked at. How we fund that, that is the problem and is going to be the problem. But presently against charges for recycling.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you,.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Fits, Cllr Stephen Stokes?

CLLR STOKES: Good morning, Cathaoirleach. I spoke at length about the issue in July. I would have concerns as I raised then about the cost of living crisis we are going through and I just, I would question the value of a 3 euro charge. Similar to what Cllr Lourda Scott raised, I would love clarification as to the free items would be included? I lived in the UK, I lived in Manchester for 6 years. I remember Manchester City Council did something down the lines, and how they could cut costs, it back fired as over there you get Baines recycling included in the council property taxes. What is interesting is that they halved the size of the bins. Going down an approach of reducing the costs which people then just dumped it everywhere, that is my concern. For a 3 euro charge you may be picking up litter band bags of stuff all over the counterparty that may grow exponentially. I said in July, the Greystones district is a large area and increasingly growing, I warmly welcome the new recycling facility in Blessington. Greystones should be next on the list it defeats the purpose to drive over to the next recycling centre with a large suburb area with no facility whatsoever so it needs to be next on the list and finally, I question the value of 3 euro. If we look at the facilities on offer in south Dublin county council, like Ballymount, they go all in but provide more services, so their fees are believed cast at 15 Euros, if I am not mistaken in South Dublin but you can bring all kinds of things, mattresses, black back rubbish. So people pack the cars tightly. It makes more impact and it starts, I think at 15 euro. Have I to check the numbers on that. So I question if the 3 euro would be sensible and I don't believe it will be the right time and the right message from Wicklow County Council.

Have a 3 euro charge. Those are my points. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Stephen Stokes, Cllr Miriam Murphy?

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, Chair. I echo what everyone is saying. As someone said, we are the people that have to face the public when charges are put. Or proposed to be put. I am shocked to know that Greystones has no recycling centre. And again investment must be made. Again, can we have more positive income from charging the organisations in the recycling centres that the public are given to something, where if there is a charge, that there is a way around it. But also, we must be aware there has to be investment in the upgrading of the recycling centres, which is another question in the price and cost and the cost of materials again. So it is a tricky one. But I certainly won't be supporting a price increase. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. A lot of debate on this. It seems unanimous in that nobody is in support of charging, certainly not at this time and takes convincing down the line to see the merits of this. I have been here long enough to sit through many debates in regards the uplands in regards to the Pure Mile project and dumping yes a situation where Pure Mile groups are collecting over 4,000 bags of rubbish a year. It is on record and it is stated that there are 8 hub illegal spots of dumping within Wicklow County Council -- 800. And we have seen the reports, we see what is going on and reality is that a lot of people cannot afford, and we will see more illegal dumping. I don't like the generalisation theme that is coming out in regards to how it break down who can pay and who cannot pay? So, to stigmatise people who live in local authority housing as they possibly can't afford to pay, is wrong.

Really wrong. I deal with a lot of people who are in private home, trying to struggle to pay mortgages. A lot of the time, based on two incomes. And a lot of them can't afford to pay.

So I think to throw around the general, to generalise people because of the background or where they live, that they can't and they cannot pay is ... lunacy, really, to be honest.

There is a lack of information here. I think that the one thing that will come from here, if we have legal advice or otherwise with regards to whether we can or cannot vote on this, senior management have an opportunity today to show the elected members that they are listening. That they are listening to us, the people that come in here, who are elected by the people on the ground, that are listening to us and in turn listening to the public and that they will not implement the charges. It has been said with regards to the lack of information around costs, the reasons why some of these facilities have to be upgraded. Most members will know intimate knowledge with regards to their own areas and the lack of infrastructure within the recycling centres but the reality is that I think that the public out there are looking for an awful lot more to be done before they are looking for this type of money to be spent on recycling centres and they in turn have to pay for it. So, I will not support this. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Avril Cronin, please.

CLLR CRONIN: Thank you very much, Cathaoirleach. I was not to come in to speak on this as I think that my colleagues here have raised quite important points and valid points. But one comment did actually, I suppose annoy me a little bit there, when it was suggested that County Wicklow don't need certain facilities. Well I'm part of a group at my local community the Pure Mile and I

know many colleagues are involved. And we go out every weekend and pick rubbish up from the side of the roads, roads where the grass is grown down the middle. I challenge colleagues to feel if people don't deserve proper facilities to join us on the litter picks. We do it every weekend, if you would like to join me, you are more than welcome. Back to the issue of charges, I think that the timing is very, very poor. As colleagues have outlined we are in the middle of a cost of living crisis and a biodiversity crisis and seeing the amount of rubbish on the roads at the moment, I think bringing in charges is going to increase that. People are already travelling 20, 25 minutes to get to their recycling facilities where I live in West Wicklow, we then expect them to travel that distance and to put a charge on top, I think that they will not bother. Then yes a problem of where is the rubbish and the recycling going to go? So I want to say that I'm against imposing charges right now on people. I think it should be, this should be taken off the shelf for now. I think we should focus on the important things we have to deal with in here. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Avril Cronin. Cllr Erika Doyle?

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, Chair to respond to Cllr John Snell and his sort of bizarre accusation and point scoring, I am not sure where it came from. I mentioned the scheme there years ago where people could get free bags if they were local authority tenants as an example of how the vulnerable people were identified and given support where they needed it, nowhere did I suggest or try to stigmatise people who lived in local authority housing. I lived in local authority housing, I lived below the poverty line, I did my recycling. I know what I am talking about. I was given an example how vulnerable people can receive support and I agree that people can pay should pay, and the people that cannot pay, if they are in local authority house, or on the housing list or on private accommodation, should not be supported. Please do not misinterpret what I say.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am here to Chair a meeting, please respect me. Has everyone spoken on the issue once? Including Cllr Miriam Murphy? So the only person who has not spoken is myself. So I will speak to 1 minute. I am opposed to the charging of the recycling centre. I also pick up litter throughout the towns, what is amazing that is the things picked up that is recycling. I also totally understand the lack of the facilities in the West of the county, the lack of modernisation in Bray. Shocked to hear that the latter needs to be modernisation but it is not the modernisation but to get in line with the sustainability of the diesel fork lift throwing fumes into the air but making it become electric. So the climate action group are doing a great job but it does cost money. So I am not in favour of charging. I may want to apologise to the members left in the couple Chamber at 4.45pm on the 3rd of July, on the 4th of July, Independence Day, when this was landed on my lap to rush through. I certainly did not want to rush it through. In fairness to Marc, he didn't have time to explain it, nor the members have the time to speak about it. So I welcome the Motion 140. If it is legal. I don't know. But we had a legal aid, he did speak but didn't give too much information but rightly so as the man was not getting paid. But I think yes had a fair airing of this. It could be spoken to until 10pm at night. I will bring in the Chief Executive on this.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the views from the members. This speaks figures motion is not just about the recycling centres, --

specific motion. It goes beyond, undermining the local framework and operations. Members have to reserve functions in the localisation and what is proposed here as part of the motion is like me refusing to accept the decisions made by the members at the county development plan meetings. There were a number of Chief Executive recommendations that the members did not accept and voted against. That is fine. That is absolutely fine. I have no problem with that, I accept the decisions and respect them as they are a reserve function. But I would hope that the same approach will be fore coming when dealing with the executive functions. And I would also like to make the point, a very important point, that no final decision has been made in relation to the charges. In relation to the amount of charges, and when they are introduced.

It was an information session that was put forward at the July meeting. We were reviewing the feedback received by the members following the meeting. We were reviewing the feedback and the views put forward by the members since that meeting. And I will take on board the views that the members have made here today. So, I really believe this section 140, not only is it illegal but it is extremely premature.

My plan will be to consider deliberations and discussions with the members over the coming weeks as part of the Budget deliberations, which is the right place to have these discussions. Not using a sledgehammer approach of a section 140. And as part of those discussions, it has been raised here before by a number of the members in the West about the implications and the members in Arklow, the implications of not going ahead with the charges. So what I commit to do is to bring forward implications if we do not go ahead with the charges.

As part of the Budget discussions. And as was pointed out, the Budget is a reserve function.

And the members have authority to pass or not pass the Budget. It's a reserve function and that is the process there. That is the process that should have been taken in this regard.

A u too points that were highlighted and made -- a few points that were highlighted and made. Cllr Joe Behan quays first. I haven't been lobbied by any private firm, and the suggestion, I would find quite insulting and outrageous to put that forward. I think it was quite clear. It was quite clear in the presentation made here in July that this is a capital investment programme. And that is the reason for the charges, that we need a new roof on Bray, a new roof in.

Murragh, and in Arklow and to set up a new recycling centre in Blessington. To improve and to modernise the facilities in the recycling centres to allow for, for example, soft plastics. So to suggest I am doing it based on private operators, lobbying me, it is outrageous. As I said, nobody has done that. So get your facts straight.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan I will bring you in next.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I am having my say now. I was asked about the capital programme. It was included in the capital programme, 2.5 million was included in the capital programme. In relation to illegal dumping based on where this is brought in and other local authorities, outlined from the July meeting there is no evidence of illegal dumping.

I don't agree with the accusation that there is a lack of communication or this was brought in some underhand way. It was brought initially at the environment

SPC, it was brought up at corporate policy group as one member pointed out, as a change in policy and the corporate policy group is the forum to bring a change of policy to. It was brought up at the corporate policy group. It was also brought up at the main council meeting. So there has been a huge amount of communication on the matter and with regards it being on the last item on the agenda in July, the reason for that, there were a number of statutory items on the agenda that had to be heard first. There was no vote on this. It was an information presentation put forward. So that was the reason it was further down the agenda item. That was nothing that we could control. In fairness to Cathaoirleach he expended the meeting, there were questions and answers for about 20 minutes to 30 minutes on the matter. I will say that, as I said before, this issue will be further discussed as part of the Budget deliberations, and when we can outline to the members the implications of what postponing these charging would do as I have outlined already. There were a number of planned investment initiatives, we will have to re-look at that. So I ask that given that this motion as it is, it is legally of sound and invalid, that it is withdrawn and it is that the matter is discussed and agreed at the Budget discussions taking place over the coming weeks and I believe that is the proper place to do it and that is the partnership approach that should be happening, not throwing in Section 140s when people feel like it. It is a partnership approach where we discuss things and agree things together. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: Throwing in Section 140s whenever we feel like it? We have had two in the lifetime of the council. Both regarding the decisions made by the executives of the council over the heads of elected members. What was thrown in was a hint there may be charges at the end of a presentation at 4.45pm, where you yourself, Cathaoirleach were not given proper notice about it. That is the first point. The second point, it is coming to a sad state of affairs when a councillor cannot ask a question without being accused of in some way hurting somebody's integrity. I asked a question: Was the Chief Executive lobbied. The answer is yes or no. That is it. Don't try to twist my words, Chief Executive. I asked a question. To follow on to the question that Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy asked: What was my information about privatisation of council facilities elsewhere? Not too far away, Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy, Balyogan, managed on behalf of done here, by the council. I have it here on the phone, I can read it out if you wish. So, let's not fuel ourselves, it is happening already in other parts of the country where recycling centres are handed over to private companies to be managed. And it is happening down the road. OK? So, that is the answer to that question. E hope that answers that particular point. It is a gross distortion to say that because we put down a Section 140 we undermine the whole basis of local Government. We are entitled under Section 140 to make decisions we feel are right and proper for the people that we represent.

And I don't apologise to anyone for doing that. Because the Chief Executive now has discovered the value of partnership but in fact there has been an agenda to have the charges for we don't know how long, perhaps for the last 2, 3 years and we are only getting it at the tail end of a presentation when all of the members are present to the partnership in inverted commas, now the Chief Executive wants us to act in the spirit of partnership by withdrawing a legally

sound and safe Section 140 direction for him not to proceed with the charges. It is absolutely, and can I say, in relation to legal advice and I have great respect for Cllr Patsy Glennon, who is wise not to give his opinion. He said he accepted but has not given opinion as to whether it is valid or not but two very senior judges in hearing cases not only involving Wicklow County Council but other councils said in relation to Section 140s, elected members are entitled to make up their own minds when it comes to legal advice. When you make an unreasoned judgment. So the question is, do you think it is reasonable that a Chief Executive will introduce a charge regime without the approval of the members? When we have to approve the Budget anyway and it is a complete change of policy, that is our remit. Not his, our remit. So I say it is a reasonable proposal. It is legally sound but what is very Trading Standards today is we hear the screeching, hand-brake turn of a change of mind from the Chief Executive. It is quite clear that he has almost gone to the stage of saying: He is going to take it off the table but he cannot admit it. As a proposer, as one of the four, you tell us, Chief Executive, that you will withdraw the proposal, completely, and I withdraw the section 140, if not, I want to press it to a vote.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much Cllr Joe Behan?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: It is fair that the members know the implications of withdrawing it. So I think it makes more sense if we can put forward the implications of what happens if this is withdrawn as part of the Budget in 2023. I think that is the most sensible approach. I would be interested to hear what the other members think of this.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: It is a conditional statement. It is not a clear withdrawal of the proposal. And secondly, I fully agree with members coming from Greystones and west Wicklow to have their own recycling centre. But, let's not forget. There are millions on millions of Euros coming into the covers of the council in development levies, the levies are a system where it is to provide infrastructure within the community. That is part of it. It is not being spent the way it should be spent in my book. But it is certainly, that the levies could be used to refurbish and to establish new recycling centres. That is up to us as it is a reserve function to pass the levy scheme, so say to the members, you are right, I will back you to the hilt in looking for services in your district. But asking you to think of the people of the county faced with the charge on top of all the other expenses that they have and we have the power to make a difference here. And on the basis that the Chief Executive has not withdrawn the proposal, I want to push for a vote.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Joe Behan. Chief Executive, I was led to believe you were going to withdraw it to a further date? Is that not the request? [sound drop]

Thank you Cllr Joe Behan, can I let the Chief Executive answer.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: It is a fair approach if we look at the implications and have it as part of the discussions with the Budget and we see the implications, as I said, of withdrawing or postponing the charges for 2023.

A number of members have expressed a concern about the impact of that. And about making a decision with the lack of information, yet, we feel we are going ahead now and doing exactly that.

So, if you want to push forward with the vote but the fact of the matter, the legal advice saying that it is void. And I am committed to having serious conversations with the members over the next few weeks to deliberate and to have the full facts in front as to regards what are the implications of doing what is suggested. I think that is the fairest approach here and the most Trent important approach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: 37 councillors want to come in, Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: To make a point when discussed in protocol in the July meeting a point was made by a number of members in the meeting that this should be a part of the Budgetary process with a proper consultation in the members with the discussion and not the way it was pushed throughout without a presentation. I think that is what the Chief Executive is saying that it will be a part of the Budgetary process, where the members have a chance to incorporate it or reject it as part of that proposal for 2023. If I am correct.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

CLLR KAVANAGH: Briefly, to remind the executive that Pack, the organisation to do with recycling, to resolve the purpose of rolling out the message to do with recycling, has a turnover of over £35 million a year from the membership fees that they use in investment to plough back into the recycling centres throughout the country. So, in terms of a source of revenue, or partial revenue, to keep that in mind. That is £35 million a year, so, the *raison d'etre* is to educate people on packaging waste and to help to rebuild recycling centres, to keep in mind.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Forgive me but to me there are 2 issues and we cannot get away from them. One of the issues is the charges. I think that I said it earlier, I will say it again, if you are party or non-party, we are speaking in one voice. That is that we are against the charges going forward for recycling. That's a clear message that I think every one of us sent out here today. But again to think of myself as a reasonable person. Again, I have listened to all the arguments from Cllr John Mullen, Cllr Aoife Flynn-Kennedy and so forth, I believe it is worthy of discussion but for the reason we need investment in our recycling centres. We cannot get away from that. So to close down the conversation is wrong. I am against the charges, to emphatically say that at the moment because of the cost of living crisis but to be grown up enough to sit down to have a grown up conversation of how to fund recycling centres in Greystones or in the West. We have a Budgetary process coming up. Without sounding like I want to suck up to the executive, I have to know the executive over the last 3 years, he was my district manager. I would like to think to say that I would take him at his word. He never let me down for the 3 years I've been here as my district leader and Chief Executive, so let's sit down to have a grown up conversation and think about the recycling centres and how this can be formed, we need solutions and not arguments, it is not a dig. I am trying to be common sense, to be diplomatic, and not trying to score points against anyone. I will sit down and genuinely sit down and talk to anyone in the chamber, party or non-party for solutions. That is unfortunately, what I want to say.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I agree with the Chief Executive and Cllr Paul O'Brien. It's about detail and it's about, you are trying to make a decision without any detail here and it's, I think it's too complex an issue and one of the reasons, Cllr Behan, I was asking about the other places was again it's about detail and it's about being able to understand that. For example in Dun Laoghaire, you raised and I look for additional information from colleagues who work there. Thornton's are involved in Ballyogan, Dun Laoghaire also have three engineers up there Shanganagh and Glasthule are there, so the local authority have looked at is it more cost effective to have a private provider provide that. That is the level of detail we owe it to our constituents to understand, before we go down the road of making any decisions. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gail Dunne.

CLLR DUNNE: I would like to have more information as well. I get the spirit of the motion from Cllr Behan, but I think we should discuss this as a budgetary process and I feel, like I don't think, I know I am not going to change my opinion on this, I am sure a lot of the other councillors are, but I think the Chief Executive should take into account what the councillors are saying. If he can do that during the budgetary process, I think that is the place to do it. I am prepared to wait as well, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Erika Doyle.

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, Chair, just very briefly, I think we owe it to our constituents to have all of the information all of the time. I always say when it's coming to a part 8 it's our job to have all the information from all sides. I think that we should all be always open to changing our mind, because new information may come to mind. So I think we owe it to the people we represent to get all the information. If that means we stick to our original viewpoint, fine, but we owe it to them to at least hear it out.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, can I bring in a Director here, Breege Kilkenny, please.

BREEGE KILKENNY: Just to mention and reassure the council members. From the very outset, the whole purpose behind this was investment, investment in recycling and investment is part of our climate action and environmental piece. So from the very outset, all of the information I was getting from members that we need to talk to the members first. So it's first place that this was brought to the members attention was at CPG level. The same presentation was brought forward and it was on a discussion with regard to, in the future, the very first point is that within Bray, it's a health and safety issue for the roof. It absolutely has to be done.

So it was on that basis then we started looking at all the recycling centres. That is when it came out that there was investment needed. That was the whole purpose. So it was an information piece, first of all to the CPG. The next SPC, of which, within our section, that there are two SPCs,

one is planning and environment and the other is the climate action piece. It just happened to be the planning one that was next. As part of that planning SPC, it was the chair's request that the next place we bring it to is to the Council, to the full council and that is the meeting that was held in July. So there was no intention, there was no sleight, there was no issue with regard to just sliding it in. That was based on the request for the chair of the Planning and Environment SPC. It was absolutely my full intention to bring to the climate action and biodiversity SPC, the next time it would have happened, but then things took over. I have asked now to make sure it is on the SPC that we are coming forward with on Thursday. But all of this was always about a discussion and, if it was a budgetary measure, it would have been brought up at that time. Like the Chief Executive had said. But what was very obvious is that there was going to be a funding deficit. It needed to be discussed as to where it would happen. From that point of view, it was mentioned, as part of one of the measures, is that charges would be looked at and it was mentioned in that context that it was one of the measures and then from being impressed with the members is where the team came up with, well a €3 charge would provide so much funding. But it was very expressed at all the meetings I was at that we would research and go through all the mechanisms of funding to make this happen. At the meetings I was at, I believe it was quite clear, that there is a lot of the materials that will remain free, but a huge part of it was for us to take in other elements of materials that other counties are able to offer and that we would put them in place. But on top of that, as well, a final piece of was that to provide a recycling centre for the west. If I could put that in the context of the communication. It was from my learning with regard to things that members were saying to me, the first point of contact that we make with any kind of issue we are doing, even if it's an operational issue is to bring it to the members. So as far as I am concerned, first port of call was the CPG then our SPC and then the council. But the discussion isn't finished. The next step would have been to have meetings with all the districts and then to have a public announcement. So that is just what I wanted to say, Cathaoirleach, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Breege. Cllr Gerry O'Neill.

CLLR O'NEILL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just briefly there, it's something I mentioned here a long time ago. The big supermarkets should be obliged to provide the recycling facilities. Just briefly there in Blessington we have three big supermarkets. Only one of them, Supervalu provide recycling. Now the cheap German drinks or Dutch drinks, you can get in Aldi or Dunnes. Their bottles are brought home, emptied and recycled at Supervalu. It is a way to put the onus on the people making the money out of this. I think a lot of the recycling issues could be solved if we demand. Driving out from west Wicklow and around you see the Lidl's and

the Aldis, but no recycling at all. No bottle banks. I have said it before here, it should be part of the planning, that they must provide the recycling... bottle banks or whatever. So, even if it's not within the legislation, as it is, surely to God we could come up with something that could demand these charge store, even at this late stage, to provide the area and the space for recycling? Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Erika Doyle. Sorry, Cllr Dermot O'Brien, apologies.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Really briefly, to me we have lost sight of the clarity of the motion here, which isn't about how, or whether to fund the upgrading or enhancement of recycling centres. It's about whether we agree with charges or not. It feels like, there was a point where we were all against charges and now it feels like people are climbing back up on the fence for some reason, because they are not sure whether they are for or against. So this allows us to set down a marker, enforceable or not, Cathaoirleach, this give us an opportunity to set down a marker, about whether we are for charges or against charges that. Is simply how it is for me.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: There has been a lot of discussion about transparency and conversation going forward, but I have sent emails requesting some of this information and I still haven't got any acknowledgement or answers back. I am wondering can we send in questions to ask to clarify some points. I mean a €3 charge, is that €3 a day, a drop, one bag of rubbish? These are the detailed information that we need as public representatives to make balanced decisions. So I was wondering is there an email, or who should we contact to ask these questions and can we submit them in writing ahead of any kind of conversation? I welcome it coming to the SPC on Thursday and maybe I can submit the questions before that. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: Just want to, we have two companies that collect recycling every fortnight. We pay for it. There is a lot of people use them two companies. But I just think we need to have further conversations. I am not going to rub into any decision or vote for anything here this evening. It needs to be put back to get further clarity. The fact is on the recycling centre that I know there is huge investment needed in it. Where we are going to get that, that has to be found. So that is my view on it, I wouldn't be voting on anything here this evening, anyway.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just think it's interesting what Breege has come in with to say there is, in the process of where she's seen it and where it started and where it's going to end. When you hear the public being asked, I am sure the public will be saying exactly what we say. But it will be interesting to see what the choices that Breege is talking about will be on paper. Some things will be charged, other things

won't be charged. I mean that has never been said in the conversation. So I think that again has to be clarified.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Finally, Cllr Joe Behan.

CLLR BEHAN: I promise, Cathaoirleach, this is my last contribution on this. If you read the motion it actually states as part of it that, 'We are directing the Chief Executive to continue to provide the service free of charge and to desist from including any such charge in the budget.' So what has been turned around in the last few minutes is, well we will talk to you and see whether we will include it in the budget or not. So, to me, that is not the clarity I am looking for, Cathaoirleach. I think Cllr O'Brien has made a very good point, we should have the vote. I am proposing that we have the vote and it will be an indication for the executive as to whether we, as members, support this idea of charging or not. We are against the charges full stop. There are other ways this can be funded, Cathaoirleach. So I want to proceed with the vote, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Chief Executive.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I will just clarify again. Listen, as part of the budget deliberations when we get the information, I have spoken about so people can make informed decisions and based on the viewpoint here now the members aren't in favour. If, after providing all the information as regards the implications they are not still not in favour of bringing it in as part of the budget 2023 I will respect that decision as part of the budget deliberations. I don't think I can be fairer than that and I can't be clearer than that. If the members still want to go ahead with the vote, they can go ahead with the vote, but it isn't enforceable. That doesn't mean I won't address the matter, as part of the budget deliberations. That is what I am saying.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you very much, Chief Executive. We have all had a good spiel about this. Cllr Joe Behan, this is your motion, what would you like to do?

CLLR BEHAN: I propose that the vote be taken, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Can I have a seconder? Before I read out the motion and call for the vote, I am just going to read one part of the Section 140 legislation. It's part 7 under Section 140: 'Without prejudice to any other relevant requirements it is necessary for the passing of a resolution under this Section that at least one third of the total number of members of the local authority concerned vote in favour of the resolution.'

Just to make it clear it's one third need to be in favour.

Section 140 motion of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), in the names of Cllr Joe Behan, Cllr M Kavanagh, Cllr Peir Leonard and Cllr Tom Fortune. Under the powers granted to elected members by virtue of Section 140 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), we the elected members of Wicklow County Council hereby direct the Chief

Executive of Wicklow County Council to continue to provide recycling services at council recycling centres, free of charge and to desist from including any such charge in the Wicklow County Council budget 2023 and subsequent budgets. Are we all clear? Yeah, thank you.

[Vote taken]

HELEN PURCELL: We have eight voting for, six not present and eight abstaining.

CLLR BEHAN: And none against.

HELEN PURCELL: None against.

CLLR BEHAN: We only need three more people...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, members. Vote is taken. Thank you very much. Thank you everyone for their contribution to a very good discussion and we will watch this space now. Helen, are you going read out the notice of motions, please? Sorry not the notice, disposal notices.

HELEN PURCELL: The next item on the agenda is to confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday 5th of September, copy circulated.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Do I have a proposer.

HELEN PURCELL: Cllr Stokes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Secunder?

HELEN PURCELL: Cllr R O'Connor.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr R O'Connor.

HELEN PURCELL: Item number three is to consider the disposal of 730m² or thereabouts in the townland of Drummin, Annamoe, Co Wicklow, by transfer to the legal personal representatives of the late William and Carmel Hawkins deceased named as Mr William Hawkins (son) and Ms Hazel Birro (daughter) (as per notice previously circulated).

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. John Snell and Shay Cullen.

HELEN PURCELL: Item number 4 is To consider the disposal of 0.0555 Ha (0.1371 ac) or thereabouts in the townland of Oldcourt, Boghall Road, Bray Co Wicklow by Transfer to Ms Myra Carroll as Legal Personal Representative in the Estate of Mr Garrett Nolan (also known as Jim) deceased (as per notice previously circulated).

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy. Proposing that? Cllr Dermot O'Brien seconded. Thank you. All agreed? Yeah.

HELEN PURCELL: Item number 5. To consider the disposal of 0.54 hectares (1.33 acres) or thereabouts in the townland of Mill Road, Killincarrig, Greystones, Co Wicklow to the Health Service Executive (- HSE) for the development of primary healthcare centre as per notice previously circulated. The members will recall this was an agenda item in April. Disposal was passed, there is a slight rectification to the boundary, that is why it's back before the members, but the site...

CATHAOIRLEACH: I have got a proposer? Cllr Stokes and seconded by Cllr Tom Fortune. Thank you.

HELEN PURCELL: Item number 6, to consider the disposal of 0.4047 hectares (1 acre) or thereabouts in the townland of Lugduff, Tinahely, Co Wicklow by Transfer to Automatic Plastics Limited, School Road, Lugduff, Tinahely, Co Wicklow.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Mullen and seconded by Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Just to say thank you to Lorraine and Susan for the work they did in regard to this project here and this is IDA land back a number of years ago and Wicklow County Council had the foresight to go and purchase it. So people like Tony O'Neill, I would like to express my thanks to those people who had another fight to go and purchase this. It's going to result in over 200 jobs provided in that particular area into the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Blake.

HELEN PURCELL: All agreed? Item number 7, is to consider the vacancy to the Planning Environment SPC arising from the resignation of Cllr Erika Doyle from this SPC. Just to advise the members the SPC Scheme states: 'Each member of Wicklow County Council shall, as a matter of equity and good practice, have the opportunity to serve on at least one SPC. And council members should not serve on more than two SPCs insofar as possible.' Again for reasons of equity and good practice and workload.' We have six SPCs. There are 34 members in total across those SPCs, so we currently have two members who are on two SPCs. That is just to give you some information before it's proposed.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: I will wait until this is determined, I am trying to come in on item 5, but I will wait until item 7 is dealt with first.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will put you on the waiting list. Is there anyone coming in on the planning SPC? Any lights on? No lights on. Cllr Gerry Walsh didn't want to talk on this one.

CLLR WALSH: Just, sorry...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead.

CLLR WALSH: Back to item number 5, I was trying to get in, just to remind members when this first came before the council in the April meeting there was a discussion around it, this is the disposal of the site to the HSE. There was a general agreement from management that the proceeds around this site would be reinvested in the Greystones Municipal District. I just want to remind that and get further confirmation on that fact.

HELEN PURCELL: Have we any nominations for the Planning and Environment SPC? No. Okay.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

HELEN PURCELL: It will remain on the agenda, or I can go back to CPG, because the scheme would need to be adjusted if the membership is

going to be adjusted. Item number 8 again has been on the agenda previously. To consider the filling...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Snell.

HELEN PURCELL: So we are on item number 8.

>>: [INAUDIBLE] not speaking into mic.

HELEN PURCELL: To consider filling the vacancies, we are looking for someone to fill the vacancies.

>>: [INAUDIBLE] due to not speaking into mic.

CATHAOIRLEACH: On planning.

ADMINISTRATOR: Item number 7. Are you willing to accept that, Cllr Mullen?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Congratulations.

HELEN PURCELL: Item number 8. To consider the filling of the vacancy to the East Coast Regional Drug Task Force, arising from the resignation of former councillor, Mags Crean. Have we any nominations to the Regional Drug Task Force.

CLLR SNELL: Can I say before we are inundated with nomination for this position. This is a committee that I serve on and you yourself, Cathaoirleach, serve on. We have been on it for many years. I think it's a very important role. I think it needs to be fulfilled here today and I would put out a request, not just to the Greystones Municipal District, because Cllr Crean play add pivotal role in this committee and got services into the area to deal with drugs and alcohol addiction. Indeed before her time, Cllr Gerry Walsh served on this committee for many years. I know Gerry went on to chair the Joint Policing Committee of which he is doing a Trojan job. Again it was a role fulfilled from the Greystones Municipal District. It's very disappointing that one, former councillor, Mags Crean had to step aside, but two we are now in a position where we don't have someone from that district to step forward. Not to put pressure on anyone in that district, as a Task Force, we are looking for members from the rural area, i.e., from Rathdrum, Aughrim, Tinahely, Shillelagh, Carnew district. Because we are in the process of trying to put in services within that district, the rural area of Wicklow. We have representation from the east and the south and as we know Bray have their own Task Force.

While I am talking about this Task Force, Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy was chair of this committee for a number of years before she became an elected member and she done Trojan, Trojan work in the role of chairperson of the east coast regional drug and alcohol Task Force. I think it's something we shouldn't be glossing over. It's something that is unfortunately a major issue in all of our towns and villages throughout county Wicklow and beyond. As public representatives we face the consequences of this on a daily basis. We need to get elected members to fulfil the roles they are elected to do. As I say, unfortunately we see

today, that there is a reluctance to partake in some of these committees, but this is a vital committee and you yourself, Cathaoirleach, have done a huge amount of work, not just in south Wicklow, but within the county on this committee and I would urge people that if we can get two people, one from Greystones and one from that rural area I am talking about to give it a bit of thought and come forward, because it's for the betterment of your own communities. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Snell. Very well- put. Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: I propose Cllr Peir Leonard.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

CLLR LEONARD: Cllr Peir Leonard look it, I am in Arklow, but I do want to get to know the more rural community within that part, so I am happy to work with John and Tommy and the other people on the committee on that. It's very important for our kids and the future generations.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We have that then, that is great.

HELEN PURCELL: A seconder.

CATHAOIRLEACH: John Snell is seconding that.

HELEN PURCELL: I will check with the Drugs Task Force, if geographically you are suitable.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Mullen. John Snell, sorry.

CLLR SNELL: Again in regard to the geographical spread the invitation is still there for people from other areas to come on board. The Task Force have wrote to the local authority in regards to looking for extra members and it would be appreciated if people want to come on board from other areas, thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Okay.

HELEN PURCELL: Item number 9 is to consider the report on the review of the Town Teams and Christine Flood is making that presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Christine.

Wherever you wish.

CHRISTINE: Teresa is just putting up the presentation for me. Thank you very much, members, for having me. This relates back to the Town Centre First policy. I will talk about the Town Centre First policy, but in actual fact we commenced the review of the Town Teams or we certainly appointed MCA Consultants, that is Allen McAdam Consultant to do the review of the Town Teams just before the, just before the Town Centre First policy was introduced. I think we seem to be having some technical problems, but I will just talk you through the beginning of the presentation while we are waiting for the technical problems to go away. I have to say, I tend to have that effect on computers, so don't blame Teresa for this! So the Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as vibrant, viable and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit and do business in. While functioning as the service and social and cultural and recreational hub for the local community. The

pandemic has highlighted some of the issues relating to town centres and in fact we have benefitted in a certain way from funding for things like outdoor dining, investment in public realm, etc.

Each development has their own town centre planned driven by the community and business as part of a Town Team. Obviously, the councillors have a role on that team. Town Teams are supported by Town Regeneration Officers and with technical and admin expertise from each local authority.

So the good news, we have it working now, thank you very much. We are on the second slide there, Teresa. Sorry, the third slide.

We were informed recently by the Department of Community and Rural Development that funding is in place for each local authority to appoint Town Regeneration Officers. And Town Regeneration Officers will assist with the regeneration of the towns, including the very important urban regeneration fund, rural regeneration fund, town and village funding, and town and Village Renewal Scheme, Falt Ireland funding, to name a few. And I understand we have a vacant homes officer, Brian Wildes in place, working on that. So, the Town Centre first policy seeks to align all of the supports through the introduction of town regeneration officers with appropriate committees. This will be a fairly senior role within the local authority. It will be the equivalent of a senior executive officer or a senior engineer. And it will be a 3-year contract. So, the TRO, the Town Regeneration Officer, will draw on a multidisciplinary team within the council to manage, deliver and to link into the wider economic and social programme within the council and obviously within each town.

And the team will include expertise in the area of planning, architecture, engineering, conservation, urban design, arts and heritage, et cetera, to name just a few of the disciplines that you find within the local authority.

And I have to say that my colleagues here in Wicklow County Council, across all of the disciplines have been very engaged so far with the Town Teams, giving very good advice in terms of arts, heritage, engineering, et cetera. So, obviously, economic development will play an important role there also.

And a key role of the town regeneration officer is to facilitate the establishment training and the ongoing work of Town Teams, and a national network of Town Regeneration Officers, to be established and coordinated at national level. That's very beneficial to towns wishing to share information and best practice nationally.

So, remind you of what a Town Team is, and this is the definition in town centre first, which is slightly different to the Town Teams, that we are

originally establishing within the county, the original idea behind the establishment of the Town Teams in the county going back to the policy in 2014, 2015 or thereabouts, it was the framework for Town Centre Renewal. Produced by the department of Enterprise and the focus very much on the retail core of the towns. the Town Centre First Town Teams is holistic in that it looks at the public realm of the towns and it broaden out the membership to community representatives. So, the Town Team is a group of local residents, business people, community reps and other stakeholders who come together to make their area a better place to live, work, visit and to invest.

In addition to council members, it can include within the Town Teams, the Chambers of Commerce, PPN, business/public representative, the local development sector, community groups, businesses, retailers, et cetera. There is a long list of potential members of the Town Team a Town Team maybe led by a local champion, potentially somebody already active in supporting town centre initiatives. And the Town Team lead ideally without the necessary experience, skills and leadership qualities to bring the Town Team on. The Town Regeneration Officer will assist in building the capacity of the Town Teams providing access to training, support, skills development and education. And the team supported by the Town Regeneration Officer and the multidisciplinary teams within the council, will lead initiatives such as health check processes, and develop the town centre first vision and plan for the development of their towns.

I suppose that the key sentence here in the presentation is "they will formulate an implementation plan in collaboration with the local authority". I would hasten to add, "Collaboration" is a key word here and the delivery of projects done in collaboration with the local authority and others as required with the Town Team consulted by the local authority during the delivery phase.

There will be a role for the Town Team in overseeing delivery, communicating with stakeholders et cetera. Now, as mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, Wicklow County Council have had Town Teams established since 2016.

Or there about. I think that Bray was the first Town Team to have been established in the county. A review of the four existing or four active Town Teams was commissioned by the council late last year, 2021 and was conducted by the MCA Consulting.

The Town Teams involved are Arklow, Blessington, Greystones and Wicklow. And as I said, Bray is awaiting the outcome of the review prior to forming a new Town Team.

The purpose of the review is to ensure the Town Teams are operating using the optimum process and processes to undertake their role in the economic development and to ensure that their impact is maximised. While Town Teams and their remit feature in government policy as a mechanism, and enabler for engagement with public bodies it is again, a guide book. The review looks at areas such as structure, governance, membership of the Town Team and representation. Co-ordination and admin support. Communications. Collaborations and strategic partnerships.

Operational activities, and the level of activity of each Town Team.

The key findings are Town Teams in County Wicklow have identified and driven some very successful projects and worthwhile projects across the county. Members will be aware of the many projects that have been developed, everything from the work on the Blessington health check and the initiation, the development stage of the Green Way. To Arklow, to the website, the tourism website and a whole range of other activities in Arklow. Wicklow have their Historical Trail and the lighting of monuments. Greystones, won the Livcom award thanks to co-operation with the Town Team and former Councillor Mags Crean and also the successful public realm plan of Greystones in collaboration with the Town Team. So, a number of very successful projects and they are only a few off the top of my head. The Town Teams have successfully harnessed considerable voluntary effort and expertise and, I might add, enthusiasm from within the communities for the benefit of their areas. And there are problems but they are not unsurmountable, understanding the shared vision of what a Town Team is and what the role is within the respective town, and there is a degree of confusion and lack of clarity as to the role of the Town Team versus the role of the local authority and the elected representatives and there is room for improvement in representation on Town Teams committees, and in getting a broad representation of players and sectors on the Town Team.

So, a number of recommendations have come out of the report. I will go through them.

Sorry, I should mention, operational structure and governance, it is recommended that all Town Teams operate under a company limited by guarantee structure. This provides a degree of protection for the members and the directors and it enables the Town Teams to act as a conduit for funding which is beyond the reach of the local authority and a very good example of this is LEADER funding. It is also recommended that Town Teams introduce a minimum standard in relation to governance. And adopt policies and procedures for the operation of the Town Teams. There is a suggestion that there should be adaptation of the

governance code for charities or similar. There is an organisation called The Wheel, which does governance and advises on governance and provides training on governance for the community and the voluntary sector.

They would be well-positioned to advise on establishing a code of governance for the Town Teams. So, with regards to membership of Town Teams, and representation, the recommendation is to review the membership of the Town Teams and to identify the gaps in the representation. Now, it are certain sectors of the community, the business community, it is very hard to get them involved in the Town Teams. Some businesses, when times are good, they are too busy to engage, and when times are bad, they don't see the relevance of the Town Teams. But, I think the more representative the Town Team is of the community and the business sector, the more successful it will be.

So the proposal is that there is a democratic approach to seeking representation for the majority of Town Team members. At the moment there is a few people who are co-opted on to the Town Teams. There is often good reason for that, they may have a particular interest or a skill set that would be useful to advance a particular project. So, I'm not saying that there is anything wrong but the advice is that we try and democratically elect people to the Town Teams.

The PPN should be used to identify community representation.

And I think that the importance of the PPN should be recognised as they have a very wide reach across the county. Consideration of election to three of the members of the Town Teams, membership to be reviewed every five years at the Wicklow County Council AGM, following the local elections. And elected member of vacancies, occurring within the period to be considered by the County Council on the recommendation of the relevant Municipal District.

And the recommendation is that we review and frequently update and re-engage with those who have waned and fallen from the Town Teams. As I said, during COVID we have had some people less engaged. But we should recruit new members democratically, to ensure that the Town Team is representative of the local town and the environs and I know that most Town Teams would like to see younger people engaging with the Town Teams and taking part in the process.

We should ensure that members are nominated and elected as officers in a fair and transparent manner. And introduce maximum turns of office that could be a part of the articles and the memorandum of association and the constitution under the CLG.

So to deal with terms of office. And then further on, the final slide, I think, on membership and representation, providing appropriate training for the Town Teams workshops, et cetera to upgrade skills and, as I said, The Wheel is a very, very good model. There is quite a bit of online training and support in the areas of governance, financial management, et cetera and we should provide an induction and a welcome pack for new members.

So, there should be a annual review of membership. to ensure that we get appropriate and accurate feedback from the members of the Town Teams. Because it has to be a satisfying experience if we are to attract members to the Town Teams. So, co-ordination and administrative support, the recommendation is that a dedicated staff resource should be provided for the operation and the administration of the Town Teams and the good news is that we will have the Town Regeneration Officer and hopefully we will have additional resources, depending on the outcome of the Budget.

Communications and relationships, again, this was another very important area that was flagged widely in the course of the feedback. So, there should be a memorandum of understanding between each Town Team and the County Council. Setting out the roles and the responsibilities of each organisation, vis-a-vis the Town Teams to bring clarity and demarcation of roles and will provide the basis for a sound working relationship on both sides.

We should have an agreed protocol for communications and PR for joint projects, between the Town Teams and the County Council. Sometimes, it is a bit of a race as to who is going to get to the media first with their good news stories ... and then there should be a development of a standard tool kit for a public consultation in relation to projects and initiatives. And the Town Team representatives to address the MD, now, they are saying that is bi monthly or a quarterly, whatever works for the members. With regards to collaboration and strategic partnerships, a Town Team forum at a counterparty level should be established. This will be extremely beneficial for sharing experiences and for networking across the county. Each Town Team should register with the PPN as mentioned. This also provides a vehicle for which the Town Teams can potentially contribute to SPCs et cetera.

With regards to operational activities, we are nearly at the end, members, we should develop and introduce a mandatory code of conduct for membership of Town Teams and Town Team committees. To outline the general principles and ethical principles and practices that are necessary for the smooth running of the Town Team and all members are required

to sign up to the code of conduct prior to taking up their position on the Town Team.

With regards to operational activities, where there are subgroups and most Town Teams have subgroups, that each has their own individual terms of reference and clear notes for the members and the stakeholders.

Because in many cases, members of the subgroups would not actually come into contact with the full Town Team and may not have a clear understanding of the full role of the Town Team.

And we should develop a county Wicklow Town Team hand book for to provide guidance in regard to the establishment of the Town Teams.

And to set parameters. And I have to say, I am really glad we will have a Town Regeneration Officer to do all of this with the Town Teams. Each Town Team should develop an annual work plan with clear priorities for the year ahead and the plan should be presented to the Municipal District for ratification. And finally, the level of the activity of Town Team, the Town Teams to be encouraged to undertake a broad range of activities, that are all listed there on the slide.

Anything from public realm initiatives, arts, culture, environment, energy, economic development, enterprise, retail, funding, community and sports initiatives. So, Members, that is the presentation. I am happy to take any questions you may have.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Christine.

Sorry, can I just get, I would like to suspend the meeting to 5.30pm, to get that out of the way until 4.30? Do I have a proposer? Thank you, Cllr O'Brien and seconder, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald. Christine, thank you for the report, it was interesting. I know that the members have been waiting for a long time, one lady in waiting is Cllr Miriam Murphy.

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, a long time since I have been called a lady! Christine, thank you for the presentation. I register on the CEO's report that the ... and I suppose, that I am being honest and not critical, and please don't think I am critical. I am very disappointed with the report in some context. I think that, I'm only speaking on behalf of Arklow Town Team. We have done all of the tick boxes. We have done what you have said in the hand book. And in all the recommendations, the only thing that I got out of it was the Regeneration Officer, which was a very positive thing. I certainly recommend that. I think that words are within the report, I think it did not give me what I hoped to be in it of, yes, getting new members in, yes, we know, we have done, I suppose, sending back emails out to all the members to come back. It didn't give me anything to go and to say, "I really want to get involved in it." , it did

not give me clarity on say limitations of what the Town Team versus MD, business, you know ... should there have been a Budgetary limit on the projects we can do that is not in remit of the MD work? Yeah ..., Christine, and I am not being critical, I was just disappointed in it. I may not be putting it into words properly but I was expecting more from the review. The three members being elected ... yeah, I would have an issue with that.

So, that's my view.

Thank you, Christine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Miriam Murphy. Cllr Gail Dunne? Cllr Dunne thank you, Cathaoirleach and Christine, thank you for the presentation.

I have to say, my dealings with the Town Team over the last number of years has not always been positive.

I find that there is times when the Town Team knows more than the members do. Where they are able to tell us what is going on and we don't know nothing about it.

In Wicklow Town for instance, they did a survey of the one-way system, they told us this was needed to be done. And it was implemented. And as soon as a few people started to give out about it, they were nowhere to be seen and the members in the area, had to take up the slack and to go on with it. I have gone to a number of Town Team meetings over the years, and I have to say, I was disappointed in the manner of all of the meetings. And especially when officials from the council went there, I felt that they were put under pressure, I didn't think that they were treated that well and on a number of occasions I had to come in, to step in to say how unfair I thought that it was. So, I'm not too sure. I think, that it may have a lot to offer but I'm not too sure what. And seriously sitting, wondering if Town Teams are taking over from the council or from the councillors? That is what I was here thinking. As far as I'm concerned there is a reason this is going on.

So, I'm really disappointed, to have been at the forefront of some very good schemes in fairness, there really have but, I could not say my dealings were always positive as I don't think they were.

I seriously feel that they undermine the role of a councillor. So, it is something that I think we should tread carefully with. And I think that going forward, everybody's roles has to be defined. Because, I think there is a cross-over and it is a dangerous cross-over. We are elected members. We are elected by the people. We represent the people.

That's our job. We all do it in different ways.

These people are put together as a committee. They have their own opinion, their own agendas. So, going forward, I will be watching this carefully but I would not be 100% happy with the direction of the way that things are going. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Dunne. Cllr Shay Cullen?

About the Town Centre First Policy. I very much welcome the enhancement of all towns. I also would include large villages in that. Sometimes I think we are focussed absolutely on the four or five main towns in our county and rightly so to a point. Let's not forget the growth areas of the likes of Newtownmountkennedy, Ashford, these type of areas that are fast- growing and need support. I would like to see the enhancement of our towns and village, rather than our towns alone. I think that is important. I very much welcome the review of the Town Teams process. I think the Town Teams members that are made up of voluntary community people, local business people, community representatives, I think they all do a great job in their own right, and should be applauded for that. That is where I end my positivity. I and Cllr Gail Dunne, have attended many Town Team meetings and I believe that a lot of decisions that are made by the Town Teams aren't even relayed to our Municipal District meetings. Very often, I as an elected public representative don't know what is going on in terms of some of the projects that are going forward, from Town Teams, we should be aware of those. We are not privy to certain information. The relationship between Town Teams and town councillors is in my view, very poor at the moment. If they ask the question in terms of funding, where is the match- funding going to come from projects coming forward for Town Teams, I suspect that will have to come from the County Council, i.e. the Municipal Districts. I do have a concern about Christine spoke about the election of a Town Team for a period of time. This sounds very much like an election of a County Council for a five- year term. I don't know where that has come from, but certainly something that needs a lot more thought. I have sat in meetings with Town Teams were officially have been treated very unsatisfactorily and again like Cllr Gail Dunne, I have tried to defend the officials, but at the end of the day, the realisation I have come to, Cathaoirleach, is that the management and the officials of this county have brought this on themselves, because it's like a hotline from a Town Team member to any one of our senior officials here that, these people aren't elected by the public, but yet they are privy to information. There is open lines of communication to our officials in the council and, as I said earlier, very often we are not, as councillors aware of what is going on, we are hearing it second hand, we might read in the paper.

I listened to a radio interview one particular day where somebody was on, from a Town Team delighted that he was awarded one million for his town. Again, we weren't even aware of this, through a scheme. That is not good enough in this day and age. I will finish on this, chairman. We, as public representatives, are elected by the people, to serve the people and not to be bypassed by Town Teams or district forums or anything else. They should be feeding in the information into our Municipal Districts, for us to work with Town Team members to establish projects and working projects and make our towns and villages a better place for everybody.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Cullen. Cllr Paul O'Brien.

CLLR P O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you, Christine for that presentation. First of all I want to thank the members of the Town Teams at the moment who do great work and it is voluntary. I do want to say that the town centre approach is excellent, because we have seen here in Wicklow Town, Fitzwilliam Square and the Market Square how the town centre has improved with the public realm works which have gone down there. Like Cllr Gail Dunne there is always a but at the end of it. I am going to be honest and accept that my own party were one of the parties who did away with local government in terms of local Government and they were wrong, they were wrong with doing away with town councils, I think it was a huge mistake and one that should be rectified. I am delighted to hear about democratic approaches, but there is a democratic process already in place and it comes around every five years. While we all might disagree at times in this chamber, the height of respect I have for my fellow councillors, is unbelievable. I know that they put themselves forward to go for election and also we have to deal with the consequences then of our own actions, because we are the democratically elected people. Cllr Dunne is 100% right. I stepped in a couple of time last year as the acting Cathaoirleach at the time, I came out of the meeting shocked. Shocked because of the amount of information I got out of that meeting was 100 times more than what I got out of an MD meeting or indeed a meeting here. If we are going to go down this twinning track, or whatever you want to call it in terms of enhancing the Town Teams, there has to be this memo of understanding. It has to be adhered to, because while it might sound great in paper, in reality it might be completely different, because as Cllr Cullen have said, we have people announcing projects on the radio, with very officials ignoring us because they have to return a call to the Town Team first and it's been said to us, there is no point in denying it. They didn't want to feel the wrath of the Town Teams.

We have a democratic process, it happens every five years for local elections and I think we should be enhancing, the Government should be enhancing our powers, not taking them away. I think this is a just a cop out, rather than bringing back town councils, who actually had a little bit of bite and that is a democratic process, by the way, I think they are diluting the democratic local Government process by bringing in Town Teams. Who is going to elect them? I understand there will be a democratic approach, but it will be the same committees electing each other to different roles. It's not going to be the public voting for these, as far as I can read into, maybe I am wrong, but I think it's a cop out, a cop out by the Government and I do take responsibility for my own party's action in this and I think it was wrong.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr O'Brien. Cllr Tom Fortune.

CLLR FORTUNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I think it's reasonable to say that I probably up to today have probably been the most outspoken public rep on this particular madness that is being put before us. I have gone into, anything I have said to date is in the public domain. I believe, Cathaoirleach, that this is a massive mistake. I think it's a massive load of BS. It's a duplication of the system we currently have in place. I don't believe for one second that it's an accident. I believe that when the, I am one of the people who loved the concept of the district council, but the problem with the district councils when they were formed because they did bring in the surrounding villages into the process, but the problem was there was no infrastructure put in. All this infrastructure that Christine has outlined before us, that is what should have been put in place with the district councils. We don't even get all the officials to our district council meetings and here we are coming out with a process, I have said that we had a meeting up in Glendalough during the budget process, I think it was 13 or 14 of you there one night. We were talking about the budget and we got on to talking about this afterwards. Said to the gathering *"what I would love to understand is when you go for the local election in two years' time as it was then what are you going to tell the public you are going to be doing when it's all been done for you?"* This is an absolute, this is not an accident, this is part of a strategy. If you look at what is happening in our world, as we, the stuff we are involved in, the KWETBs have all been amalgamated into 16 from 32. The policing commissions have been amalgamated and in both cases the head offices are in, one is in Kildare and one is in Wexford and one of them in Wicklow. I believe what is coming down the road, I can see local authorities being amalgamated in a similar fashion. That is going to effect, not only councillor, but executives and officials in the council as well. But this here, basically if you stand back from this and look at it from a purely organisational perspective, this is basically replicating

everything that a public, democratically elected public rep does, so I can't understand for the life of me the role of the Town Team, I will put it in inverted commas and the democratically elected councillors. Christine says the process is moving along and they are going to be democratically picked, to date they haven't. I don't understand the point about Bray being the first, because as far as I understand it, Greystones was the one that was really focussed on and they were hand-picked the people who were put in charge of that and a legal entity put in place. I am going to also comment, if I may and just give me a bit of patience on this, chair. I think this is the most important thing that has ever come before democratically elected councillors. When I look at the document, we got, a review of Wicklow Town Teams. A remit of the Town Team was to engage in an appraisal and planning process resulted in a development and plan for the **town council** which highlighted key themes and areas of social activities which when delivered would benefit the value and the residents of the town as well as the socio-economic role of our organisation. I thought that was our role.

It should be noted in approaching this review, there is no national benchmark or standard by which Town Teams are required to operate by. What? There is no structure, no organisation, it's all seat of the pants, love, we will make it up as we go along. Let's take powers off councillor, this is what it's all about. While Town Teams and their remit feature in the Government as an engager and the bolt only up approach to town development. At the time of completion of this rule no operational rule book or standardised rule book existing at national or regional level. What the hell are we talking about? I have done a lot of research on this. I have looked at how the local government is structured and how the management association is structured and how they feed into everything. I have looked into this as a background to this, I am not just shouting off the back of my head. There is an article in yesterday's paper that talked about the chilling morning to what was called Mandarins. There is quotes in it from TD O'Brien from Sinn Fein also and also a minister from the Government. The minister warned patience is running out, it was once the case that civil servants were supposed to keep politicians in check. Now politicians are needed to keep the civil service in check. Our mandarins appear to enjoy an unofficial version of qualified immunity. I think this process is feeding into that kind of accountability. At least we come in here and a number of us will rattle the cage or ask a question or try to be accountable on behalf of the people who elect us. But I don't see how this will work. I just think what is going on here, as members I will be flabbergasted if we accept this as members. We should not do it. I know as well from...

CATHAOIRLEACH: Tom.

CLLR FORTUNE: Just give me a couple of minutes, chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I can't.

CLLR FORTUNE: I am not finished.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I have other speakers to come in and a very important presentation from the NTA.

CLLR FORTUNE: Give me a couple of minutes.

CLLR FORTUNE: Give me two.

CATHAOIRLEACH: One- and- a- half, okay.

CLLR FORTUNE: I have lost track.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Don't lose track, you were doing well and I stopped you.

CLLR FORTUNE: What I am saying is this is an absolute disaster. What I was saying, as members, there is no way in the world we should accept this. I know from talking to other councillors, who have contacted me, having seen some of my public pronouncements on this who have similar issues. Wicklow for some reason was driving this like a coach and horses versus other counties which I always found a little bit amusing. What I am going to do chair to facilitate what you have said to me, and I have a lots of other things I could talk about. I am going to make a proposal. My proposal is if this situation is proceeded with and enforced upon us, my proposal is that all members of the Municipal District would sit on the executive of the Town Team and that the Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District would at all times be the chair of that organisation. That is the only way we, as members, should even contemplate this in any shape or fashion, because this is the greatest attack on local democracy ever. What it's doing is it's taking the democratically elected... and the silence from our TDs of course always amuses me as well. Obviously they see, they probably see articulated and pushy councillors as competition coming down the track and maybe it suits. That is my cynical comment on it. I am saying it cynically because they don't come out and support us in any way, shape or fashion. It's ridiculous. I have to say, I am absolutely 110% disgusted with this. I will not accept it, I will talk out against it continually and I would hope that members will do the same. Because this is not in your interests, it's not in the interests of the people we represent and the people that are currently on a lot of these teams have been actually hand- picked. They have never been elected to anything... never been involved in most things.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Let's let other members talk on it. Thank you, Cllr Behan. Cllr R O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thank you, chair, thank you for the presentation. We have been waiting for this for some time in Bray. I just want to say I agree with what Cllr Tom Fortune just said. If you got 50 people in this room and said that role as a councillor,... just one question I have, as a council, each Municipal District, are they able to put forward a motion to abolish a Town Team if they so want to. If they overstep their boundaries and they don't follow the communication protocols or anything like that? Do we have the ability to just abolish it as a council?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr R O'Connor. Cllr Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

CLLR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you very much, Christine, for this, as Cllr O'Connor said we have been waiting for this in Bray. We have had The Bray Reopening Committee which is kind of like the Town Teams but we have been holding back to wait for this. I think it's quite exciting. I know people have raised the fact about the role of the councillor and whether or not it is, but it's not within, not everyone wants to stick their face on a poster, up on a pole and go for election, they still want to be involved in their local town and have a role to play. I think there should be enough role for everyone to get involved. We have had maybe not a Town Team structure, but something similar in Bray up until we held off for this review and it worked really well. We had the businesses there and other communities there, it was open to any of the local councillors to get involved. I think it was really effective. We also had the development of a terms of reference led by our district manager, which again was a really inclusive process. Actually funny enough, Cllr Fortune one of the recommendations we had in our terms of reference was the Cathaoirleach was the chair of the Town Team and the membership was open to all councillors. So perhaps that is something that we could see going forward. I know some of the Town Teams have had their challenges, since they have been established. I think some of the recommendations that Christine has outlined will give some structure and maybe address some of the communication issues. I don't think we should be afraid to give other people in the community an opportunity to get involved in how the community runs. So that would be my own perspective.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, Chair. Just to start with, look I welcome the review. I think in my view the concept, the overall concept of the establishment of Town Teams and the Town Centre First policy has merit. I welcome the appointment of the TRO, the Town Regeneration Officer. This is national policy and I see there is a national coordinator and a

national office after being established. Look, I would look at it as a support to the role of the elected reps. The make-up of the Town Team is so important that businesses are represented in the various community groups are represented and that there is a broad representation. I accept the point around communication and the delivery of projects. There has to be serious co- operation with all stakeholders in that regard and communication protocol is so vital. The fact there is going to be training introduced for Town Team members and workshops is also welcomed with welcome packs, etc. I wanted to ask Christine, in relation to this, the review, is she going to organise a forum? I think that was mentioned with the established Town Teams at the moment to go through the review and maybe look at their make up and see what changes need to be made to make them more accountable and to improve the communication piece around that. So that is important also and again the elected members, I would certainly, should include, if not, should include the current chair of the Municipal District. On that project you mentioned, I note you mention a vacant homes officer has been appointed. It's important that that scheme is expanded now to include rural areas as well and the TRO, will he, he will obviously be feeding into the Municipal District reps as well as the Town Team members? So again the Town Team representative to address the Municipal District unfortunately took the members and the work of the Town Team is vital. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Walsh. Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. A lot of what I was going to say has probably been said to a degree already. I welcome this review, because although I am sort of involved with one of the committees of our Town Team and I do commend the spirit in which members of our community have joined the Town Team and the work that they are already putting into it, there is huge room for improvement without a doubt. I find the review has raised more concerns in my mind than it's alleviated. I am just looking there on slide 8. When you have sentences saying, "*There is basically not good representation on the Town Teams committees.*" There is degrees of confusion and lack of clarity as to the role of the Town Team versus the role of the local authority and it's elected representatives. That is probably one of the few sentences that actually mentioned elected representatives which I find concerning. And a lack of shared vision as to what the Town Team is. If that was any other committee or entity set up without a shared vision, confusion, lack of clarity and lack of representation we would be hitting the pause button very quickly. Really that is my question and from talking to people within my community, they are not aware of our Town Team. It's not to say that good work isn't being done, but people in general don't have a clue what

the Town Team is or what they are doing. That really concerns me. A couple of specific questions for Christine.

I am wonder, as elected reps we represent the wider communities. In my case it's not just Greystones, it's Kilcoole, Delgany and Newcastle and as part of Newtownmountkennedy. Is part of the MD's budget to be allocated to the Town Team in Greystones? How does the budget work? Where does Smart Villages fit into this? If some of our rural villages are moving along the smart village network, can they be a subgroup of the Town Team or do they have to be separate? It concerns me in some of the recommendations. For example, it mentioned a list of people or representatives who "*could be*" included, such as developers, interestingly enough. Really there should be a list of the people who should be represented on the Town Teams such as people from minority community, people with disabilities and really then back to my bigger question.

Do these recommendations, how is this information going to be disseminated to the team Town Teams and how are recommendations going to be moved through in a meaningful fashion. Not just we sent out an email to the PPN looking for representatives and no one responded. That job ticked we looked for a recommendation. The recommendation are good, but I would like clarity as to how they are going to be worked on and I think they need to be worked on half moved through this detail with each Town Team. That clarity has to be pinned down in writing, really before we are moving forward with applying for funding and grants and all the rest. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Scott. Cllr Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: I would have some concerns about what I heard from, essentially seems to be an expansion of the Town Teams. I think they have very definitely got a use and a function. Particularly, certainly I have found that where I represent there isn't a business voice in the town and I think that this has enabled some people who are used to business and used to getting things done to get, to work at getting things done. For instance the Christmas lights in the town wouldn't happen without them, keeping the town website, various, there is various art in the station has been put together to make a very nice feature for the town. That being done by them and by enthusiastic volunteers. I very much welcome that and it wouldn't be done I don't think without having a Town Team in place where people feed ideas off each other and it's useful. However, I don't think that they should be elected. There is already elections for local

government, which have a fairly low turnout and our function, we are elected and I don't think the people on the Town Team need to be elected.

You should really be a group of people who are keen to work at things and get things done and I would support them on that basis. They have certainly contributed locally, but I just don't think that the whole gamut of local authority functions should be discussed or decided. In terms of who is on it, I think that it's useful that all councillors could go to the meetings if they wish. The meetings can be quite long. In the Greystones one two hours. I don't think, certainly not every time I am interested in going to another meeting of two hours, not all of which would be on things I would be interested in. I have been to quite a lot of the meetings and I think that most councillors probably would have that view. That they don't want yet another two- hour meeting. So I think that I wouldn't agree with the election of more people and I think it should be composed of individuals who want to work to get something done in the town themselves. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Mitchell. Cllr Dermot O'Brien.

CLLR D O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I can't say that I have ever been to a Town Team meeting because I haven't. But I am fascinated with the report. I don't think we should underestimate the importance of a piece of research/review, because that informs a conversation that needs to happen. So for me, I will be very honest, idealistically, I spend a lot of time in the world of enhanced participation and engagement, so the concept of enhancing participation and engagement is something I am very passionate about. I think if we are going to create a structure and give it a legitimacy and level of power and interest we have to be able to stand over the functions of that. That is wondering about duplication and structures that already exist. Ultimately for me, if Town Team, if the Town Team concept is something worthy of wrestling with and engaging with we have got to be able to identify how it adds significant value to what is already there and I think there is a fascinating challenge there.

I would like, again 19 recommendations says something very profound about how we do move forwards. So that is 19 points of consideration that we need to take on board. I liked Christine mentioning, again young people don't sit on any MDs. So young people deserve to have a voice in decisions that are being made in local areas. So I think that is a potential

space for that to happen. But it has to be meaningful, it has to be inclusive. I think the three elected members would probably cause killings, rather than be celebrated. Because where is the power play in that regard? So I think that is something again to revisit. Ultimately, Cathaoirleach, the basis of a structure that gets to make decisions and have power over what happens in communities needs to be rooted in integrity and I think we have to be able to stand over the integrity of the model and the concept. I think there is a bit of work to be done in that regard. I am up for it, Cathaoirleach. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Look it, it's been said here that this is Town Teams are to be driven from grassroots up. But the reality is what is happening here is that it's being driven from the top down. By that I mean central government. They are trying to fill a void that they made a huge mistake in 2013 when they decided that, when the elections come around for 2014 they would abolish all town councils and town councils and County Councils were reduced from 114 to 31 in the State.

The reality is, probably the cynic in me that thinks, if there was to be elections to replace what was there, the whole face of politics has changed. It's no longer the powerhouse of the three big parties. Politics in Ireland has changed forever. I believe that unelected people, there is politics within Town Teams, within community organisations and that is a fact of life and you have to accept it and get on with it. But when people come together and nobody can tell you who elected them, how they come together and who put them together and then we are proposing to leave them there for a number of years and they are taking the role of a public representative, that is worrying. That is what is happening. They are taking the role of a democratically elected members. They don't go knocking on doors, they don't go answering questions and as we have experienced in east Wicklow they go to ground when their ideas don't work, they go to ground when there is a backlash.

I want to thank Christine for her comprehensive report and I don't believe there is anyone in in county who understands the set- up greater than Christine Flood and I have experienced her experience at some of these town council meetings and the value that she brings to this council. I just don't believe that Town Teams understand the work that council officials have to do outside of their couple of ideas and where the funding is going to come from, because the reality is the local property tax will be coming

up for debate and money will be short if you don't support at least retaining what was there or increasing.

1700 HEATHER HERE Yet Town Teams come up with magical ideas and claiming the glory for them but we can't find the money for them here, as 32 elected members. So I have a major concern with Town Teams. I do believe that if something is going to be political, if there is an undercurrent, an overcurrent it needs to be open and transparent and elected members need to be a part and parcel of that and everyone knows where they stand. I hear great things about Town Teams in parts of this county, I believe in Arklow, there they are a part of the Municipal District that is welcome. But in other parts of the county, some elected members are not notified to meetings. So it tells you that they are either from a different poll areas of those who sit within the Town Team, that they are not wanted, they are too vocal or don't have the same mindset of the people sitting around the table. We are all different, 32, we never agree on everything 100%, we have to respect one another's views and the Town Teams have to respect the views of elected members and official, we cannot give them a blank chequebook to do as they please and the lard decisions made by us, the elected members here, it is not fair, right nor proper. I experienced like others, the down side of Town Team but I would not, Cathaoirleach, I would not throw out the baby with the bath water. I would not. Because there is good people within Town Teams for the right reasons. We need to harness it and probably that is a starting place. But publicly elected members must be a part and parcel. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

Thank you, John. Under time pressure with the members. I have 3 more speakers. Put it down to 1 minute. Cllr Mary Kavanagh?

CLLR KAVANAGH: Thank you, Chair. I will be brief as I can. To acknowledge first the good work carried out by the Town Team volunteers, I have personally seen this in action. However like other speakers I have an awful lot of reservations about the evolving role of the Town Team, to emphasise "evolving" as they seem to be empowered now with a lot more power than they had in the early days when set up, such as for example, they are now indemnified for insurance purposes by councils and that kind of thing. It is firstly, I feel, an erosion of democracy. I think that while the aversion of the Town Team can be valuable, such as to be able to apply for LEADER funding that we as councils cannot do, is very important. But importantly, they have become far more powerful than first envisaged. The change seems executive-led, not done consulting with the councillors, so in other words we are only hearing this back. We are not allowed to input into this, which is a disaster as far as I'm concerned. Unless the powers of the Town Teams

are modified down wards, there will be conflict between the Town Teams and the councillors into the future.

And the other thing to say is that Town Teams are undermine the role of the public participation network which acts as a voice for all community and voluntary organisations that will isolate them and leave them further out in the cold. That is my contribution.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Mary Kavanagh. Cllr Stephen Stokes.

CLLR STOKES: To thank Christine for the review and to thank all the good people out there that is putting a best foot forward to do their best with the Town Teams, we don't want to be ungrateful for the good work that has been done. Greystones, I believe has done well over the years. It does sound like speaking to other members it is pot luck. As somebody who started out as a town councillor, I do lambent the loss of town councils with subcommittee, running all kinds of wonderful events, including Catherine Kehler running the festive lights and the St Patrick's Day Parade. And when we lost the Greystones council, we lost then the Chambers of Commerce so in fairness to the Town Team they have come like a Phoenix from the ashes to do a lot of that work. But I am concerned by what I call "mission creep" into council functions or to have elections in general. There is a role for Town Teams but concerned about going too much further but that said, they do lots of valuable work that we appreciate.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Grace Cllr Grace McManus?

CLLR MCMANUS: Thank you, I see the potential and reasons we may need them in terms of access to funding and thank you to Christine for the report and for us to deliberate. My point to add to the deliberations, I round the recommendation which is 18 about the annual work plan and the annual work plan to be presented to the local Municipal District for ratification, to make a comment that proposing the work plan should be, like how we are able to communicate what the Town Team is for but ratification is us saying yes or no as a Municipal District and if the council is not a part of making that plan, I can see an area for conflict there. If it is the case that we are exploring how best Town Teams work, in my mind it is that elected representatives are either fully on the Town Team or a part of making the annual plan along the way, not left to a yes or a no vote when it comes to it, I think that will be a healthier space, rather than a yes or no vote.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. The Chief Executive, if you would like to come in?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I am conscious, we have the NTA to come in, there are questions from the members and a lot of feedback. It is a complex issue. Thank you to Christine for doing the presentation. I think rather than, if the members agree, rather than Christine trying to go through many of the questions to answer them, there are a lot of questions I don't think that we can answer today. I think this is the first stage of a process. We have done the report. It will be presented to the Town Teams. I think as well. I think that we will get feedback from all parties and I think we can bring it back and I suppose what we want to do is to produce a consistent approach or framework across all of the Municipal Districts. And Cllr John Snell took the words from my mouth, we don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water. The fact of the matter is that this is part of Government policy, the town centre first policy. It is a vehicle for funding. There are lots of good people working on them but, absolutely, there are flaws, there are difficulties with the existing system, this is what we are trying to do to address them and to make a better system. But we take on board what we can do. When we get your own feedback and I ask you to send on further comments to Christine, to email her. She will get the feedback from the Town Teams themselves. To take it together and what we may do is even set up a working group with the representatives of the Municipal Districts on that, so that we can get a document that is consistent across all of the Municipal Districts and that everyone is happy with. Is everyone agreed with that? Is that enough OK. Thank you. That is great. Thank you, Christine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will call a suspension to standing orders now.

Cllr Tom Fortune very quick.

CLLR FORTUNE: I think we need to revisit this again in the Chamber, collectively. I think we are rushing at it again. It is too important. If this is strategy that is pushed down through yourself. There are a lot of members that have problems with it. So we need to look at the results of the proposals and the seconded that should be recorded and the feedback from the members should be picked up and gathered. So I hope that is all picked up and not sanitised.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Tom Fortune. Cllr Gail Dunne? CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thanks for taking the suspension of standing orders. And so that the members are aware, I've been a member of the council, the town council since 2009. It is the first time I have brought a suspension of standing orders. I am really frustrated about what is going on in Wicklow harbour over the last couple of years. You may know that Wicklow harbour is a working port with over 100 ships visit, import/export. It is a tidal port so the ships come in on the tides. Over the last while, we have a problem with dredging in the

harbour. Basically, we were draft at 5.8 metres over the years, that has gone down to 4.7. It means that ships visiting Wicklow harbour, they can't have as much cargo in the ship as they could when they have 5.8 so it means that people importing cannot bring in the cargo that they want to bring in. The shipping agent, Roy Conway has been on to me that a number of the ship owners, the people coming into Wicklow harbour expressed their concerns over the draft in the harbour.

They are losing money, basically, as they cannot, in simple terms fill the ship up in the way that they should do. For export, again, the same principle applies, where we cannot, the ship cannot be filled again. The cargo cannot be put on to fully laden the ship as it leaves the harbour, which is leading to a loss of money again. I have been on this for the last while. I've been seeking a number of meetings. In fairness, I have had some meetings. But the lack of engagement to the people in Wicklow harbour, the stakeholders and myself, it has been disappointing to say the least.

I know there is a certain, they have to follow through with certain things. But we are looking for a meeting now, as far as I know with the foreshore people, to get a licence to dredge the harbour for a long number of years. This is something that has not just arose, it happens every number of years. We should have seen this coming. There is a quick solution, it is a thing called ploughing. It can be done under an emergency licence, to give the council time to apply for a full foreshore license to do a proper job. It takes 3-4 weeks it is an emergency situation, it obviously should not happen all the time, we should be able to know when we need it from now on. Last Saturday a ship left Wicklow harbour half full, half full because of the current situation there.

I'm extremely disappointed that this is not being looked after. I feel it is put on the back burner by the council, this has to come quickly or Wicklow harbour, which, the monies that is coming into Wicklow harbour from import and exports helps all the other harbours within the county. So I am extremely disappointed it has been put on the long finger and something needs to be done or Wicklow harbour will be closed.

And the solution is right in front of us. And some people need to take this by the scruff of the neck and Wicklow County Council go to Government and sort this out as quickly as possible.

CLLR LEONARD: This is not just about Wicklow it is Arklow as well all the ports need to be dredged. We could have a dredger working up and down and rent it to some of the ports along the coast. We are building a wall in Arklow, over 2.5 metres at some points on the flood release scheme as the river is not deep enough and historically it was always dredged. I have had numerous consultations with different members of the maritime

business development committee, as well, it was a committee that I set on that seemed to disappear from the radar and asked many times what has happened to the committee. We have not met up in the last year, there was no formal closure of the committee, that I am aware, I think that Gayle was on the committee as well. The coastline it is such an economic valuable asset with the wind farms coming in, there are some areas being dredged but we have to dredge all of the harbour, and if it means to purchase one to rent to other ports in Wexford or whatever, we can make are revenue from that but I think that the maritime business and development committee we need tow know what is happening and we need input into the maritime space with the members of the Wicklow County Council and all the businesses involved. And to ask the question, what happened with that committee and are there plans for replacement of it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr Peir Leonard. I will go to the Chief Executive. I know members have lights on but we are running out of time. I wish to have the answer for this.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Wicklow is in the process of applying for a license for emergency dredging for Wicklow harbour. It is a long and a complicated process to get the license. To give an outline of what has been done, following consultation with the Marine institute in Galloway, 11 sediment samples were taken from the harbour to go to a laboratory within the UK for testing. 9 samples were assessed class 1 material, that is acceptable for disposal at sea. Further testing required on a couple of other sample, that testing has been carried out, and the results show that no elevated levels were shown so now they have been classed as class 1 materials and acceptable. That was the first point that had to be done. We also engaged consultants to carry out a screening report for the emergency dredging. This has been concluded and the report concludes that stage 2 assessment is not required but all of this must be done and takes time.

Following this, a foreshore license pre-application request, regarding dredging up Wicklow harbour was submitted to the foreshore unit in the department in August. And with the request, the unit came back to agree to meet with the Wicklow County Council on the 6th of October 2022, and at that meeting, a request for an emergency dredging will be discussed, following that, we would then hope to make an official application straight away to the unit and will be pushing hard to get that done. So, look, there has been a lot of work done. A lot of work done on the matter. We are conscious of it. We are not ignoring it, unfortunately, due to legislation it takes time, there are a lot of hoops that we have to jump through. Rest assured it is a priority.

Following the meeting on the 6th of October, we can inform the members of the outcome of that and I know personally, myself, I have spoken to Roy Conway to update him on that position.

So, I suppose, that is where we are, councillor, I hope it is acceptable.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Two lights on. Councillors are you happy with the explanation? Cllr John Snell?

CLLR SNELL: ... I wanted to make a point. In August 2016 Wicklow Port Company transferred over to Wicklow County Council. And on record at the time in stating that when the minister gave a direction under the national ports policy of 2013 that all Local Authorities take more or less ownership of ports and harbours, I raised a concern at the time as I did state that there was no proper investigations going into the likes of the port, the harbour walls, the lights, the structures around the harbours or the piers and to get clarity as we will have a Budget meeting. We didn't get a costing on this with regards to the dredging. Will central Government fund this to give huge commitments that they would look after the Local Authorities, now yes to factor this into our Budgets going forward? Without any foresight to see if central Government will give us a helping hand like they promised back in 2016? And we are in a situation now, where we are inheriting issues put on the long finger for many, many decades and the Local Authorities are going to have to pick up the short fall here.

By and large from our own Budget. So, just to get a costing on this and is there funding available from central Government to give us a dig out on this important infrastructure?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Gail Dunne? CLLR DUNNE: Thank you, and thank you Chief Executive. For your reply. On the meeting on the 6th executive are you going to the meeting to prioritise what we are doing and Cllr John Snell's point, the emergency dredging of the harbour, that would buy lots of time, that would take a metre-and-a-half off, probably would cost under £50,000 yes euro. So, it could be done. Very quickly. Cheaply. But I want to know, would the Chief Executive make himself available to go to that meeting to prioritise this very serious situation. Thank you.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I have stated it would be my intention to make that meeting if possible. I have another meeting that I am trying to rearrange. If I am available I will be attending.

As regards to costs. I think that the emergency dredging, our estimations are higher than 50,000 but in relation to the Budget for a number of years there has been capital transfer included in the revenue Budget in the build up of a fund for dredging, so, if there is funding available for the department we will apply for it but we do have a fund built up over the

last 10 years to use for that for emergency dredging. We don't want to be held up on funding applications and waiting for calls. So, we recognise the urgency, so, evolving that and to use the fund that we have built up over the last 10 years to use for emergency dredging. Obviously the bigger job of proper dredging for Wicklow and Arklow is another matter and costs a lot more. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Chief Executive. Helen, yes a presentation from the NTA.

HELEN PURCELL: To receive updates from the NTA on the park and ride development options for the preferred space for the bus ride sites on the N/M . We have extended the N/M11 meeting until 3.30pm but we may go beyond that we the members of Wicklow County Council ask the minister of education and transport to revisit the scheme as the system is not fit for purpose leading to children left on the side of the road, leaving working parent and families reducing work hours, to deliver children to and from the school when the parents were more than willing to pay as they have done for many years. It is a matter for the elected members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: All agreed? Yes. Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Cllr. Vincent Blake for bringing the motion. OK.

Elaine, thank you very much and Owen thank you very much for the patience.

>> Thank you for having us down to propose to you. The park and ride development office was set up with the climate action plan of 2019 when there was a focus on stopping park and ride to look to get sites identified and implemented. So the first action was to develop a strategy. The strategy has been developed as part of the draft transport strategy for the greater Dublin area, available on the website. So, what we wanted to present today is the outcome of the strategy and then the specific sites along the M11 corridor that we had prioritised for development given the other transport challenges that we are aware of in Wicklow and that maybe park and ride is probably more of a priority in Wicklow than it may be in other locations. I would say it is not is a silver bullet but part of an integrated transport solution to work together with good quality public transport and putting it in the right locations to serve those who need to use it. I may move on to the next slide. Where we set out the vision statement and objectives of the park and ride strategy. This key thing in park and ride is about balance. Not to encourage more people to get into the car to drive further to get to public transport and by-pass the local services in place. But we want to put it on the strategic road network at a point where we can intersect the traffic at appropriate locations or save the rural Hinterlands and settlements where we cannot get to bring the quality public transport to the destinations that it serves and to identify

the appropriate sites are challenging and difficult but the main thing is to build on the public transport we have, enhance the services where needed and reduce reliance on the private car. So, it has a role in saving some rural Hinterlands, and part of the metropolitan areas and smaller towns and settlements.

This is the strategy itself probably small for you to see it. But the red dots indicate park and ride and the blue indicate the rail based park and ride. You will note there is no rail based park and ride on the Wicklow side reflecting of the rail service and the accessibility from the strategic road network so bus in the interim is the solution along the M11 corridor. We identified 3 location, junction 18, 12 and junction 6.

That is right. So, in total there are 13 strategic park and ride sites. This is 400 spaces and above. It is looking at large scale and intercepting larger volumes of traffic. So, you can see across the strategy itself, we look to reduce about 59 million car kilometres per annum equating to 10,500 tons of carbon so it is a part of a shift to a sustainable transport mode. With that, I will hand over to Elaine to talk about the demand and the sites specifically we are looking at now. Thank you.

>> I suppose, just on the MLL corridor before getting into the site details, it is 3 strategic bus space park and rides to go through the analysis we did.

To inform our location selection on the corridor and I suppose in turn to inform our strategy. We looked at the number of cars crossing 6 green lines on the M11 corridor during the peak hour in 2020 and 2043 and the map shows the number of cars crossing the lines is increasing moving north with 3 times as many cars crossing junction 5 compared to those crossing junction 18.

We also looked at the destinations of the cars at various points in the M11. The destination zones were the city centre, the area within a kilometre of the M11 and the M50, so, also some other destinations zones that people are traveling to on the M50 but these require interchange so as a result we have focused on the areas that we could access easily by bus.

I suppose that the results here show that the travel demand to the destination zones increases as we move closer to Dublin City appropriate locations for park and ride were selected using the information with combining of applying principles of the park and ride located, such as the travel demand and the point of congestion and such that you minimise the distances travelled by a car.

On that basis, we recommended 3 strategic park and rides at junction 6, 11 and 16.

First is junction 6. Showing that about 400 spaces are required by the location by 2043. Looking at four site options. Sites 1 and 3 during the initial evaluation with sites 2 and 4 brought forward to the next stage with the multi-criteria analysis. If you are not familiar with the processes we used it as a tool to compare two or more sites under various criteria, including economy, safety, environment accessibility and social inclusion, integration and physical activity. In this case, what is coming from the multi-criteria analysis is the site scoring favourably. Which is a site, draft layout shown on the slide for slide 4.

Sorry, one back.

So the next park and ride is junction 11.

The results of the analysis show that about 600 spaces are required at this location by 2043 with 3 site options.

So the next park and ride is at junction 11, Kilpedder. The results showed that approximately 600 spaces would be required at this location by 2043. So we had three site options initially. Site three was shifted out with sites one and two brought forward to the next phase which is our multicriteria analysis. Site 2 is within the road is the reservation for the N11 junction 4- 14 upgrade scheme. Site 4 has a planning application on it. So we are waiting for decisions to be made on that planning application before we can 100% lock in our preferred option. The MCA is showing that site 1 is the preferred location.

Then the third park and ride location is at junction 16, it showed that 200 spaces would be required at this location by 2043. We looked at four locations, with site one sifted out during our initial evaluation. Just to note that site 4 has been included in the development plan and it's zoned as public utility with a local objective allowing park and ride on the site. Notwithstanding that, we have gone through our multicriteria analysis and what is coming through that is that site 3 is scoring more favourably, so site 3 is our preferred option at this location. There is a site lay out shown there. Apologies. So the three blue ones, the one, the one to the west is site 4, the one on the triangular plot is site 3 and the site 2 is the one just on the Ashford side of the M11.

Apologies, the slides are probably not big enough to be able to see. So just to note as well that we do have the M11 bus, the bus priority interim scheme is also being progressed at this time. I suppose that will be very beneficial to our throw bus space park and rides, because it will improve

journey times and service reliability as well. So just moving on. So finally just the next steps for the park and ride development office in progressing these sites, include the completion of our option selection reports, continued preparation of the planning documentation, including environmental impact assessment reports, continue discussion with landowners on agreements. Development of options for bus services and submission of planning applications. We have a target to have all three planning applications in by the end of 2022. Next slide. So thank, everyone, if anyone has any questions we can take them now.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. Cllr Stokes, please.

CLLR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. Thank you very much, that was a wonderful presentation and it's very warmly welcomed. I think it's badly needed more park and ride and public transport options. There is a bit of an echo there! It's always good. Just firstly a couple of things in relation to the bus service providers. Has that been considered? I know that people would be very worried about they heard that Go Ahead was going to be involved in the bus aspect of this. There would be a public protest, where as if it's Dublin Bus or Finnegan's that would be absolutely fine.

I see this relates to buses, was there ever an extension of the Luas considered from Cherrywood, because that would be welcomed, to have the Luas extended. Maybe you have long- term plans for that. Will the service be 24 hours? Maybe we are getting too far ahead, or certainly have wide- ranging times. I am a commuter myself from Greystones to Dublin most days. I get the 84X, which is a wonderful service, but it's very limited to set windows. If I was to give an example of a city that has amazing park and ride facilities in terms of strategic, it would be Cambridge City Council. I don't know if you have explored that. They have PDF maps, it's superb, because they don't just look at it as commute, they have tourism and people who drop their car off and get the bus into the city. I suppose will the parking be free? I suppose there would be a charge if you are going to get the bus. I am wondering, say families are meeting up somewhere and they decide to converge in one car and drive off.

I am wondering if the parking would be free, because in Manchester, where I used to live, they used to have free park and ride facilities beside the Metrolink which was their version of the Luas, what was also interesting is they would have two storeys for it. If you look at the Greystones park and ride, when first went in people said this is mad, it's

way too big and now everyone is like there is not enough spaces. The solution would be to have a two storey facility, it's hard once you put it in because residents might object. I think this could be so popular, what you are doing is so wonderful, because you may end up in a situation where we need more and we need to think really big early and that's pretty much everything I have got, thank you so much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr R O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thank you very much for the presentation. I just have two questions really. Just from reading the map, where the demand for park and ride. I am not sure if I am reading it correctly, but it seems like Bray will have the largest demand overall while Bray won't have the largest park and ride facility out of all three places shown. Also just another kind of observation. I think it's great that there will be 10,500 tonnes of carbon reduced every year, but there is ways to maximise that. If you look at our own parking lot we have solar panels over the cars, which is great, because it also reduces the carbon, if you could look at that going forward, doing the planning permission, but you guys can maximise your carbon reduction. If you could consider that that would be great.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: Thanks a million. This is really welcome. I suppose the success of this project will hinge on the reliability and the frequency of the buses and the cost of the buses as well. I would concur with what Cllr Stokes said, particularly for female traveller, if they are travelling back from the city centre or Sandyford late at night, you want the security of knowing that the bus will be there and you are going to your car in a well- lit secure environment. There is some great examples of solar powered park and rides in the UK and I would really like to see these at the planning point. That they are not just slabs of concrete with 600 cars sitting on them. That it's a zero carbon site, there is solar panels powering the site, there is and the adequate EV charging points and sufficient of them as well, because that is what more and more people will be driving in the future. Also that consideration be given to making these sites as green as possible, so that there was potential for green planting trees, shrubs, that it's not just as it's said concrete which has its own issues in terms of carbon. But the really key piece in this is going to be the buses and also the non- charging on the parking as well. It's got to be cheap and easy and reliable for people to use.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I strongly welcome this presentation. I think it's a very good idea and to hear that there might

even be a planning application before Christmas would be remarkable! I particularly welcome the one in the area I represent in Kilpedder, but all of them are useful, because we need to cut down on the traffic on the N11. The Wicklow rail line south of Greystones doesn't work effectively. There is one or four three carriage train at lunchtime. That is the lot. It could be made better but it's not policy to do so. I welcome this. The express bus service which will obviously take a while to get up and running is very important is how it works. Because the journey time from Wicklow is very high. Therefore people take their cars. For instance the journey time of the Aircoach from Greystones is virtually the same time as the Aircoach from Belfast to Dublin Airport. It used to be a lot quicker when it went along sandy mount strand. So the journey time is absolutely vital to make these bus services work and get people out of their cars. So I would welcome this and it's a great pity we didn't know a few weeks ago about this, because the County Development Plan was rezoning various sites for various purposes and this could have been incorporated into it at the time. It was only a few weeks ago. Anyway, it's welcome.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Melanie Corrigan.

CLLR CORRIGAN: I very much welcome this like my colleagues here it will only work if the bus services are significantly improved. At the moment there is chaos in north Wicklow with the buses. That will have to be improved. I can't stress that enough, for this to work. Again it has to be made economically sound, that it's beneficial for the people to be able to park, cheap rates or no rates at all for parking. And yes, plenty of EV charges and bike chargers in place to encourage people again. Have you considered shuttle buses to the DART and the Luas. Because Bray, I think again parking is at a premium, so that would be an encouragement for people as well. I do think there is not enough spaces allocated at the Fassaroe junction. There is a huge amount of cars passing there and plus there is planning, there will be possibly 4,000- 6,000 more houses in there at the moment. I don't think it's enough, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Shay Cullen.

CLLR S CULLEN: Thank you for the presentation, guys. I am just wondering about Junction 16, Ashford and Rathnew. I suppose I am fascinating to see how the criteria has come about to choose a site. Site number 4 is zoned for park and ride. It has extremely good sight lines, it's walled on three sides, there is no initial impact and it's private, but yet the site that seems to be the preferred option is site number 3 which has an entrance just off a busy roundabout, it's very visual from, in terms of the N11 and I am just baffled of how, what criteria you used to choose a site? I am not a planner, but I deal enough with planning issues on a daily basis to know that sight lines, visibility, all of that is essential when

you are dealing with a lot of traffic. So I am just curious to know how you have selected site number 3 ahead of site number 4?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr Peir Leonard.

CLLR LEONARD: I know earlier on in the presentation you mentioned Arklow. I know in Arklow at the moment we have been negatively impacted because we didn't have a sewage treatment plant, but we are due to have the sewage treatment plant complete in two years and the town is going to rapidly expand again. A lot of our commuters are on bus, because we don't and we probably won't see a rail service coming down to Arklow in the near future and we have no educational facilities, so everyone is on the bus to Dublin and to hospitals. I am wondering where that is coming into your plan and how is it future- proofed and could we be considered to be part of this plan?

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr M Kavanagh.

CLLR M KAVANAGH: Thank you, just a quick question. Is the land going to be leased or is it going to be purchased? And if it's going to be leased, if it turns out that it's being underutilised down the line for all kinds of reasons, possibly to do with antisocial behaviour or whatever, none of us can predict the future, there will be buyout clauses and things like that. Because it seems like a lot of money is going to go into this. What we really need south of Greystones is a proper serving rail network that goes a few times a day to allow commuters to commute to Dublin on a much more regular basis than currently. I am wondering if there is going to be an awful lot of money ploughed into this that could be better spent.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Cllr Erika Doyle.

CLLR DOYLE: Thank you, chair. Just one brief comment about the proposed site at Fassaroe. It just seems like a lot of space in an area that has huge pressure and not much space left for residential development. So if you were looking at increasing that, or when you are looking at that, my hope would be that you would build up or down, rather than out, because there is such pressure on space in the Bray district. Thank you, chair.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. John Snell.

CLLR SNELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I will be brief. I just want to welcome this in the three areas and just to get a little bit of clarity in regards the confused over the Ashford- Rathnew. I am not sure which parcel of land it is that you are proposing. So it's just to get the landowners. Is it Stevens land, Wildings land or John Linnane. John Linnane is next to the garage in Rathnew, Wilds is to the right hand side

on the Ashford side and Stevens is to the left. It's just to get clarity on which site you are proposing.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Walsh wants to come in. Can you speak up a little bit, I was finding it hard to hear you earlier on.

CLLR WALSH: Just to get clarity on the Kilpedder site, where that is being proposed for.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Were you able to understand that?

HELEN PURCELL: Yes.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that all the councillors that have spoken. Thank you very much Owen and Noleen, I appreciate the presentation... Elaine, I apologise, there is so much going on in my head. Elaine, thank you very much. There is a few questions, would you like to answer a few of them.

OWEN: There is a few themes there initially and then we can get on to the specific sites. The themes, firstly looking at the destinations of travel on the M11, it's not either or when it comes to rail services or people using the rail and people using the bus. They do actually serve different catchments in some cases. What you might note from some of the analysis we have provided is that the car travellers aren't necessarily going to the city centre, they are going to destinations along the M11 corridor and as Elaine said some are heading towards the M50. So it is part of that integrated solution to try and look at when in 2020 we are looking at the now and in 2043 we are looking at the future when the GDA Transport Strategy is in place as well. So it's looking at those areas that aren't served by public transport into the future and are still using car to get to their destination as well.

So that is looking at the issue now and looking at the issue in the future. That is where we have sort of got to understanding our demand. So things like feeder buses into the DART stations or local bus services, they are covered under the network design proposals that are being rolled out under Bus Connects and there are services coming from Fassaroe and Enniskerry and across to the Bray rail station and similar services elsewhere. So that is one of the key aspects that we are looking at. In terms of sites themselves, or the bus services there is a couple of different options. It's not a one size fits all solution to everything. The economics of it does come into it. To run a bus service all the way out to Ashford and Rathnew as a dedicated bus service does have a cost and an expense to it. So is there an opportunity to dedicate services to that? Or does it dedicate, does a dedicated service need to be provided. As we move closer the Kilpedder and Fassaroe sites they are probably more of a

linked site and it probably is more economic to run those as a dedicated service.

At peak times, again the economics of it comes in, but certainly in peak hours we would be thinking it does need to be somewhere between 15 and 20 minutes to make it attractive to users, to make that decision, to get out of their car and get on to a bus. We acknowledge that. It doesn't always have to be faster, it has to be reliable and competitive. They are important things, we can't always guarantee we will be faster getting you door- to- door because it's not always the case. But we do understand reliability and competitiveness. Fair structures becomes a little bit something that we have to understand, but one of the key things that the NTA have been trying to deliver is an integrated fare solution for public transport that can be used across all moulds and those sorts of thing, you have probably seen things like the TFI90 scheme where it's a single flat fare across those things.

So, it's again delivering something that is competitive and that encourages, not discourages use. I will be honest, we haven't determined whether we will pay for the park and ride and get the bus for free, or whether you pay for the, you get the parking for free, pay for the bus. Some of that will depend on the procurement mechanisms that we either go out and get someone to operate the bus service and the park and ride or we go out and get someone to operate the park and ride and then have the bus service servicing those park and rides. The payment mechanisms will be delivered on that. But we fully get the message that it does have to represent value for money for the user and it does have to be attractive for them to use. So integrated it with things like Leap card or other payment mechanisms is important to us. In terms of the design of the sites, nature- based solutions for things like drainage, we are not looking to deliver concrete jungles or those sorts of things, we are trying to be sensitive to the environment they are in. These typically aren't in urban areas, the further we move out, they are not in urban areas so we do want to **integrate** them into the landscape. We don't want to be putting in lots of surface water drainage and those thing, we do want permeable paving and nature- based solutions and greening of the space as well. So those are things that are looked at.

We are looking at the appropriate level of electric charges infrastructure and actually the appropriate level of fast- charging structure as well. Because these again are in remote locations and getting the power to the locations can be difficult, but that is not the primary influencer, actually if

we are looking at them being a commuter use or someone using it for a four- hour trip into town, do they need a fast charge for a trip that is 25km. Do they need to use a fast charge, drawing down extensive power? The minimum requirement is 10% of provision for charging infrastructure and that will be made at all locations. Then, based on the catch. We see, the distances people are travelling to the site and the type of charging that would require the anticipated duration of stay, we are probably looking at somewhere around 25% provision of charging infrastructure on sites. The more peripheral sites, the longer distances, but somewhere like Fassaroe, actually the catchment is much smaller to the level of provision isn't one size fits all again and the technology we are using then will facilitate some level of fast- charging but will manage demand, a bit like the way broadband used to be in the old days, like when everyone is on it, they can't all draw down together. So that is the approach to electric charging.

The solar panels and we saw them as they were coming in. We know there is a site in Arklow where someone was looking at a provision. It does have an upfront cost and I suppose that is something that we do have to be cognisant of. Can we facilitate it and look at options of bringing it in if we could opportunities in the contracts that are being set out for those things, it's something that could be additional. I think the number one thing we need to get is improved services for people to move around and that is our primary focus. So it is an opportunity to explore, but I am not sure, as a day one provision it's something that we are actually considering.

I think just mentioning Arklow, there is an existing planning permission for a park and ride in Arklow. That was developed by a private developer at Templarainey, it's provision for about 130 spaces. I know with have been approached by them and they are in discussions with the council at the moment about bringing forward that site for development through public funds as well and we do see that as an important location, but as a strategic park and ride that delivers its own service and that sort of thing, we probably see that the critical mass just needs to come a little bit further and pick up some further locations along there to deliver something of the scale of 400 and above. But we are anxious to try and get that Arklow site up and running because we do see a demand there and we know there is existing parking happening at those locations as well, which raises its own safety issues.

So I think we are probably then on to the hours of operation. Again that is something that we will have to look at and it is balancing, NTA are committed to 24- hour bus services and they are being rolled out in locations and again it's picking the appropriate frequency for some of the services that we do need to consider. There is a cost of operation and that is something that we need to get the balance right. In terms of the future expansion of sites and those sorts of things, I hope and pray that we will be oversubscribed for these locations, because that is a problem I want to have, not a problem where they are being underutilised and people are saying why have we spent the money on these things? We have considered whether there is opportunity for double height on the footprints we have and we are comfortable that we can deliver those sorts of things in that sort of area. So I think we are really on to the site specific locations, is it?

ELAINE: I think a question came up with the extension of the Luas. That is something that is on the cards. With the site of Fassaroe we see that as short- term proposal as opposed to a long- term proposal. That comes down to the way that site is zoned as well and the space pressure. So again there is a question came up about whether the sites would be leased or purchased. So Fassaroe we were looking at a lease option on that and a purchase option on the other two sites. So that is still in discussion with the landowners, but that is our thoughts on that at the moment.

There was another question that came up regarding Ashford and Rathnew and our selection criteria for that. I do understand that that site 4 was zoned. So some of the things that came out of our option selection report is just that a stream located at the end of that and that drain into the Murrough wetland, so it complicates that slightly. So on hydrology and hydrology it scored not as well as our site 3. Also in respect of flooding, air quality and climate and noise and vibration. I suppose from road safety there was a slight preference for site 4, it was a balancing act but it came out that site 3 scored more favourably.

OWEN: It's fair to say that the two sites on the Ashford site are the preferred sites. At the moment the site 3 to the northern side of the junction is the one that is emerging preferred from our option selection, but it is somewhat marginal. Now the issues that Elaine have pointed to, really relate to the fact that for sites of this scale we do have to go through an environmental impact assessment. So anything 400 spaces or above that has to go to An Bord Pleanála and as a result of that if I suppose we do have to consider all of our options across these 17

environmental criteria, demonstrate that the options that we are bringing forward are, is the best option, on balance across those, or they are no show stoppers. I would probably say if someone said is that site and you can do it, we think either one will work, for the purposes of delivering that park and ride, it's fair to say, but on balance the criteria that we looked at, it is that site, but we are happy to discuss it further and we are in discussion with both landowners on that side of the road.

[INAUDIBLE DUE TO NOT SPEAKING INTO MIC]

CLLR S CULLEN: It sounds like environmental is trumping safety, which I have concerns about.

ELAINE: I suppose we did look at the distances and what right pocket length you could provide. It is within the standards. So it is considered safe, site 3 is also considered safe if you design the entrance that we looked at designing it for. Obviously it's a comparative assessment, so there is a marginal preference for site 4 over 3. If there was a red flag with site 3 that would really swathe the multicriteria analysis, but as it's a comparative assessment, we score it, depending on how good or poor the scoring is.

Another question that came up was the demand for Bray which is accumulative, so looking at the figures as they cross the stream lines getting higher to Dublin City, the cars that are crossing, they are still crossing at Bray. So it is breaking it down. We can provide a huge park and ride at Bray but wish to reduce the cars from the earliest point so we look at the 3 park and rides.

>> Reflective of that point it is reflective of the public transport provision afforded to people in Bray. If that is the bus connect services, that are going out to the significant services and they have options and alternatives for public transport that people don't have. They don't have the same level of public transport availability. So it is that balance of trying to get the point of view people in the areas, coming down to that point, facing the people in Bray, who don't want people in Bray coming to the park and ride and by-passing the bus services in place or the other Dart services in place already.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr John Snell?

CLLR SNELL: Obviously, in regard to your negotiating with landowners and that is delicate in itself but also just to say to bear in mind that you will be dealing with neighbouring properties. So such as site 4. Ashford and Rathnew that we discussed. There are neighbouring properties there, I had contact from some of them regards the county development plan

and concerns in regards to noise and light pollution. So, obviously, I know you cannot put the cart before the horse and talk to the neighbouring properties before you have dealt with the land own, but to bear in mind, if at some stage you are going to site 4 as site 3 does not have neighbouring properties. Thank you.

>> It is one of the influence, noise and with regards to hedging on residential properties that will influence the outcome.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I bring in the Chief Executive, please.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I will be quick, to thank Owen and Elaine to hang around to do the presentation. It was informative, beneficial and exciting for all the commuters within the county. To explain, the reason we wanted to get the NTA in for the presentation was to have it in advance of Minister Rimes [sic] visit. To make it more relevant. So for the members, information, if you can put in your calendars, October 28th. That is Friday, October 28th. That is the latest date that we have for Minister Rimes [sic] visit. So, there was another date, that is the latest, as soon as we have confirmation, we will tell you but put it in the diaries for the moment. Thank you again to Owen and Elaine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, and thank you, members. Thanks a million.

