

MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY BUILDINGS, WHITEGATES, WICKLOW TOWN
AND VIA TEAMS

ON MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2026 AT 2:00PM

STENOGRAPHER: Niamh Kelly-Leahy, RMR, MBIVR

Transcript provided by
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1 MEETING COMMENCED ON MONDAY, 5TH OCTOBER 2026 AT 2:00 PM,
2 AS FOLLOWS:

3

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you everyone. If you could take your seats. So
5 welcome, Elected Members, staff, members of the public, press. Welcome to today's
6 meeting. I am going to pass you to Rachel who is going to take a roll call and just
7 explain the protocol for the meeting.

8 MS GILLESPIE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Welcome everyone to today's meeting.
9 Please can I remind everyone to keep their mobile phones on silent? Members of the
10 public shall be seated and maintain silence and observe any direction given by the
11 chair or by any employee. No cameras or any kind of sound recording are permitted.
12 Members of the public online, please keep your cameras off. Can I also remind
13 everyone to ensure that respect and dignity are afforded in all discussions in this
14 chamber. Please also ensure compliance with the code of conduct for councillors. If
15 anyone has any technical issues please let myself or Teresa know. Thank you.

16

17 I will move on to the roll call now. Councillor Danny Alvey?

18 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.

19 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Mark Barry?

20 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.

21 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Joe Behan?

22 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Present.

23 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

24 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.

25 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

26 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.

27 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Avril Cronin?

28 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Present.

29 MS GILLESPIE: Present online. Councillor Erika Doyle?

30 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Present.

31 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Malachai Duddy?

32 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Anseo.

33 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Gail Dunne?

34 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Present.

- 1 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?
- 2 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Present online.
- 3 MS GILLESPIE: Present online. Thank you. Apologies received from Councillor
- 4 Orla Finn. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?
- 5 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.
- 6 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Apologies received from Councillor Tom Fortune.
- 7 Councillor Patsy Glennon?
- 8 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Present.
- 9 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
- 10 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Present.
- 11 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 12 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Present.
- 13 MS GILLESPIE: Present online. Thank you. Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 14 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Present.
- 15 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 16 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Present.
- 17 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 18 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Present.
- 19 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Miriam Murphy? Councillor Ian Neary?
- 20 COUNCILLOR NEARY: Present.
- 21 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 22 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Present.
- 23 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Gerry O'Neill?
- 24 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Anseo.
- 25 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 26 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Present.
- 27 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 28 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Present.
- 29 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Lourda Scott?
- 30 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Here.
- 31 MS GILLESPIE: Present online. Thank you. Councillor John Snell?
- 32 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Present.
- 33 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Peter Stapleton?
- 34 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Present.

1 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Stephen Stokes?

2 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Present.

3 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor John Ward?

4 COUNCILLOR WARD: Here.

5 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Ned Whelan?

6 COUNCILLOR WHELAN: Present.

7 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Present.

9 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: And do we have any votes of sympathy? Councillor Paul
11 O'Brien.

12 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to offer my
13 sincere condolences to the family of John O'Brien who sadly passed away in Bray
14 there. John was a great union man, fought for workers' rights throughout his whole
15 career, and a good Labour Party person as well, and former chair of the Labour
16 Party. I know his wife sadly passed away a couple of years ago but my sincere
17 condolences to John and all his family. Thank you.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Mahon.

19 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Yeah, I'd like to offer condolences to the family of John
20 Brennan from Ballymount. A former member of An Garda Síochána for many,
21 many years. A very decent man, sadly missed in the community and by his family.
22 Thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Mulhall.

24 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would just like to be
25 associated with the vote of sympathy for John Brennan. As Councillor Mahon
26 mentioned, he was very much involved in the community and was a member of
27 Blessington Tidy Towns for a period and also Blessington District Forum, and
28 somebody who kind of looked out for community a lot of the time. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. There's no condolences from staff so
30 can everybody stand? Sorry, Councillor Duddy, there's one more.

31 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: I actually pressed the 'yes' button rather than the 'mic'
32 button, so my apologies. My fault. If I could join in Councillor O'Brien's
33 condolences in relation to John O'Brien in Bray. I'd also like to extend my
34 condolences to Councillor Behan on the death of his brother-in-law Martin Walsh,

1 and if I could extend my condolences to his wife Monica and his son Chris and his
2 wife Grace, and the whole of the Walsh and Behan families. I might also mention
3 my own aunt, Maura Duffy who passed away. A great feminist in her own way.
4 Mother of Frank, Cormac, Geraldine, Alec, Maeve and Kathleen. Go raibh mile
5 maith agat, Cathaoirleach.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

7
8 (Moment of silence.)
9

10 MS GILLESPIE: May their souls and the souls of all the faithfully departed, through
11 the mercy of God, rest in peace.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: So item 1 on the agenda, I am going to pass to Rachel.

13 MS GILLESPIE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Members will be aware of the section
14 140 in the names of Councillor Warren O'Toole, Councillor John Ward, Councillor
15 Joe Behan: "That Wicklow County Council pursuant to section 140 of the Local
16 Government Act 2001 hereby directs the Chief Executive to immediately stop the
17 implementation of the new Differential Rent Scheme due to take effect on the 3rd of
18 October 2026 and continue to operate the two differential rent schemes in existence
19 before that date." Thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Toole.

21 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Moving the implementation
22 date from the 3rd October to the 7th November gives tenants a short reprieve but it
23 does not address the substantial rent increases, the uncertainty or the financial
24 pressures they are facing. This is why the section 140 motion has been brought
25 forward. We have been advised that our section 140 resolution cannot be
26 implemented on the basis of legal advice received by the Chief Executive. I respect
27 that the legal advice has been obtained but legal advice is advice. It is not a
28 judgment of the High Court and it is not itself a binding judicial determination of the
29 law. Section 140 provides a mechanism whereby Elected Members can require a
30 specific execution -- executive act to be carried out provided that what is being
31 required can lawfully be done. The question here is whether stopping or suspending
32 the implementation of this scheme falls within that power, and that question has not
33 been finally determined by the courts.
34

1 A closely related dispute involving South County Dublin is currently before the High
2 Court. We should not present one legal interpretation as though the matter has
3 already been settled. This issue is not isolated to Wicklow either. AILG has raised
4 concerns nationally around the powers available to Elected Members under section
5 140 and the need for greater clarity and support for councillors in exercising those
6 powers. If implementation can be moved from October to November then it can be
7 paused long enough to allow this legal issue be clarified and, just as importantly, to
8 allow the impact on tenants be properly examined because behind every rent
9 assessment is a person, be it a pensioner, a person with disabilities, a working
10 household, a single person or a family struggling with the cost of living. These
11 people are not figures on spreadsheets. They are our constituents and deserve to be
12 listened to. Before we impose significant increases we must be satisfied that
13 affordability and hardship have been properly considered.

14
15 My position is simple: Management should not proceed with the implementation of
16 the new Differential Rent Scheme until the legality of councillors using their section
17 140 power in circumstances such as this has been properly determined by the High
18 Court. Given the potential serious effect these rent increases could have households
19 and individuals right across Wicklow, the responsible course of action is to pause
20 this implementation and listen properly to the tenants, examine the hardship and
21 affordability. Until those issues are resolved proceeding with this scheme neither
22 necessary nor justified. This is the fair and responsible course of action. Thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Ward.

24 COUNCILLOR WARD: Thanks. We're here today because we're discussing this
25 issue again after we invoked the Local Government Act and brought forward a
26 section 140 motion to use the powers that were given to councillors to challenge and
27 reverse decisions taken by Management where Elected Members believe those
28 decisions go against the express view of the Council. In this case a section 140
29 motion was brought forward to stop the new Differential Rent Scheme because the
30 devastating impact it is having and will have on the tenants right across County
31 Wicklow. With some tenants facing increases of a hundred up to 200 or more. So
32 councillors have a very clear choice today: You vote for section 140 and vote to stop
33 these rent increases or you vote against it and accept these rent increases will go
34 ahead. There is no hiding from the choice. Every councillor has to decide today

1 whether they are going to stand with the tenants facing unaffordable rent increases or
2 whether they are going to stand aside and allow the Management to proceed with this
3 scheme.

4

5 And there is another fundamental issue at stake here: The rights and powers of the
6 elected councillors. Section 140 is one of the few meaningful powers councillors
7 have to challenge decisions taken by Management. If you allow the management to
8 simply dismiss the powers, undermine it and tell elected councillors that we cannot
9 exercise it then we are surrendering one of the few tools we have to hold the
10 executive to account. We are standing up for the rights of the tenants but we are also
11 standing up to the domestic rights of the elected councillors. We cannot let
12 Management ride roughshod over councillors and we certainly cannot allow them to
13 ride roughshod over tenants.

14

15 The legality of section 140 to revoke the Differential Rent Scheme is currently being
16 tested in the High Court following legal proceedings taken by councillors in South
17 Dublin County Council. That process must be allowed reach its conclusion. Legal
18 options provided by Management to councillors ahead of today's meetings are just
19 that. They are opinions. They are not the decision of the High Court. In time it is
20 the courts that will decide and determine the legality of this position, so Management
21 should stop the implementation of this new Differential Rent Scheme and await the
22 outcome of the High Court proceedings.

23

24 Today councillors have the opportunity to send a very clear message: Vote for
25 section 140, vote to stop the rent hikes, vote to protect the tenants, and vote to defend
26 the powers of the Elected Members in this Council. Because if councillors surrender
27 this power today it will be simply tenants who pay the price. We will stand for the
28 tenants and we will stand up for the rights of the councillors, and we will stand for
29 the domestic principle that elected representatives must have the power to hold
30 Management to account.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

32 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I agree with what the
33 councillors who have brought this motion were trying to do, address the significant
34 increases in rent that some households are now facing, however there is a

1 fundamental flaw in the wording of this motion. It seeks to have the Council
2 continue operating the two rent schemes in existence before this new one, but those
3 rent schemes are just as much an issue as this current one is as they both use a
4 formula where only income up to €188 is disregarded. This is the same issue I
5 pointed out last week. The only real difference with this new scheme is the
6 minimum rent going from €24 or €27 to €30. So even if the section 140 was passed
7 and legally implementable, the only difference in all the letters that were issued to
8 homes a couple of weeks back would be between €3 and €6, and I would ask
9 someone in the exec or those councillors who have brought forward this motion to
10 explain otherwise. Furthermore, the new scheme disregards carers' allowance and
11 child maintenance completely. So for the 600 or so carer and lone parent households
12 this decrease down to the minimum rent of €30 would be wiped out if we went back
13 to the old scheme. I have had a number of those affected families and Family Carers
14 Ireland contact me about that this week. Instead, I will repeat what I said last week
15 and call on the Executive to further delay this new scheme and change the formula so
16 that the income disregard is increased in line with the basic social welfare payments.
17 This is the best way in which we can see the increases reduced, especially for those
18 most vulnerable groups such as pensioners and those on disability allowance.

19
20 To illustrate that point clearly let me use this example. In 2019 the minimum rent
21 was €27 in Wicklow. Under that scheme in 2019 someone on a contributory state
22 pension would have to pay €34 per week. Now in 2026 they have to pay €48.
23 Instead, if the income disregard level is increased to what the current baseline rate of
24 welfare is, €252, under such a scheme someone on the contributory state pension
25 would not have to pay €48 but would be down to €33 instead. Raising the income
26 disregard is what would also reduce everyone else's rent who earns above these
27 levels.

28
29 As it stands the formula of this scheme does not take account of inflation and does
30 not change the base rate of welfare since the base rate of welfare was €188 back in
31 2016. So for every increase in welfare the Government has given over the past ten
32 years the Council is taking an unfair 20% share of this. But none of that important
33 detail is in this section 140 motion, and if it were passed here today even if it were
34 legal would mean everyone's rent coming down by only about €3 to €6. Instead, it is

1 the Executive that need to act and change the unfair formula used in this scheme that
2 would give all our affected tenants a much fairer rents. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Behan.

4 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Councillor Alvey makes a
5 reasonable point, and I think what our aim was: To stop the Chief Executive from
6 going any further with what she is proposing to do and then we look at a fairer
7 scheme that we design as members, as Elected Members of the Council because this
8 is the fundamental point here. It is within our power, I am absolutely convinced, to
9 draw up and to pass a particular Differential Rent Scheme based on what we think
10 the priority should be. You would want to have a heart of stone and not be moved by
11 the number of people who have been on to all of us who are so seriously upset,
12 concerned, stressed and worried about what is going to happen, okay, not today but
13 in a month's time. Old people, rent going from €50 to €100 a week just like that.
14 Old age pensioners in their eighties. Two particular people I met just by accident
15 during the week, two women who are holding down jobs who have said that if this
16 increase goes through they are faced with a choice of having to give up their job. So,
17 you know, I don't think the Chief Executive has a heart of stone, I think she is a very
18 humane person, I said this last week, and I really am asking her to consider again the
19 implications of what she is about to do because it is going to turn many
20 people -- Over 5,000 families in this county are going to be affected by her decision
21 in the next couple of weeks.

22

23 With regard to the legal advice, and I have been around long enough to see legal
24 advice coming from the top table on many occasions, and with the greatest of respect
25 to the legal adviser that was commissioned to produce this report I fundamentally
26 disagree with him, and I will explain why. What he is basically saying is that yes,
27 you have the right to pass a section 140 if it concerns an act of the Chief Executive
28 that you decide to take on that power, but it cannot be used for every single element
29 of that particular Chief Executive's duties. So what he is saying is, if you order the
30 Chief Executive to design or to stop the implementation of a scheme you're saying
31 that's 5,000 individual acts. It's not. It's one act. Because the Chief Executive
32 signed an order or the director signed an order on the 15th December. It was one act:
33 To bring in a new Differential Rent Scheme. On that basis, the legal advice is
34 flawed as far as I'm concerned because it is not regarding a whole lot of housing

1 decisions. It is one decision to make a new scheme to join the Bray and the Wicklow
2 schemes. And I can remember as a member of the Council in the past voting to
3 accept and adopt differential rent schemes in the past. So I do not accept the advice.
4 I think we have a right to make this decision and I would appeal genuinely to all of
5 my colleagues to join us in preventing the Chief Executive implementing this, what
6 is going to be a cruel change to many people's lives. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Richmond.

8 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And it's just, I spent the
9 last week looking at the implications and actually seeking other legal opinions about
10 what is the legitimacy of whatever, and we keep coming back to the fact that this was
11 an Executive decision, the rent review, I come back to one of the major flaws of this
12 is; that it took seven years since the last rent review. In the last week I have had a
13 number of calls from those in approved housing bodies who are anxiously awaiting
14 for this new scheme to be put in place because they're on carers and maintenance and
15 their rent stands to drop, and by delaying this, they're the ones who are struggling.
16 Like when we look at the background, nearly 20% of rents dropped under the review
17 that was carried out. They are halted until the new scheme is implemented. And
18 whilst I speak with people but sometimes the language that is being used, we use
19 word like hike, increase, but there's also a very real thing, you're playing with
20 people's emotions and mental health. And the reviews, and I welcome what was
21 brought in last week about introducing clinics, where those affected -- and I'd share
22 the sentiment, particularly with regard to pensioners who may have entrusted the
23 filling out of forms to other people, and those will be dealt with and manned by
24 people who can implement them straight away.

25
26 So whilst we look at the section 140, on the face of it it's the language and the
27 rhetoric that is built around it, and what is the power, and in this respect I don't
28 believe that this is something which has the power to change the rent review that has
29 been approved. Thank you.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Councillor. Councillor Scott online.

31 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Can you hear me?

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes, we can hear you, councillor.

33 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: I just wanted to add to some of the comments that I made
34 at the last meeting on this, in that I agree that it took too long, seven years.

1 November wasn't long enough. It should have been put back until the spring so that
2 there could be a correct and thorough examination of the formula to make sure
3 vulnerable people aren't being caught. Similar comments -- I would very largely
4 agree with what Councillor Alvey has said.

5
6 I want to specifically make the point, I am concerned about the vote today for a
7 number of reasons. One of the reasons is the effect it may have for households that
8 are relying on child maintenance and carers. I would ask that whatever the result of
9 the vote is that appropriate provision is maintained for these households and
10 consideration so that they are not unduly penalised or unfairly impacted by the result
11 of the vote. They may be penalised as a result of a delay waiting for a legal opinion
12 on section 140. And I do believe that they are a vulnerable household that has been
13 overlooked in this argument. It is important to reiterate that this is a rent review, it is
14 not just a rent hike or rent increase. There are some families waiting for those
15 disregards for child maintenance and carers' allowance in order to make their rent
16 more acceptable to their finances. So it is important not to lose sight of that.

17
18 My second question is to the Executive. We've seen the legal advice so my question
19 is: If the vote is taken today and if the vote passes what happens next? Would the
20 Executive go to the High Court? What implications does that have on the people that
21 put their name on the vote? What implications does that for people who take part in
22 the vote? I would just like some clarity around that if that is possible without more
23 legal opinion. Thank you.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Duddy.

25 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Go raibh mile maith agat, Cathaoirleach. I am
26 supporting the motion today. I think this is the wrong time for these changes to be
27 implemented. Between a war in the Middle East that's affecting people's fuel prices,
28 affecting people's heating prices, affecting anything anyone does on the road which
29 will have knock-on effects on inflation and has had knock-on impact on inflation, at
30 a time coming up to Christmas when this change is coming in, when people haven't
31 had an opportunity to budget for it or to prepare for it. You have people starting
32 college now. And again, this hike is disturbing people's tranquillity to prepare for
33 what is ahead. And I think of any element in the inflationary crisis that we're looking
34 at, if the State or any part of the State, including Local Authorities, are increasing

1 that pressure on people I think it is an opportunity for all of us to stand and shout
2 halt.

3

4 Without predicting what might happen as a result of this motion, should legal
5 proceedings take place the implementation of any changes would be enjoined. They
6 would be halted for the duration. I would plead at this point rather than going down
7 the potential route that we come to our senses and we use the time now that will be
8 forced upon us at that point, we use that time now to come to a better settlement.
9 Remarks have been made in this chamber, and they're on the record, from certain
10 officials that show a certain disregard for the law and constitutional rights, and in
11 circumstances where the same parties then may try and use the law as a shield when
12 they have already stated that they're prepared to use a sword to cut that law to pieces,
13 a court would look very scathingly on such an approach.

14

15 But without offering any legal advice, as I say, as an elected representative I think I
16 have an obligation to stand with the tenants and prevent a situation which is -- much
17 of it is beyond our power in terms of inflation, but we can stop this step and delay it
18 in a way that a more reasonable approach would be adopted. Go raibh mile maith
19 agat.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Stapleton.

21 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Today I won't be
22 supporting the motion, and it's not because I don't have a heart of stone or that I have
23 a heart of stone. I have had some very difficult conversations over the last two
24 weeks, I have had some very difficult conversations with people, probably many in
25 the audience here today, whose rents have gone up massively, but most of those I
26 think would be captured by the change to the rent scheme that Councillor Alvey
27 supported, whereas for the last two weeks to Councillor Ward and Councillor
28 O'Toole who put forward this motion you've talked about stopping rent increases but
29 the last day I asked what you think in this policy that is actually unfair and you've
30 come back and said no, we just need to stop, listen. But actually, I think, like, when
31 I have had conversations with people whose rent has gone up, when I have explained
32 it is on your ability to pay, if your income goes up then your rent goes up, if your
33 income goes down your rent goes down, many people were acknowledging that that
34 is a fair system. What would be unfair would be if we left someone who was earning

1 very little income in 2019 now earning huge income in 2026 not contribute more to
2 the maintenance and upkeep of social housing; if we let people who lived in
3 approved housing bodies whose rents get reviewed every year be on different terms
4 to people who only had their rent reviewed back in 2016; or if we let someone who
5 just moved into a house last year and had their rent be based on the income they
6 moved in on last year be at a completely different rent level to someone who last
7 their income assessed in 2016 or 2019, I don't think that is fair. On top of it, the final
8 thing in the old policies that don't appear to be fair is that if you are living in Bray
9 your rent is assessed on a different basis to someone who lives outside of Bray,
10 anywhere else in the county. We have two different schemes. Whether the legal
11 advice stood or not, today I wouldn't be supporting this motion.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Sorry, Councillor Dunne, did you
13 take yourself off? Councillor Doyle.

14 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. The first thing I'd like to get
15 out of the way is that I am really disappointed in how some politicians are portraying
16 the Elected Members in a them and us way, as though some of us are allies of tenants
17 and others are somehow detached from the reality of ordinary people. To be clear:
18 Councillors, all of us, earn around €30,000 a year, not €130,000 like TDs. I have
19 said this before in this chamber, particularly when accused of being out of touch, and
20 I will say it again, I was a single parent, I lived in a council house. I know what it is
21 like to struggle. Many of us here know how difficult it can be to meet bills, whether
22 it is Local Authority rent, private rent or mortgage payments. There should not be a
23 them and us here. Most of us are simply trying to get by ourselves while also trying
24 to do the best we can for our constituents.

25
26 Regarding the Differential Rent Scheme, I'm hearing a lot of noise about rent
27 increases without enough discussion about why people's rent has gone up. Yes, if
28 your income has gone up you must expect that your rent may increase. That is the
29 basic principle and income-based Differential Rent Scheme. It is disingenuous to
30 suggest that rent should remain the same regardless of income. But with that must
31 come an obligation to provide adequate accommodation for our tenants. If you are
32 paying rent your property must meet a certain standard, and it is incumbent on
33 Wicklow County Council to make sure that it does.

34

1 I also think a disservice is being done to tenants when they are being told that this
2 section 140 will reduce their rent. That is simply not what this vote will do. The
3 legal advice presented to this chamber is that this vote will be void. If the legal
4 advice before this chamber is that the vote is void then we have a responsibility to be
5 honest with tenants about what this motion can and cannot achieve. People should
6 not be encouraged to put their hope in a vote which according to the legal advice that
7 we have received will change nothing.

8
9 So if we genuinely want to make rents more affordable what should we actually be
10 doing? The €188 disregard should be increased. That is the amount a person is
11 allowed to earn before that income begins to affect their rent. Increasing that
12 threshold could have a tangible impact, particularly for pensioners and vulnerable
13 tenants. More funding should be made available for retrofit council houses to reduce
14 energy bills. Let us not forget that rent pays for these measures. They are practical
15 measures that actually put money back in the pockets of tenants. This vote today
16 will not do those things. I want to be very clear about that. We need practical
17 solutions for tenants not headlines. I want to work towards a system where tenants
18 pay a fair rent based on their ability to pay, and that is why I cannot support this
19 motion.

20
21 I cannot support a measure which according to the legal advice before us is void and
22 will not deliver the outcome being claimed for it. We have a responsibility in this
23 chamber to act in good faith, to be honest with the people we represent and to make
24 decisions that actually have a practical benefit. For those reasons and with the remit
25 I have to act with integrity and in good faith at all times I have no choice but to
26 abstain from this vote. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Leonard. Sorry,
28 Councillor O'Brien.

29 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Basically what I was going
30 to say Councillor Doyle has said it, and she has put it in a lot better way than I can
31 ever do. I'm not a legal expert so I am going to take the legal advice that has been
32 given to us. I haven't got unlimited resources financially. I'm a full-time councillor,
33 I earn 30 grand a year, I have a mortgage and I'm not afraid to take decisions either.
34 My mortgage went up two weeks ago, there was no protest about that. We just had

1 to get on with it. I feel the pain. To put it as a them and us, as Councillor Doyle
2 quite rightly said, is wrong. It's setting expectations that can never be met and it puts
3 us in danger as well, not by the people sitting here but I have seen some of the threats
4 online about us, because of this decision that is going to be taken here today.

5
6 But I just need something clarified more so than anything today because if Sinn
7 Féin's motion is carried here today, the section 140, and it's appealed to the High
8 Court, what's the financial implications for those that support that motion? Because
9 there was a case here a number of years ago where councillors were up to €40,000
10 each landed with legal costs from a case a number of years ago. So I think before
11 anyone votes here today there has to be clarification on costs here. But I just want to
12 reiterate that it is not because we're sitting here heartless. We have got hearts. We
13 have families that are affected by this rate or rent increase as well. A lot of them
14 have accepted it because their income has gone up as well. A lot of them are going
15 to find it hard as well. But at the end of the day we have decisions to make here
16 today. We have an important decision that is coming up later in the meeting that I'd
17 like to get to as well. Let's not con ourselves, this is a stunt and that's all it is. And I
18 feel sorry for the people here today -- Excuse me -- I feel sorry for the people here
19 duped into believing that we take a vote here and all of a sudden this is going to
20 magically disappear. We're dealing with people's mental health here, we're dealing
21 with their future, we are dealing with their lives, and it is being used as a political
22 football. Let's call a spade a spade at this stage. So for the reasons that I've outlined
23 I'm going to abstain from this vote because I think it is a stunt, I think it is going to
24 backfire on them, and unfortunately the people that will actually have to live with the
25 consequences are the people here thinking that this vote matters, and that's wrong.
26 You should not get people's hopes up in this climate simply because you want to
27 make political headway. So for that reason I will be abstaining. Thank you,
28 Cathaoirleach.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Leonard.

30 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you. Firstly, I don't want to make any political
31 headlines. I wish I wasn't sitting here today having to have this conversation. I am
32 here to represent the people in my community that voted me in under a mandate and
33 people that are struggling. I think the whole situation has been completely
34 compounded by the national crisis and cost of living crisis. Also it's been

1 compounded by the delay in bringing this Differential Rent Scheme review about.
2 So I would like to ask just for some transparency around that.

3
4 I know it started in 2025, this scheme, but just going back through records myself
5 and doing some research, it was proposed to review this scheme in 2020. So I would
6 just like maybe for the members if the Chief Executive could prepare a report on
7 what happened. And I know Covid came but I was still working and I'm sure the
8 commercial rates were still being collected. So I would like more clarification on
9 why this wasn't reviewed and was it brought to the Housing Policy Committee
10 throughout that period, and if not why not, and who made that decision? Was it a
11 decision that was made not to do this rent review at that time? Because I think it is
12 partially part of this, what's compounded the situation here. Also, clarification
13 around did the auditors actually -- What were their recommendations throughout this
14 period in their annual audit? I would like that clarification as well on it.

15
16 I will be supporting the motion today. It is not a perfect motion but I think like
17 Malachai, I think it will buy time to mitigate the impact on a lot of residents around
18 the county. There's real pain out there. People are really struggling. It mightn't be
19 everybody that's in the rent review but it absolutely is a cohort of people there that
20 are barely making ends meet every week, and they are choosing -- I had an email
21 earlier on from one of the local charities that provides food to people who are
22 struggling, and they said that this is going to compound the situation even more. I
23 think we need to be careful. I think buying time -- I did ask at the last meeting for a
24 six-month period. I think we need to look at the just transition of what the effect of
25 this is going to be on tenants, and I think that we could end up in a worse situation
26 financially in Wicklow County Council with more arrears. We're already trying to
27 tackle the arrears that we have, a couple of million pound in arrears, so I think that
28 taking the time and taking that six months out, you know, to really review it and
29 make sure and do a report on the transition and the impact this is going to have on
30 tenants is needed. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Glennon.

32 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Look, I echo a lot of what
33 Councillor Doyle has said but from the outset I just want to make it clear that even if
34 this resolution is passed here today it is void, so it has no bearing. So people have

1 been misled. A number of people have contacted me about rent increases, and I am
2 as sympathetic as anybody else in this chamber, and I just think it is very unfair to
3 mislead people that if this is passed that the rent review doesn't take place. It is the
4 Chief Executive's function and she has made her decision and she is not for going
5 back from that position.

6
7 I thank her for confirming both last and this morning at Corporate Policy that there
8 will be a meaningful review for anyone who is experiencing hardship or where they
9 have significant unexplained increases that she will have those thoroughly reviewed
10 and brought to the right level if the rent that's been proposed is higher than what it
11 should be. I thank her for confirming that commitment this morning.

12
13 I speak on behalf of the Fianna Fáil group, and we have discussed this at length this
14 morning, and we obviously are as sympathetic as anybody else who is experiencing
15 serious rent increases but let's be factual about it, this 140 motion does not affect the
16 rent that you're going to be paying once these increases come in. I would somewhat
17 support a delay till the new year if that's possible, and that's been spoken about by a
18 number of councillors, and it would also allow us a little bit of time to review people
19 who feel that they have been unfairly treated.

20
21 So that's my position on it. And I think Councillor Ward certainly has
22 misrepresented the position when he said that if this motion is passed today that the
23 rent increases won't take place. That is incorrect in my view. And I don't dismiss
24 the senior counsel's view that was given in this matter actually at considerable
25 expense to the Council. He is a leading light in administrative law in the Law
26 Library, he's a senior counsel for 23 years and he's at the Bar for 39 years so I take it
27 he knows what he is talking about, so I wouldn't dismiss it as lightly as some of my
28 colleagues have done. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Bourke.

30 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. First of all, I am very sorry
31 that so many of our tenants have had shocking rent increases and are having
32 difficulties in trying to cope with the prospect of having to pay out significant large
33 sums per annum over and above what they have been used to paying, and I do
34 support some of the suggestions there by Councillor Doyle and Councillor Alvey

1 that the mechanism that we are using is very blunt and that perhaps we should review
2 the thresholds for calculations of rents particularly for people who are very
3 vulnerable, old age pensioners, for example. There was one case where they were
4 on -- I got dozens of emails from people complaining about this, where they went
5 from €33 to €90. Those kind of increases are off the scale. But having said that, we
6 all have to pay pair rent as well. Naturally. I don't think anyone is complaining
7 about fair rent. So getting that fairness into the system is the challenge.

8
9 Now, as regards the section 140 motion today, I have given it a lot of thought. I was
10 in this position before 20 years ago. We had a section 140 motion. I think it was
11 called a section 4 in those days. And it came in because we wanted to direct the
12 manager not to do something, and the manager said no, that's an illegal motion I'm
13 going to do it anyway. So we said right off we go to the High Court -- or first of all
14 to get independent legal advice which we got as a Council. And I recall the
15 barristers agreeing over the facts of the case and saying oh my god, the manager is
16 frustrating the will of the Council, the Council has voted for this, this has to be
17 challenged in the High Court, this will make legal history. I remember those words
18 very carefully as if they were yesterday, and we all ended up in the High Court and
19 we lost the case in the High Court. The judge at the time, Justice Ó Caoimh, said
20 this is an unusual case, it's called the County Council v. The County Manager, this is
21 unprecedented, I have to retitle it and call it The County Councillors v. The County
22 Manager. So all of a sudden the county councillors had culpability and we're liable
23 for costs should the motion fail. And fail it did. Then there was a hunt to find out
24 who started the case and nobody would put their hand up saying they initiated it, but
25 three councillors had to because they signed the grounding afterwards. So cutting a
26 very long story short a lot of money was spent, and a lot of money wasted really. I
27 think it was over half a million of costs paid out to pay for councillors' costs and then
28 I think the three individual councillors, Kelly, Doran and Cullen, had to pay about
29 €30,000 I think out of their own pocket. So for that reason I am very worried that
30 potentially this case --

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: One second I have to put your mic back on.

32 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Is it three minutes or five minutes?

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Three.

34 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Anyway, should we vote for it my big fear is should it

1 go to the High Court we will end up being dragged back into the High Court, we
2 could be pulled back in again. I'm not going to go through all that again for a motion
3 that is not going to achieve what we want it to achieve. So I am sorry that so many
4 people have been misled by this hope, it's a false hope, and look it I think we have to
5 look at another avenue to try to get fairness into the system.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor O'Toole.

7 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I'm listening to some of the
8 contributions there. I suppose I wonder does everybody listen to everyone's
9 contributions because some of the words that have been used there in the rhetoric is
10 definitely trying to be a bit frightening. Just to be clear: We have outlined that we
11 are waiting, we're looking to wait for the judgment in the High Court that has already
12 been taking place in South County Dublin. So there's not much point in us taking an
13 action against something for the exact same thing. So I am very conscious of saving
14 money and all that sort of stuff so that's why we're actually here.

15

16 Like, the fact that some of the councillors are saying that this is trying to be made out
17 to be a political football and all the rest I think that is a bit disingenuous also. The
18 amount of phone calls and the amount of people that have contacted me personally, I
19 won't speak for anybody else, just me here today, has been absolutely alarming. The
20 heartache that these people are feeling, the difficult situations they're in. And they
21 are aware that an increase was due, they're not denying that, but the fact that the
22 volume of the increases, the short timeframe since being noticed and notified when
23 to pay, and then the fact that the Chief Executive and directors see fit that it should
24 be implemented in November right before Christmas, I think shows how out of touch
25 some of the people in here are with the struggles that people are facing. So I just
26 think trying to terrify people -- Like, we're here to try and stop this motion for a
27 fairer system that suits everybody. Like, talking to different people outside and over
28 the phone and everything else, not everybody is getting in contact with the Council.
29 They can't get in contact with the Council. They've made numerous attempts via
30 email, phone calls. They're still not getting through. Some emails are bouncing
31 back. And this situation was highlighted last week also. So thank you.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Fenelon Gaskin online,
33 please.

34 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Yes, thank you, Cathaoirleach. Can you

1 hear me okay?

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: We can hear you fine.

3 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Yeah, great. Just to say I'll be abstaining
4 from the motion just for various reasons. I have heard from a few constituents who
5 have had their rents go up and a few who have had their rents go down, so there are
6 mixed views on this rent review. I think having the clinics should be a benefit to a
7 lot of constituents but they have to be facilitated at times to help those renters who
8 do actually work. So I think that is something that the Executive will have to
9 facilitate. And I do think it should be put out for a number of months but I do think
10 that the houses that need attention should be assessed as soon as everything settles
11 down. People who haven't put their paperwork in should have no option but to
12 submit it. I'd like to see the rent review looked for on the old age pensioners
13 especially for those who are only receiving the State pension and have no other
14 income only the State pension. That's it. Thank you.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Mulhall.

16 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just I'd like to say I have
17 concerns about the process to date and I want to be clear that those concerns are not a
18 reflection on the hard work, significant hard work of Council staff. My concern is
19 really with the timeline from decision to implementation and the significant impact
20 on tenants of this Council. I think if this wasn't a priority for seven years a few more
21 months shouldn't really make a huge difference. I'm also concerned that Elected
22 Members were not provided with sufficiently detailed analysis of the scheme and its
23 potential impact in advance of decisions being made. I would be supportive of
24 additional time being provided to allow everyone involved to properly consider the
25 information and make an informed decision. I am aware of the section 140 proposal,
26 what it's intended to do, I have heard different views and opinions on it, and I am not
27 yet satisfied that we fully understand the implications of taking the section 140
28 decision either way. I think that needs to be clarified before we proceed on it. I am
29 also conscious that there are tenants who will see their rents reduce under the new
30 scheme or proposed scheme and we need to ensure that they are not overlooked in
31 this debate. At the same time I'm concerned about the impact on tenants facing
32 significant increases. So both ends of the spectrum are at play here.

33

34 I'd comment Councillor O'Toole for taking the lead on this but I would be of a

1 similar mind to Councillor Alvey and Councillor Duddy. My own preference would
2 be to pause, take the necessary time to examine the scheme further and its impacts,
3 and that may be several months, and ultimately ensure that whatever scheme is put in
4 place is fair, accurate and appropriate to the circumstances that people face today,
5 and if that further delay was put forward I would be supporting it to ensure the
6 correct decisions are made. Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. That's everyone. Did you want to
8 come in, Chief Executive?

9 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Oh, sorry.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell.

11 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yes, I was just taking a few notes
12 of what my colleagues around the chamber are saying in regards to the various
13 different degrees of opinions on this. Still there needs to be clarity here regards the
14 section 140. Is it being proposed that we're waiting for the judgment from South
15 Dublin County Council and therefore is the section 140 premature?

16

17 I will be supporting the section 140 as a lot of my constituents are affected by the
18 decisions that's made in this executive function by the Chief Executive and our
19 colleagues at the top table. So therefore I would welcome a stay on this certainly
20 into the new year. I'm not sure when the decision from the High Court is due but if
21 the Chief Executive could maybe hold fire until you see what comes back from that.
22 I have read the legal opinion. I am around long enough to know what happened the
23 last time in regards to those councillors, and certainly if anyone wants to look for
24 €30,000 in my pockets to pay for this they're more than welcome to root around there
25 but there's not €30 never mind €30,000. But the truth is that I think we can solve this
26 without going down that road. I think if you look at the disregard in regards the
27 €188, when that's lifted to a more balanced price to reflect what people are getting
28 today it would have a decrease for the most vulnerable in our society, including our
29 old age pensioners, those on social welfare payments. And I think that's a decision
30 that could be made at the top table and could be made quite quickly. And I do think
31 in regards to section 140 we're putting the cart in front of the horse because if we're
32 waiting for the judgments it's quite unclear what we're doing. We're ordering you
33 not to go ahead with something but we're told that it won't stand up to scrutiny but
34 yet we're waiting on a High Court action. And I'd just like clarity on that, because as

1 I say I will support the section 140. I would hope that we could come to a more
2 agreeable stance where we could sort this ourselves at the top table.

3

4 I know people are calling in regards to why did it not happen in 2020. Just to remind
5 people that we did have Covid. Had it been sorted in 2021/22 we would have had
6 the same -- with the scheme as it's being published today we'd have had the same
7 who are disenfranchised in this regard because the scheme is not a fair and balanced
8 scheme as proposed to the vast majority.

9

10 I also have a question in regards to, by keep delaying and delaying, yes, it has to be
11 debated here but there is the percentage of people, someone mentioned 20%, I
12 believe it's greater than 20% to have a reduction, and what happens here? I assume
13 we can't put a proposal forward that they have their reduction straight away?
14 Because on the one hand we're asking you not to increase the rent and then the
15 next -- But I do think it is very unfair on that percentage of people who have a
16 decrease based on the carers' allowance and the child maintenance now being
17 disregarded, and I'd have major concern. I have a lot of people who contacted me in
18 that regard, that they're looking forward to their decrease to help them into Christmas
19 and the new year. So while we're having this debate today I'd like some further
20 clarity on that as well. In an ideal world I would like to see that their decreases
21 would start straight away but it is a bit contradictory I suppose in what we are trying
22 to achieve here. But yeah, look it, I will be supporting the section 140 if it goes
23 forward. I do think it is premature, we're waiting for a judgment from the High
24 Court and I would ask my colleagues to consider that. I would ask the Chief
25 Executive before we even go down that line to get some sort of commitment that we
26 get the additional time that's being sought. Thank you.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, councillor. Councillor O'Neill.

28 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I am inclined to agree a lot with
29 Councillors Mulhall and Snell that there could be -- should be a bit of breathing
30 space here. You know, if there was a review carried out on the hundreds of people
31 who have got some wild new estimates I doubt it they will never have pay what they
32 are being asked to pay, if there was some breathing space there to see what exactly
33 the figures will be at the end of the day. But as I pointed out last week, I think a lot
34 of this is connected with, you know, the pressure people are under nowadays, you

1 know, getting the children to school, to get the bread on the table, to get the fire lit, et
2 cetera, et cetera, and then for this to happen is frightening. And we can't forget
3 actually the people in affordable and the housing agency, the approved housing body
4 housing, they're being hit by up to 2% per year. So all this rent increase is coming
5 probably at a rough time. But I see three TDs in the audience here today, and they
6 don't have to take the risk that councillors would have to here today. Again like
7 Councillor Snell, I remember a times when the councillors were held accountable
8 financially for making decisions in here. It didn't affect the big parties, the Fianna
9 Fáils and Sinn Féins or anyone else. The Independents can be hit hard by this type
10 of money. 30,000, 40,000, 70,000 a go for an Independent is a little big rough,
11 whereas you know the people who could be pushing these things widely would be
12 from well-propped up financially political parties.

13

14 I think by the sound of things in the chamber it's going to be defeated. Again we
15 have to watch the scaremongering that will come from the threats. I will be voting
16 for section 140. Just an honest opinion, I know the tos and fros against it, I have to
17 question myself whether I am being really sincere in what I am doing. I really just
18 want to do my best for, which I have worked for all my life, the ordinary person. But
19 I do know the pressure that the people of Ireland are under at the moment, whether it
20 be a rent increase -- I would love this to be put down the road 'til there is a complete
21 review of every one of those people affected by the price increase. Go raibh maith
22 agat.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Ward.

24 COUNCILLOR WARD: Thanks. Basically I am not here for any political gain. I
25 am basically here because of all the calls and all the emails I've received from
26 people. We were not being disingenuous when we brought this forward. We were
27 thinking of the people. That's all. We're thinking about the people who are paying
28 rent. Nobody is disagreeing that they have to pay new rents. It's the severity of the
29 rents that people are paying. The scheme we are looking for is just to stop and give
30 the councillors, as Joe Behan is saying, a bigger impact into exactly how this is
31 working out. We need to be able to see it is just as people said, they're not against
32 paying extra rent. There is people that maybe didn't send in the forms but I'd say the
33 majority of people have sent in the forms, and to come back and be told you're going
34 to be paying a couple hundred euro extra that you can't get -- it is unjust. So maybe

1 if this scheme and the 140 went through and we came back at a later date with all the
2 councillors' support and the councillors have a bigger input and we can see more
3 clarity on what is coming and where the money is coming from this will be a big
4 help to all our constituents. As Joe Behan was saying, I do think we should have a
5 bigger say in exactly what way these increases are met and sent on the people.
6 Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Leonard.

8 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I am not sure whether this would help, but I would
9 like to propose a motion: "That Wicklow County Council agree to place a six-month
10 stay on the implementation of the Social Housing Rent Review pending the outcome
11 of the High Court proceedings, and that during that six-month period that the
12 Council shall maintain social housing rents at their current level with no increase
13 arising from the proposed rent review until that date, and immediately implement the
14 appropriate carers' and maintenance exemption taking into account the financial
15 circumstances of households where a tenant has significant caring responsibilities or
16 essential maintenance costs arise."

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Did you want to speak, Councillor Snell?

18 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just to say that I would
19 second that because I think it's very fair in that it's taking into account the people
20 who have a decrease, i.e. those who no longer -- in regards to their child maintenance
21 and carers' allowance. I think it is a very fair request. I think it gives the senior
22 management the opportunity to go away and have a look at it with the Corporate and
23 Strategic Policy group for housing as well and with the full chamber, and we
24 hopefully will have a direction from the High Court. It would save the taxpayers of
25 County Wicklow an awful lot of money, an awful lot of heartache down the line and
26 potentially stave off any further problems in regards to democratically Elected
27 Members having to defend themselves in a High Court action. But if that is what we
28 are prepared to do I suppose that's the chance we take but I would ask the Chief
29 Executive to consider this motion. I think it is a very fair and balanced request.
30 Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Dunne.

32 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I'd like to support that motion.
33 In my opinion it gives people breathing time. It also might give an opportunity for
34 the High Court action to be looked on and maybe decided. Maybe with the motion

1 that is being brought before us they could be right. So if we did do that I think it
2 would be a good idea. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Is that everyone that wants to come in for now?
4 Councillor Behan.

5 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Yeah, Cathaoirleach. I am sure the Chief Executive is
6 around long enough to know to get the will of the councillors here is very clear that
7 you should be holding off doing anything with regard to increasing the rent but also
8 implementing Government policy with regard to carers' allowance and child
9 maintenance. The effect of what Councillor Leonard has suggested is exactly the
10 same effect that we have put forward in terms of the section 140 which is basically
11 we're directing, Peir is asking, that the Chief Executive hold off for a period of six
12 months to allow the High Court to discuss and decide on the issue in South Dublin
13 but also give more time for a further re-examination by the SPC, as Councillor Snell
14 has said, and by the officials about some of the failures of the new scheme which
15 Councillor Alvey highlighted very well last week with regard to the income
16 disregard. But I would reject absolutely anybody saying that this section 140 was a
17 stunt. Because if we hadn't put down the section 140 we wouldn't be discussing this
18 anymore. It'd be going ahead and being implemented at the beginning of November
19 and we wouldn't have had a chance because that's what the Chief Executive said. So
20 I think it is good that we've had another discussion and I think it is very clear what
21 the consensus is in the chamber here, and I would honestly really ask the Chief
22 Executive to consider the terms of what has been proposed here now and give us
23 some kind of light at the end of this terrible tunnel. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Duddy.

25 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Go raibh mile maith agat, Cathaoirleach. There have
26 been various recollections offered by councillors in relation to cases in the past, and I
27 understand all of the cases have cost Wicklow County Council a lot of money, but I
28 wonder, I think the reference has been made to one particular case that came to
29 conclusion in the Supreme Court, the case of Cullen, Doran, Kelly & Ors v.
30 Wicklow County Manager & Ors. It has a neutral citation of 2010 IESC 49. I
31 wonder would it be possible for the county law agent to make that decision available
32 to councillors? There have been murmurings within the councillors, I don't know
33 where the source is, about various implications of how they vote in this matter in
34 relation to costs, et cetera, and rather than people being frightened into voting any

1 particular way I think it might be useful if councillors could make an informed
2 decision, and if a particular case is being quoted at them I think the councillors
3 should be able to read that case. So I would ask if that case -- It's a determination of
4 Hardiman J, Fennelly J and O'Donnell J, and again the title is Cullen & Ors v.
5 Wicklow County Council, neutral citation 2010 IESC 49. Go raibh mile maith agat,
6 Cathaoirleach.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Doyle.

8 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I'd just have a question on
9 procedure, procedurally about the addition of a motion or an amendment within a
10 section 140 process, how that works. I didn't actually catch the full motion, I didn't
11 hear the end of it but I think I got the gist of it. But I would like a response from the
12 top table. As I see it, essentially it's kind of asking the same kind of thing in a
13 different language, so is the response going to be the same? I would like a little bit
14 more information about anything relevant that we should know procedurally. Thank
15 you.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor O'Toole.

17 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just to be clear: There's
18 nobody called for the section 140 looking for legal challenge because there is a legal
19 challenge already. Just to reiterate that again. So we're not looking to call for legal
20 challenge towards Wicklow County Council. Regarding Councillor Leonard's
21 motion, that is kind of ultimately what we are asking for, and if an amendment needs
22 to be put on to ours for different wording we don't mind doing that. Thank you.
23 That's it.

24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, councillor. Councillor O'Brien.

25 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just have a couple of things
26 I just need for clarification before I decide on what to do. First of all, I listened to
27 Councillor Glennon who is well versed with law and I took his point in relation to
28 who gave us the legal advice, and I do take that legal advice serious, that this vote is
29 void. So if Councillor Leonard's motion goes through we're waiting on the legal
30 case, what's the timeframe of that? I don't know if it's going to take six months or a
31 year. And what I'm afraid of is that we're back here in six months, if it's not sorted
32 we're back here in six months again, or let's say the South Dublin win, the
33 councillors win the case, or they lose the case, whatever the case may be, but we're
34 back here at square one again, what I am afraid of then is are we going to backdate

1 the rents to now because we waited six months? I want a bit of clarification because
2 there's a lot of ifs, butts and maybes. And I know it is great sound-bites and there
3 was a round of applause, but this is serious. We need clarity. I am lost here. I know
4 they're great headlines. I know people go on social media fighting for the people.
5 We're all here fighting for the people. I just need a clarification because we're
6 playing with people's lives. What happens if the court case doesn't go ahead in six
7 months? What happens if we have to backdate the rents if the rents go up even
8 further? A bit of clarification, that's all I'm looking for. Thank you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. CEO.

10 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you, Members. Just I'll
11 start with the first point of clarification. There hasn't been leave to serve High Court
12 proceedings from South Dublin in the matter as of yet. It is before the courts for
13 leave to serve proceedings on the 14th December. So there is no case in the High
14 Court at the moment in South Dublin. That is just a point of clarification on the legal
15 status of the action being taken or otherwise proposed by South Dublin County
16 Council.

17

18 I will certainly circulate that decision, Councillor Duddy, and other relevant
19 decisions to the members. That's not a problem.

20

21 In relation to other questions that have arisen about financial implications and
22 otherwise, I cannot second guess what would happen if the section 140 is passed by
23 the members here today. My legal advice, and it is my legal advice, for me, he asked
24 me that I share it with the members so that you are informed, is that the motion is not
25 lawful and I will not be able to implement it. What the members choose to do after
26 that is a matter for yourselves. And I understand and I hear what Councillor O'Toole
27 and Councillor Ward are saying about proceedings in South Dublin but they haven't
28 had leave to serve proceeds as of yet and they will not have until the 14th of
29 December.

30

31 I have given a commitment at the last meeting, the meeting last Monday, that we will
32 hold clinics and go through rent reviews for anybody that feels that they have been
33 over assessed or that their income has been unfairly assessed. I am committed to
34 doing that. I also committed at that meeting that any reassessment or readjustment

1 downwards of that rent would be backdated to the effective date of the rent scheme
2 which is the 7th of November. That's I suppose the position that I have at the
3 moment. It did go through the SPC. I know it's seven years, and I absolutely take
4 that fully on board that it's been seven years since we've had a rent review. That's
5 not good enough. We did have Covid in between. It has been the subject of two
6 audit reports that were brought to the Council where the recommendation to merge
7 the schemes was in place. And to review the scheme from the time of my
8 appointment here I have been working closely with the housing team to get that
9 review underway, and it has taken a full year for the team to assess the income and
10 the rents of tenants. That is because of the gap. And I fully acknowledge that
11 seven-year gap is not good enough and I am committed to having rent reviews on a
12 more frequent basis so that we are never in a position to again where there is such a
13 sharp adjustment upwards or downwards to people's rents.

14

15 Again Helen might just clarify on the procedural matters of the motion that's being
16 proposed and seconded by Councillor Leonard and Councillor Snell on what would
17 happen there, but my view of that, it's the same form, it's directing me to do
18 something that is not lawful. It's still an executive function and I am still in the same
19 position.

20

21 So, members, I mean it is a matter for yourselves to decide how you want to proceed
22 here, my advice, my legal advice, is that if the motion is passed I can't lawfully act
23 on it. That is my position.

24 MS PURCELL: In relation to the section 140, which is the item that we are
25 discussing, there is no provision in legislation to amend the section 140 that has been
26 submitted. It is open to the councillors who submitted it to withdraw it, amend it,
27 resubmit it. That means at another Council meeting. I am just saying that is an
28 option to you.

29

30 The way we propose to proceed is the section 140 stands alone. There will be a vote
31 on that.

32

33 The legislation in relation to the section 140 is very specific. I am going to read you
34 a slight element of it now. "Without prejudice to any other relevant requirements it

1 is necessary for the passing of a resolution under this section that at least one-third of
2 the total number of members of the Local Authority concerned vote in favour of the
3 resolution." And in relation to one-third of 32 and fractions the legislation states that
4 it should be rounded down. So it is ten members at least who are required to vote in
5 favour of the resolution.

6

7 Then in relation to the motion, we will have the vote on the section 140 first and we
8 can then proceed with the motion as sent in by Councillor Leonard, if necessary, and
9 seconded by Councillor Snell. The Chief Executive has already stated she also
10 believes that this is ultra vires.

11

12 So that is just to clarify the process. If there are any further questions or have I
13 answered the question that was asked?

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Toole.

15 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And thanks for those
16 instructions regarding the section 140. Would it be possible then to withdraw the
17 current form until we get independent legal advice and come back with a different
18 proposal? That might suit things a bit better. Maybe we can have discussions
19 amongst the chamber also.

20 MS PURCELL: If the three of you wish to withdraw the section 140 that's
21 absolutely fine.

22 MS O'GORMAN: Absolutely. There's no issue with that at all. But I suppose to the
23 point of the legal advice that I have that an instruction to change the scheme or to
24 empower a Differential Rent Scheme of an executive function, any executive
25 function, is not legal. So absolutely, I have no issue, whatever the members choose
26 to do I am more than satisfied that you are doing what you feel is the right thing to
27 do.

28 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Look it, I suppose we will proceed. We'll proceed.
29 Because I do know that -- -- Yeah, look, we'll proceed. Thank you.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Alvey.

31 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, look, there's two different
32 motions here before us, and I take it that the councillors who brought forward this
33 motion were seeking to do one thing but unfortunately we as the rest of the
34 councillors have to read it as it is stated here in front of us, and as it is stated it is to

1 stop the implementation of this new scheme and go back to the old one. So I can't in
2 good faith support that because of all of the things that are wrong with the old
3 scheme. I will support Councillor Leonard's motion because I think that is a fair
4 resolution in this situation, and will give us time albeit it would seem that the Chief
5 Executive is telling us she's not going to do either of the motions but nonetheless I
6 think it is important that we lay down a marker as councillors as united as we
7 possibly can be, and I think what Councillor Leonard has brought to the table is a fair
8 resolution, an opportunity to stop and consider what is happening here. So that is my
9 stance. I want to make it known. Thank you.

10 MS O'GORMAN: Just another point of clarification. I wanted to make sure that you
11 have absolutely the best information in front of you. In a standard motion, if a
12 motion is voted on in the chamber and is defeated or otherwise it can't be revisited
13 for a six-month period. I want to make sure that you have the right advice as to
14 whether that applies to a section 140 or not should the motion be defeated. Just so
15 you have the full facts. Helen is checking that now. If you want to bear with us for a
16 moment.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Doyle.

18 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just so I have it absolutely
19 clear: The motion from Councillor Leonard is also being viewed as ultra vires; is
20 that right? And so, it cannot instruct you, and if we vote it is equally void, and it is
21 not connected, the section 140 stands alone, it a motion from the floor that just
22 happens to be during this conversation but it isn't connected to the 140; is that right?
23 Technically.

24 MS O'GORMAN: Technically that's correct.

25 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Richmond.

27 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. It's just really to clarify
28 what Councillor Doyle was saying there. So even if we vote on Councillor Leonard's
29 motion and even if it's passed it really doesn't impact; is that correct?

30 MS O'GORMAN: That is correct. I hear what everybody is saying --

31 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Thank you.

32 MS O'GORMAN: -- and you know we are in a position where we will review,
33 reassess, look at people's rents and any change will be backdated to the 7th
34 November. I have given that commitment and I stand firm on that, even if it takes us

1 a couple of months to do that. We won't put people into difficulty that if their rent
2 has been over assessed. So that is going to take a bit of time if there are individual
3 cases, and I am very happy to work through that with members. I know Councillor
4 Fenelon Gaskin raised the point about having clinics outside of hours for people
5 working and I will happily do that. I want to caution as well, to put on record, we
6 are in the middle of public sector dispute so the organising of clinics is a little bit
7 problematic for us at the moment but we will do it as soon as we possibly can.

8 MS PURCELL: Just to clarify in relation to Councillor Leonard's motion, section 15
9 of the standing orders, section 15(c) states: "Subject to standing order 16 --" I will
10 read that in a minute. "-- any matter decided by the Local Authority by motion on
11 notice or on the report of a committee shall not be reopened within six months of the
12 date of such decision." And section 16 states: "Notwithstanding any other
13 provisions of these standing orders a motion may be proposed without notice for the
14 purpose of dealing with urgent business related to a function of the Local Authority
15 subject to the requirement that not less than a majority of members present vote in
16 favour."

17

18 So the section 140 motion is before us, we will see how the decision on that vote
19 goes and then the standing orders are saying that "any matter decided by the Local
20 Authority by motion on notice or on report of the committee shall not be reopened
21 within six months of the date of such decision." So it is not possible to have a vote
22 on the second motion until after six months from today.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that everyone who wanted to come in? Councillor Snell.

24 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just in regards to what
25 Helen has read out there in regards to the section motion. The second motion is
26 fundamentally different. It's taking into account the decreases that people have been
27 notified about and it's to safeguard their opportunity to be on what the senior
28 management believe is a fair scheme for them. So we're trying to protect them in
29 this, the people who are getting a decrease. We're also not calling for a section 140.
30 A section 140 is fundamentally a hell of a lot different than the motion that's being
31 proposed by Councillor Leonard and supported by myself, and therefore I think it
32 can be taken and should be taken after this vote for the section 140.

33 MS O'GORMAN: Yeah, look, my apologies. That's my understanding of what you
34 said and Councillor Leonard had proposed. I'd ask Helen to check, and I was

1 speaking in relation to the 140, whether if the 140 failed whether it could be re-
2 entered again or would it need a period of six months. So we are just getting final
3 clarification on it but my view is that the second motion can absolutely be heard
4 following the section 140 motion.

5 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Chief Executive.

6 MS GILLESPIE: Thank you. So we will proceed to the vote then on the section 140
7 motion: "That Wicklow County Council pursuant to section 140 of the Local
8 Government Act 2001 hereby directs the Chief Executive to immediately stop the
9 implementation of the new Differential Rent Scheme due to take effect on the 3rd of
10 October 2026 and continue to operate the two differential rent schemes in existence
11 before that date." Signed by Councillor Warren O'Toole, Councillor John Ward and
12 Councillor Joe Behan. So I will now ask everyone to vote please. Councillor Danny
13 Alvey?

14 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Abstain.

15 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Mark Barry?

16 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Abstain.

17 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Joe Behan?

18 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: For.

19 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

20 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Abstain.

21 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

22 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Abstain.

23 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Avril Cronin? Not present. Councillor Erika
24 Doyle?

25 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Abstain.

26 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Malachai Duddy?

27 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Tá.

28 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Gail Dunne?

29 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Abstain.

30 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?

31 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Abstain.

32 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Orla Finn? Not present. Councillor Pat
33 Fitzgerald?

34 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Abstain.

- 1 MS PURCELL: Abstain. Councillor Tom Fortune? Not present. Councillor Patsy
2 Glennon?
- 3 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Abstaining.
- 4 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
- 5 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Abstain.
- 6 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 7 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Abstain.
- 8 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 9 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: For.
- 10 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 11 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Abstain.
- 12 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 13 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Abstain.
- 14 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Miriam Murphy?
- 15 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Abstain.
- 16 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Ian Neary?
- 17 COUNCILLOR NEARY: For.
- 18 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 19 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Abstain.
- 20 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Gerry O'Neill?
- 21 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: For.
- 22 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 23 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: For.
- 24 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 25 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Abstain.
- 26 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Lourda Scott?
- 27 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Abstain.
- 28 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor John Snell?
- 29 COUNCILLOR SNELL: For.
- 30 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Peter Stapleton?
- 31 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Against.
- 32 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Stephen Stokes?
- 33 COUNCILLOR STOKES: For.
- 34 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor John Ward?

1 COUNCILLOR WARD: For.

2 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Ned Whelan?

3 COUNCILLOR WHELAN: Abstain.

4 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Abstain.

6 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. There's 9 votes for, 1 against, 2 not present, and 19
7 abstaining. Therefore the motion falls. Thank you. 3 not present. My apologies.
8 Thank you, Teresa.

9 MS PURCELL: I am just awaiting some advice in relation to the second motion.
10 Fine to go ahead. Right.

11 MS GILLESPIE: Thank you. So we will now proceed to the proposal by Councillor
12 Peir Leonard, seconded by Councillor John Snell. I will just get it now, one second.
13 "That Wicklow County Council agrees to place a six-month stay on the
14 implementation of the social housing rent review pending the outcome of High Court
15 proceedings. During this six-month period the Council shall (1) maintain social
16 housing rents at their current level with no increase arising from the proposed rent
17 review until that date; (2) immediately implement an appropriate carers and
18 maintenance exemption taking into account the financial circumstances of
19 households where a tenant has significant caring responsibilities or where essential
20 maintenance costs arise." So I will now proceed to a vote on that. Councillor Danny
21 Alvey?

22 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: For.

23 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Mark Barry?

24 COUNCILLOR BARRY: For.

25 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Joe Behan?

26 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: For.

27 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

28 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: For.

29 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

30 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: For.

31 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Avril Cronin? Not present. Councillor Erika
32 Doyle?

33 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Abstain.

34 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Malachai Duddy?

- 1 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Tá.
- 2 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Gail Dunne?
- 3 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: For.
- 4 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?
- 5 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: For.
- 6 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Orla Finn? Not present. Councillor Pat
- 7 Fitzgerald?
- 8 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: For.
- 9 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Tom Fortune? Not present. Councillor Patsy
- 10 Glennon?
- 11 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: For.
- 12 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
- 13 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: For.
- 14 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 15 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: For.
- 16 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 17 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: For.
- 18 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 19 COUNCILLOR MAHON: For.
- 20 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 21 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: For.
- 22 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Miriam Murphy?
- 23 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: For.
- 24 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Ian Neary?
- 25 COUNCILLOR NEARY: For.
- 26 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 27 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Abstain.
- 28 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Gerry O'Neill?
- 29 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: For.
- 30 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 31 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: For.
- 32 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 33 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Abstain.
- 34 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. Councillor Lourda Scott?

1 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: For.

2 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor John Snell?

3 COUNCILLOR SNELL: For.

4 MS GILLESPIE: Councillor Peter Stapleton?

5 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Against.

6 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Stephen Stokes?

7 COUNCILLOR STOKES: For.

8 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor John Ward?

9 COUNCILLOR WARD: For.

10 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Ned Whelan?

11 COUNCILLOR WHELAN: For.

12 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: For.

14 MS GILLESPIE: For. So that's 25 for, 1 against, 3 not present and 3 abstaining.

15 Therefore the motion is carried. Thank you.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: I would like to say something. Councillors can choose to
17 vote the way they wish and please can you not in the gallery make comments to
18 people on the way that they have voted. Everyone is acting in the best interests of
19 their constituents and it may not be what you agree with but please have some
20 respect for the people doing their jobs. Okay. Thank you.

21

22 So item 2 --

23 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Can we find out what she's going to do now? Sorry, I am
24 just asking what is the Chief Executive's response to that overwhelming vote of 25
25 members voting for it?

26 MS O'GORMAN: My view, as already stated before the vote is taken, is that it is
27 ultra vires and I cannot implement it.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Doyle.

29 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just to repeat, I requested
30 clarification on the nature of the vote. I was told it was ultra vires which means it's a
31 void vote, it cannot be carried and will not be instated. I don't vote on ultra vires
32 votes. There is no point. Nothing is won. Nothing is gained. Nothing changes. So
33 you know just an explanation as to why sometimes people might abstain on a vote; if
34 there's not enough information or if it is a void vote. Nobody in this chamber is

1 afraid of a difficult vote but in this instance nothing changes. Absolutely nothing
2 changes. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: So item 2: "To confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting
4 of Wicklow County Council held on Monday, 7th September 2026." Can I have a
5 proposer, please? Councillor Snell. A seconder? Councillor Whelan. Thank you.

6
7 Item 3: "To consider the disposal of 0.114 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of
8 Killincarrig, Greystones, County Wicklow, being the property known as 10 Mill
9 Road, Killincarrig, Greystones, County Wicklow, A63 DH76, to Gareth O'Sullivan
10 and Danielle O'Sullivan having their address at 3 Castlefield Terrace, Killincarrig,
11 Greystones, County Wicklow, by way of auction/private treaty conditions." Can I
12 have a proposer please? Okay. Councillor Duddy. And seconder? Councillor
13 Stokes. Agreed? (Agreed.)

14
15 I am just going to let people clear out. One minute.

16
17 Okay. Item 4: "To consider the disposal of 1.40 acres or thereabouts in the
18 townland of Corballis Upper, Rathdrum, County Wicklow being the property known
19 as Site I0A, Avondale Business Park, Corballis, Rathdrum, County Wicklow to
20 Derek Stafford t/a DS MetalWorx Ltd, Hartes Cottage, Ballynattin, Arklow, County
21 Wicklow by way of a 999-year lease." Can I have a proposer, please? Councillor
22 Kennedy. And a seconder? Councillor Bourke. Thank you. Agreed? (Agreed.)

23
24 Item 5: "To consider the disposal of 0.0381 hectares or thereabouts in the townland
25 of Knockanrahan Upper TD being the property known as 98 Fernhill, Arklow to
26 Helen Greene." Can I have a proposer, please? Councillor Bourke. Secunder?
27 Councillor Fitzgerald. It is sometimes hard to see councillor. Did you want to come
28 in there? Councillor Fitzgerald, would like to speak? Okay. Agreed? (Agreed.)

29
30 Item 6: "To consider the disposal of 0.014 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of
31 Blessington TD being the property known as 15 Rockypool Crescent, Blessington,
32 County Wicklow to Bridget Cullen, Mary hectares, Edward Lennon, Patrick Lennon
33 and Margaret Lismore." Can I have a proposer, please? Councillor Glennon. And
34 Councillor O'Neill. Agreed? (Agreed.)

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Item 7: "To consider the disposal of 0.0536 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of Little Bray TD being the property known as 35 Ledwidge Crescent to Noel Dodd." Can I have a proposer? Councillor Whelan and seconded by Councillor Neary. Agreed? Councillor Behan, you would like to come in there?

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I was going to propose it so I'm obviously agreeing to it. How long does it take for the actual disposal to happen after we made the vote today? Because I think there's a time factor for the family. Like, what is the period of time afterwards, after today, that we expect it to be brought into effect? Thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: We expedite them as quickly as possible but if you have a particular concern in that case let me know, I will pass them on to the law agent so we can expedite it.

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Item number 8: "To ratify the appointment of Councillor Jason Ward to the Bray Local Drugs Task Force." Can I have a proposer, please? Councillor Neary. And a seconder? Councillor Glennon. Agreed? (Agreed.) Oh, and do you agree, Councillor Ward? Are you happy to take the position? Councillor Ward, are you happy to take the position?

COUNCILLOR WARD: Yes, sorry.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Item 9: "To ratify the appointment of Councillor Graham Richmond to the East Coast Regional Drugs Task Force." Can I have a proposer, please? Councillor Dunne and Councillor Whelan. Agreed? (Agreed.) Also can I ask Councillor Richmond if he's happy to take that position? Are you happy to take that? Yeah.

Item number 10: "To approve in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, a temporary overdraft accommodation of €20 million for the financial year ending 31st December 2027."

MR GLEESON: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. This is a process we go through every year. It should be fairly straightforward. We look for a temporary overdraft facility of 20 million. That's in place to cover any eventualities where we might have timing delays with funding coming back from the Department between our initial payments. This would relate to I suppose major construction projects in the areas of housing

1 and roads. We haven't had to avail of our overdraft facility thank God to date but I
2 suppose it's always prudent to have that contingency in place. So in order to make
3 our submission to the Department we need approval from the Council members. So
4 we need a proposer and seconder, please.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. A proposer, please? Councillor O'Brien. And then
6 Councillor Snell. Agreed? (Agreed.)
7

8 Okay. Item 11: "To consider the variation of the basic rate of Local Property Tax
9 and the setting of the Local Adjustment Factor in accordance with the Finance (Local
10 Property Tax) Act 2012 (as amended) to apply for the period as specified from the
11 next local property tax liability date 1st November 2026." We are going to have a
12 presentation from Director Gleeson.

13 MR GLEESON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Good afternoon, members. As is
14 always the case this time of the year I'll just provide a presentation on the Local
15 Property Tax before we make a decision on next year's allocation and variation rate.
16

17 The items for discussion that we will go through today: I will first of all outline the
18 budgetary process for Local Authorities, the legislative background and the
19 particular change to legislation that has led to one change this year, what services
20 should LPT support; I will then go through the estimated income and expenditure for
21 next year including the LPT allocation for 2027, our financial position and the 2027
22 recommendation; then we will look at how the recommendation impacts on
23 householders and also the Local Authority itself, its budget and its ability to deliver
24 services; I'll then review the public consultation process and then conclude with a
25 summary of the decisions being put forward.
26

27 Next slide, Teresa.
28

29 So at this stage you should be well aware of the budgetary process. This is the first
30 stage, the LPT decision. Last year we had it in July due to the fact it was a
31 revaluation year. It's a non-revaluation year so the deadline set by the Revenue
32 Commissioners is the 15th of October. So we must make our decision and notify it
33 to Revenue before that date in order for them to make changes on their systems.
34

1 The Draft Budgetary Plan and General Municipal Allocations is the next step of the
2 process, and that's where it's sent out to the municipal districts. That'll be over
3 October and November. So the prescribed period is from the 1st of October to the
4 13th of November. So district administrators have been made aware of that and I am
5 sure will be having it on your agenda for the next meeting.

6
7 Finally, we have the adoption of the Annual Budget hopefully on the 23rd of
8 November of this year, and then following that we have the Schedule of Municipal
9 District Works which when we receive all our roads grants from the Department we
10 send out the full split by municipal district.

11
12 Next slide, Teresa.

13
14 Just a brief outline of the legislative background. As you know, the Local Authority
15 may as a reserve function vary the LPT rate every year, and as per the regulations
16 before deciding on whether or not to vary that rate we have to take into account a
17 number of issues, including the Council's estimation of income and expenditure, the
18 financial position of the Local Authority, the financial effect of the proposed rate on
19 individuals, and Wicklow County Council's budget and service delivery plans, and
20 also take account of the feedback received from the public consultation.

21
22 Just to note the Finance Act 2025 has now been enacted and that will allow for an
23 upward variation to 25% while keeping the downward variation to minus 15. 2027 is
24 the first time that this change will be brought into effect, and the reason being that a
25 vast number of Local Authorities were already at the maximum of 15% so had no
26 scope to generate additional funding for their Council. Approximately I think 22 of
27 the 31 Local Authorities are currently at 15%.

28
29 Next slide, Teresa.

30
31 A lot of councillors asking and they're telling me that a lot of their constituents ask
32 what does the LPT go towards. Well, basically 50% of our funding is provided by
33 the Government. The remainder has to be generated by ourselves. The two main
34 sources of funding are LPT and commercial rates. So where we have to provide our

1 own self-funding to services that's where your LPT goes. Regional and local roads
2 maintenance, we get 16 million in Government grants but we also put in 5 million of
3 our own self funds. Public lighting repairs, playground repairs, street cleaning,
4 recycling operations, maintenance, parks and open spaces, library services, fire
5 services, community grants, Arts programmes and leisure operations, which would
6 include the Coral leisure centres in Arklow and Wicklow, economic development
7 and tourism initiatives, harbour operations, climate change and energy reduction
8 measures, and also the municipal district discretionary funding. So they are the
9 services that are supported by your LPT.

10
11 I suppose on the flip side, if we do not get -- as outlined in the report that was
12 circulated on Wednesday, if we don't get an increase in LPT these are the specific
13 areas that we will have to go back and look at for 2027 unfortunately.

14
15 Next slide, please, Teresa.

16
17 As was said already, outside of Government grants the main sources of funding for
18 Local Authorities are LPT and commercial rates. So you might ask why are we
19 coming back looking for LPT this year, and to give a brief overview of that. We got
20 our circular from the Department a couple of weeks ago that stated the LPT
21 allocation for 2026 had been calculated and there would be no increase not only to
22 Wicklow County Council but any Local Authority. So there's no increase in any
23 Local Authority's LPT allocation for 2027. And just to put that in comparison to last
24 year, we got a 4.5 million increase. You will recall that baselines were increased and
25 we also got some buoyancy. So there is a big gap between what we got last year and
26 what we're receiving this year. Protected increase for commercial rates for 2027 is
27 €100,000. When we compare that to last year we got buoyancy of €900,000. The
28 reason for that being was that there was a backlog of applications with Tailte Éireann
29 and they cleared a significant number of them. So we got a good bounce last year.

30
31 So in total, these two sources of funding, in last year's budget, or 2026 budget,
32 provided an extra €5.4 million to the Council budget. This year the same two
33 sources are only providing an extra €100,000. So that is a massive difference of €5.3
34 million. Yet at the same time while our income is stagnant our costs are still

1 increasing, hence the reason why we need to raise funds ourselves in order to close
2 that projected funding gap.

3
4 Next slide, Teresa.

5
6 While the allocation isn't changing for 2027 I will still go through the numbers. Our
7 gross allocation is €23.5 million, unchanged from last year. The baseline amount is
8 €13.1. So that's the minimum level of funding that we receive. The surplus amount
9 is €10.3 million, what we take the baseline off. And then the way the model works is
10 the amount of the surplus that we are allowed keep within the revenue budget is €7.3
11 million. That's calculated, a formula that the Department have of 31% of the gross
12 income of 23 and a half, so that gives the €7.3. When that's added to our baseline of
13 €13.1 it gives us a total amount of €20.4 million of discretionary LPT funding for
14 2027. That excludes any variation rate increase. So the 6% that we have had for the
15 last number of years which brings in €1.4 million that still has to be added. Also the
16 amount taken away from the surplus is earmarked for self-funding housing services.

17
18 As the regulations say we have to give consideration to income and expenditure.
19 The slide there shows obviously our balance budget last year -- sorry, this year,
20 2026. €184 million income matching expenditure. Currently we have expenditure
21 projections of just over €201,000, and income of €198,000. So there's -- €198
22 million, sorry. So there's a gap of €3.6 million. I have also included a column to the
23 far right to cover the financial periods 2028 and 2029. The reason I have included
24 that is it allows the members to set a rate for the remaining lifetime of the Council if
25 they should so wish, which covers '27 and '29.

26
27 Next slide, Teresa. Thank you.

28
29 So the gap of 3.6 that we're currently facing of non-discretionary costs broken down.
30 Net pay increases, we have increments which comes to over €600,000. We have
31 staff of over 900 people, they're due increments on an annual basis. The National
32 Pay Agreement which still has to be agreed but will be, as you know every year we
33 only get 85% Government funding to offset that cost so we have to provide 15%
34 ourselves from our own resources. Uisce Eireann stranded costs, that has to do with

1 additional staff that we have as part of the transition from Water Services staff
2 transitioning from Uisce Eireann back to Wicklow County Council. As you are well
3 aware, every member of the Water Services was given the option of transferring to
4 Uisce Eireann or staying in Wicklow County Council. This has been a long process
5 over the last couple of years. HR have worked very hard to identify vacancies within
6 Wicklow County Council that Water Services staff can move into. However, due to
7 the unique nature of some water grades similar roles weren't identified within the
8 Council and weren't vacant, so we've had to create nine new extra posts, and that is a
9 figure of €678,000. A funding application has gone to the Department on behalf of
10 the sector and obviously this will apply to not only Wicklow County Council but a
11 number of other Local Authorities in relation to funding but no agreement has been
12 reached in relation to funding to date.

13
14 Our ongoing rollout of Microsoft 365 and our financial management upgrade along
15 with security costs will cost us another €400,000 next year. Pensions, as you know,
16 there's always an additional cost every year. People retire, they go on our pension
17 payroll the following year. That's going to cost us another €300,000. We've recently
18 received notification from IPB that our insurance premium will increase by 6%, and
19 that's just shy of €200,000. And just to be aware, that is not to do with increased
20 claims, it's just to do with the costs of claims has increased. Drink water monitoring,
21 €105,000. Under EU regulations we must monitor water quality on a regular basis
22 and this cost is do with our statutory requirement for additional testing in that area.
23 And other costs, just under €900,000. That's a conservative estimate in relation to
24 inflation that we will encounter in the budget next year. 3.4% is the inflation rate
25 over the last 12 months, and unfortunately Local Authorities like everyone else,
26 every other business, we are not immune to inflation and our costs go up
27 year-on-year.

28
29 The overall financial position of Wicklow County Council. We have a revenue
30 surplus of €50,000 at the end of 2025. You will be aware we have chipped away at
31 our deficit over the last number of years and we're now in surplus. Our ratio of
32 current assets to current liabilities is 3:1, and the ratio of loans payable to revenue
33 income is 30%. So overall we're in a stable financial position.

34

1 So taking into account all of those items, the decision taken here today allows for the
2 members to vary the LPT rate positive up by 25% or down 15%. And also, the
3 members can decide to set the rate for one year or more than one year and up to three
4 years which is the remaining lifetime of the Council.

5
6 So the recommendation of the Executive is to increase the rate from 6% up to 15%.
7 Given that we're already at 6%, this is a real increase of 9%. We're proposing to
8 keep the 6% earmarked for MD discretionary funding, that's €1.4 million, and the
9 incremental increase of 9% generates an extra €2.1 million, and that will cover the
10 additional payroll inflation and other cost increases that I have outlined earlier. It is
11 also recommended that in this case to set the rate for a three-year period, 2027-2029.

12
13 The effect on a liable person. If there's a no-change scenario, as in the retention of
14 the 6% rate, there's no additional increases to rates paid by householders in 2026.
15 However, if the 6% variation was not retained the saving per household is only
16 ranging from €5.70 to €37.10 for over 91% of the households which are in bands 1 to
17 6, and that equates to an average of €17.50 per annum. However, this would result
18 in a loss of €1.4 million to Wicklow County Council. So the result of that would be
19 that the discretionary fund would be removed from budget 2027.

20
21 There's a number of different tables in the report that issued Wednesday, 15%, 6%,
22 however what I am going to focus on is the 9% impact because that's the
23 recommendation, what we're proposing to increase incrementally. 91% -- over 91%
24 of properties in Wicklow are valued in the first six bands, and a 9% variation across
25 these six bands ranges from €8.55 to €55.65 per annum. And taking into account the
26 split of households across those particular bands the average increase would be
27 €24.50 per annum which is less than 50 cent per week. So a very limited increase.
28 Also only 1.4% of households would have to pay more than €100,000 -- or €100,
29 sorry, apologies, per annum if it was increased to 15%, and that would only be over
30 bands 12 and upwards. The weighted average across all bands there is €34 per
31 annum which equates to 65 cent per week. So still represents a very limited increase.
32 Also just to note that Wicklow County Council and the approved housing bodies pay
33 the LPT charges in respect of old or social housing tenants. So there's no impact on
34 tenants.

1
2 Go to the next one as well, Teresa. Thanks.
3

4 So the impact on the Wicklow County Council revenue budget. 15% variation
5 provides €3.5 million to the budget. The existing rate of 6% will continue to support
6 the municipal districts' discretionary fund for an amount of €1.4 million. How that's
7 split out will remain the same. Bray will receive €352,000 and the other four MDs
8 will receive €264,000 each. So the 9% incremental increase will generate €2.1
9 million of new funding, and that will help us balance the budget and avoid making
10 cuts to our existing services.
11

12 Just to review the public consultation that took place. It ran from 2nd September to
13 1st October. We received a total of ten submissions, seven via the consultation hub
14 and three by email. One requested an increase to the LPT rate, seven requested a
15 decrease and two requested no change at all.
16

17 So to summarise my presentation, I suppose why are we here? As I have said
18 already, the LPT and the commercial rates buoyancy of €100,000 is far and away
19 less than what we received last year, which was €5.4 million, so that places us under
20 extreme pressure to balance our budget. We are proposing to increase the rate from
21 6% up to 15%, which generates an extra €2.1 million. If we were at 15% it would
22 also mean we are in line with the vast majority of other Local Authorities. As I said,
23 22 of the 31 Local Authorities are currently at 15%. We are proposing to retain the
24 6%, which equates to €1.4 million, for the municipal district discretionary funding,
25 and the 9% will be to cover inflationary costs and balance the budget.
26

27 As I have said, we feel this is a limited increase to householder bills. And I am not
28 down-playing the cost of living challenges out there but it is a very small increase.
29 We're also recommending to set the rate for the remaining lifetime of the Council,
30 which is a three-year period, 2027-2029. And finally, I suppose to give you full
31 information, the alternative to not increasing our LPT is reducing our existing
32 services, and that list of services that I outlined in my earlier slides are the areas we'll
33 have to look at, or there can be a substantial increase to our commercial rates. I
34 suppose for information, if we were to fill that funding gap with commercial rates we

1 would have to increase it by 11%.

2

3 So they're the options to the members here today. I know it is not a particularly easy
4 thing to do but in order to keep our services at the level they're currently at we do
5 need an increase in our Local Property Tax for 2027. Thank you.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Bourke.

7 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thanks very much,
8 Brian, for your presentation. You're asking for a very large increase there of 15%,
9 Brian, and I'd like to propose that we adjourn for ten to 15 minutes just for to us
10 consider our position in light of the figures that you have put up, if you would agree
11 to that, Cathaoirleach.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder, please?

13 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Can I second that? I'm okay with that if you -- yeah.
14 Agreed? (Agreed.)

15 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: This man has got great chutzpah I'll give him that, I'll
16 give him that, coming along and saying I want a 15% increase. And for those who
17 vote for the 6% increase which he acknowledged is always an increase of 6% what
18 he's telling you now is that if you go from the 6% to the 15% you add another 9%,
19 you won't even be able to say you got it for your local area. He's going to bring that
20 back into the general funding. That's point number one. Point number two: No
21 reference to all the additional houses that are going to come on stream during the
22 next year that will qualify to pay the property tax, not one word about that. Thirdly,
23 he says he's not discounting the cost of living crisis but actually he is because that is
24 what is happening for people. We've already seen where the Chief Executive is
25 going to put huge increases and burdens on people who can least afford it in the
26 Local Authority sector. Now he's going to do an additional 15% on householders
27 who are struggling also with cost of living rises in fuel and food and everything else.
28 To my mind it is outrageous to even be looking for 6% never mind 15%. And then
29 the icing on the cake is that not alone does he want you to do it this year he wants
30 you to do it for the next three years so he doesn't have to go to the bother of coming
31 back and explaining this anymore. Outrageous. And I hope when Fine Gael and
32 Fianna Fáil and everyone else meets they will consider the other side of our story
33 which is that our constituents are suffering at the moment, and even if you went to
34 the extra 15% the constituents are not going to see any difference. Thanks,

1 Cathaoirleach. I just wanted to get that said.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I just check, is yours comments as well? Okay, perfect.
3 Councillor Leonard.

4 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you. I just want some clarifications. The
5 breakdown of income of derelict properties and vacant units, does that come in as
6 part of the revenue? I know you mentioned commercial rates being one of the forms
7 of revenue, and if there is a quantity or an amount on that. Then also, just the 900
8 staff in Wicklow County Council what percentage of those are on-the-ground ground
9 staff? Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor O'Toole.

11 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Some interesting figures there
12 all right. 2.1 million for payroll. Another thing that was mentioned, discretionary
13 fund being removed from local districts. I think Management is completely out of
14 touch with what is going on on the ground here. There's increases on every single
15 thing. Even people with their cars for NCTs have gone up, pre-tests have gone up,
16 fuel and maintenance of a car has gone up. Everything on a vehicle just to get
17 around. There's no public infrastructure for travel within the county. There's so
18 many things lacking. People are resorting to -- There's necessity for these things.
19 Like the last thing people need is an additional burden on them, and that's what this
20 is. This is another burden. Like, if anything, management need to be looking at this
21 and reducing it. He was talking about increases around about 22 councils, there's
22 other councils that have done reductions. We should be aligning with those councils
23 to be looking after the people, the constituents within those councils. Again with
24 these threats of lack of service, lack of this, lack of that, if we don't abide by this.
25 This is absolutely shocking. It is absolutely shocking and it is disgraceful. Like
26 always, we'll be voting against this. And I'd actually be calling on the Chief
27 Executive and Management to be reducing it by 15%. Thank you.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Brien.

29 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thank you to Brian for
30 the presentation. We go on about our extra powers and how they're cut and all that,
31 we have one difficult decision a year and this is the response we get. But I'm willing
32 to entertain those willing to cut the LPT this year so I am. But while we adjourn the
33 meeting, while we have those few minutes could those councillors come back in here
34 or take that bit of time in the few minutes to tell us where they're going to cut.

1 Because there will be cuts. It's as simple as that. What I would ask is that the
2 councillors -- not throw it back on Brian, not throw it back on the Executive, the
3 councillors that are proposing that we reduce the LPT, or not increase it, can they
4 come back in here in ten or 15 minutes and tell me where they're going to cut, and
5 then I'll assess that and I'll ask them. I will support you if there's no cuts but I am
6 going to put it back on the councillors this year. Normally I come in and say I'm
7 going to hold it or increase it but I'm willing to reduce it this year if the councillors
8 tell me where the cuts are going to be, and then I will see it and make an informed
9 decision on it then. Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dunne.

11 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Just for clarification, Councillor Behan said Fine Gael
12 and Fianna Fáil. We're not part of the grouping that controls the Council in here. He
13 should realise that. Thank you.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Stokes.

15 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and I'd like to thank Director
16 Brian Gleeson for the presentation. It outlined a very serious situation in relation to
17 our finances, and I certainly am looking at that very carefully in a responsible
18 manner. I just worry that we would end up having to cut significant services so I am
19 going to take the adjournment to think about that very carefully. Thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.

21 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Just with the greatest of respect to Councillor O'Brien and
22 his predecessors on the Council from the Labour Party, this is not a budget meeting.
23 This is setting the rate of property tax, then the officials go back and decide to work
24 whatever it is into the budget. So nobody, I don't expect anybody to be coming up
25 with specific cuts at a meeting to set a rate. You decide on what rate you think is
26 most appropriate and you take the consequences whatever that may be. The decision
27 on what's cut or not cut, what's spent or not spent, is for the budget, not for the
28 property tax meeting. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Brien.

30 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And Councillor Behan
31 knows the respect I have for him, this is politics, it's not personal. There's
32 consequences to today's decision so there is and it is to do with the budget. So again,
33 rather than going out looking for headlines, rather than coming in here with their big
34 statements and going on social media -- Hang on, I didn't interrupt you. I didn't

1 interrupt you. You don't interrupt me. Let me talk.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have order, please?

3 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Joe, you're preaching here to the converted. I know
4 exactly what you are up to.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think we have got to the point now --

6 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Cathaoirleach, there was a proposal made to cut the rate
7 and I want to know where these councillors are going to find the money for services.
8 No, you haven't. You have put the blame back on the Executive as usual for you --

9 MS GILLESPIE: Members, please, with respect.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think this is the time I think we need to take the
11 adjournment. We need to take some of the heat out of this and have a chance to
12 think and discuss, so I request that we have a 15-minute adjournment. Okay. Thank
13 you.

14

15 (Short adjournment.)

16

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, everyone, we'll get back to business. Thanks for your
18 patience. I am going to pass to Rachel for roll call.

19 MS GILLESPIE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. We will just take a roll call now as we
20 have returned from the adjournment. Councillor Danny Alvey?

21 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.

22 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Mark Barry?

23 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.

24 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Joe Behan?

25 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Present.

26 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

27 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.

28 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

29 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.

30 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Avril Cronin? Not present. Councillor Erika
31 Doyle?

32 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Present.

33 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Malachai Duddy?

34 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Anseo.

- 1 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Gail Dunne?
- 2 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Present.
- 3 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?
- 4 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Present.
- 5 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Orla Finn? Not present. Councillor Pat
- 6 Fitzgerald?
- 7 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.
- 8 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Tom Fortune? Not present. Councillor Patsy
- 9 Glennon?
- 10 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Present.
- 11 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
- 12 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Present.
- 13 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 14 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Present.
- 15 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 16 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Present.
- 17 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 18 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Present.
- 19 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 20 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Present.
- 21 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Miriam Murphy?
- 22 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Present.
- 23 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Ian Neary?
- 24 COUNCILLOR NEARY: Present.
- 25 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 26 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Present.
- 27 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Gerry O'Neill?
- 28 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Anseo.
- 29 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 30 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Anseo.
- 31 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 32 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Present.
- 33 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Lourda Scott? Not present. She's en route I
- 34 understand. Councillor John Snell?

1 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Present.

2 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Peter Stapleton?

3 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Present.

4 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Stephen Stokes?

5 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Present.

6 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor John Ward?

7 COUNCILLOR WARD: Here.

8 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Ned Whelan?

9 COUNCILLOR WHELAN: Present.

10 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Present.

12 MS GILLESPIE: Councillor Scott, present.

13 MR GLEESON: I will just come in with a few of the clarifications on some of the
14 points made before the adjournment. In relation to I suppose the suggestion that we
15 would be getting extra buoyancy for our LPT due to extra properties, that has been
16 confirmed by the Department that there are no increases -- I have the circular here if
17 everyone wants to look at it -- that there will be no increases to our LPT allocations
18 for next year. The reason being that last year the Revenue Commissioners estimated
19 buoyancy of I think €626 million. Basically they're looking like they're €20 million
20 behind in collections. So to avoid having to cut LPT allocations for 2027 the
21 Department got a commitment from DEPR to allow them to stay unchanged and that
22 the issue would be reviewed for 2028. So there are no increases to any Local
23 Property Tax allocations for any Local Authority in 2027.

24

25 With regard to the derelict site, the vacant property site. The vacant priority site
26 ended in 2024. The derelict levy was -- It's a capital issue, capital account issue
27 rather than a revenue account issue, so it doesn't impact on this conversation, but to
28 note that the new derelict tax will be collected by the Revenue Commissioners from
29 2027 onwards. So it won't be a matter for the Local Authority from 2027 onwards.
30 In relation to staffing, outdoor staffing, I will ask Helen maybe to come in in a
31 moment. And just in relation to Councillor O'Toole, just to say I'm not making any
32 threats, councillor. I'm just actually informing everyone so they can make an
33 informed decision. The reality is our costs do increase every year like everyone
34 else's and we have to generate money to cover our costs. You're proposing 15% of a

1 reduction. That would be in real terms a 21% reduction because we're already at 6%.
2 So the impact that would have on the budget and the sort of cuts we would be
3 looking at is €8.5 million because the 15% reduction would take €5 million out of
4 the budget from where it is at at the moment and then we have the funding gap of
5 €3.6 million. So that is €8.5 million of cuts that would have to be applied. And
6 that's the reality unfortunately.

7

8 So, Helen, if you wouldn't mind if you could come in with the stats on the outdoor
9 workers.

10 MS PURCELL: Yeah. The percentages in relation to staff are: 57% are
11 administrative and professional, 31% are outdoor and 12% are firefighters. Thanks.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor Stapleton.

13 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, look, Brian,
14 thanks for the presentation and thanks for the information you followed up with
15 there. It's really not an easy message to hear that essentially we're requiring people
16 to pay an increase on their local base rate property tax just for things to stay the same
17 but unfortunately that is just the reality of the message you are portraying and I hear
18 it loud and clear. It's also the reality that I accept that any increase to the variation
19 will have a direct impact on people. People who are struggling out there, everyone I
20 think in this chamber acknowledges that people are under pressure, but I do not
21 believe it's the job of county councillors to provide for cost of living packages. I
22 think it's the provide of county councillors to provide for this county. And I think
23 that if we were to leave this chamber today without providing for any increase to the
24 variation we would be doing our county a huge disservice, and as such, I think what
25 a reasonable place given that yes people will feel this but I think the burden of not
26 putting on a positive variation to the base rate would leave our county in a worse off
27 position, so I would like to propose a 10% positive adjustment variation to the base
28 rate, and I propose that we lock that in for the remainder of this Council's terms.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Stokes.

30 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to second
31 Councillor Stapleton's proposal. It's no easy feat in the current challenges that we
32 have both globally, nationally and locally, and I take this responsibility very
33 seriously because I am very concerned about the potential shortfall that we are
34 facing. I think it is absolutely vital that we continue to provide the level of services

1 or certainly as best we can to the people of County Wicklow. I mean I meet with
2 people every day that are completely reliant on what Wicklow County Council does,
3 and for me it would be very difficult to see those services, not all necessarily but see
4 reductions to those services, and I think it is a very serious matter that, you know, I
5 take with great responsibility. And while it is not easy and I accept that there are a
6 lot of challenges for people within the community I certainly strongly believe we
7 have to do everything we can to support our services especially for those that are
8 most vulnerable in our communities. That's why I will be supporting this proposal.
9 Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dunne.

11 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, obviously we weren't
12 involved in the negotiations so I am proposing a 10-minute recess so we can talk to
13 Brian Gleeson about what he's proposing and that we need to talk to him as well.
14 Thank you.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: You need a seconder for that. Okay. Councillor Duddy.

16 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Cathaoirleach, I am very happy to second that on
17 behalf --

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed? (Agreed.)

19 MS PURCELL: If we could remind the members the meetings finishes at 5 today.
20 There is no extension. Just to be careful of time. Thank you.

21

22 (Short adjournment.)

23

24 MS GILLESPIE: I will take a further roll call. Councillor Danny Alvey?

25 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.

26 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Mark Barry?

27 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.

28 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Joe Behan?

29 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Present.

30 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

31 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.

32 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

33 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.

34 MS GILLESPIE: Councillor Avril Cronin? Not present. Councillor Erika Doyle?

- 1 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Present.
- 2 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Malachai Duddy?
- 3 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Anseo.
- 4 MS GILLESPIE: Anseo. Councillor Gail Dunne?
- 5 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Here.
- 6 MS GILLESPIE: Here. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin? Not present.
- 7 Apologies from Councillor Orla Finn. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?
- 8 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.
- 9 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Tom Fortune? Not present. Councillor Patsy
- 10 Glennon?
- 11 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Present.
- 12 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
- 13 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Here.
- 14 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Shane Langrell present. Thank you.
- 15 Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 16 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Here.
- 17 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 18 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Present.
- 19 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Sorry, I'm here as well, Rachel.
- 20 MS GILLESPIE: Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin present. Thank you.
- 21 Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 22 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Present.
- 23 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Miriam Murphy?
- 24 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Sorry Rachel, we're not hearing you.
- 25 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: The signal is very, very poor.
- 26 MS GILLESPIE: Councillor Murphy, can you hear me now?
- 27 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Yeah, we can hear you now.
- 28 MS GILLESPIE: Councillor Miriam Murphy present? Councillor Ian Neary?
- 29 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Present, very much.
- 30 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Did you get me, Rachel?
- 31 MS GILLESPIE: Yes, Councillor Fenelon Gaskin, yes, and Councillor Langrell.
- 32 COUNCILLOR NEARY: Present.
- 33 MS GILLESPIE: Ian Neary present. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 34 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Present.

1 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Gerry O'Neill?

2 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Anseo.

3 MS GILLESPIE: Anseo. Councillor Warren O'Toole?

4 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Anseo.

5 MS GILLESPIE: Anseo. Councillor Graham Richmond?

6 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Present.

7 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Lourda Scott?

8 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Here.

9 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor John Snell?

10 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Present.

11 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Peter Stapleton?

12 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Here.

13 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Stephen Stokes?

14 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Here.

15 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor John Ward?

16 COUNCILLOR WARD: Here.

17 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Ned Whelan?

18 COUNCILLOR WHELAN: Present.

19 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Present.

21 MS GILLESPIE: Present. Thank you. Now, as we stand at the moment we have a
22 proposal in the name of Councillor Stapleton, seconded by Councillor Stephen
23 Stokes: "In accordance with the provisions of section 20 of the Finance Local
24 Property Act 2012, as amended, that the base rate of LPT shall stand varied upwards
25 by 10% for three years, 2027-2029, representing the remaining lifetime of the
26 Council in respect of the relevant residential properties situated in the administrative
27 area of Wicklow County Council." Councillor Danny Alvey? Sorry.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.

29 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: We didn't get time to discuss it, Cathaoirleach, I want to
30 discuss it for a minute. First of all, can it be clarified that although the increase is
31 going to be 10%, 4% of that 10% is going to be subsumed back into the general
32 budget and the people in the municipal districts won't see the benefit of that as
33 discretionary funds? I think I know the answer to that but I'd like to hear it.
34 Secondly, to the people who are proposing and seconding this, why are you

1 suggesting or proposing that this should be for the next three years? What is the
2 logic of imposing this increase for three years when you don't know what position
3 we will be in in a year's time? Through the Chair, I would be interested to hear the
4 proposers' view on that or what is their reasoning behind that, Cathaoirleach.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to let Councillor Scott in. Councillor Scott.

6 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yeah, thank you. I had a similar question actually to
7 Councillor Behan. I have concerns about fixing this for three years as we don't know
8 what the situation will be in anyone's situation, whether it be the Council, the country
9 or people's individual pocket in three years' time, so I would have reservations about
10 fixing for three years. Again, I would like clarity, if it is fixed 10% for three years
11 do we have the option to come back and change that next year or the year after?
12 And, is there an option to get additional discretionary for use at the councillors' own
13 discretionary for use in their own municipals? Thank you.

14 MR GLEESON: Very quickly I will say, yes, the proposal is 10%. The 6% will be
15 retained for municipal district discretionary funding and the 4% will go towards
16 balancing the budget. If it is set for three years, you do have the option at any stage
17 in the process to go back and revisit it. So if you wanted to go back next year you
18 can have a LPT meeting. That doesn't tie you up here if you agree to it. Okay.
19 Thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to let Councillor Snell in, and then I will let
21 Councillor Stapleton in.

22 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. I think it would be a very
23 dangerous thing to be proposing to implement this for a three-year period in the
24 current climate when we don't know in regards to the stability of financial packages
25 that will be made available to this Council are be reduced. We were sitting in a
26 different position 12 months ago where the Local Property Tax was being proposed
27 that there would be no increase and today we hear that it was a 6% increase, and yet
28 local media presented it as no increase. Now it's being proposed as a 6% increase
29 plus the 4%, and the 4% really is only going to fill the void that is going to be left
30 from Central Government. I would be suggesting that people here with political
31 clout should be talking to their senior ministers to see why is there a void in the
32 funding to Wicklow County Council. I think taking the decision is tying the hands
33 of future councillors here. We see that there's councillors changing here all the time
34 in regards to not seeing out their current term, and you know I just think that it

1 wouldn't be very prudent of us to come along and tie everyone down for three years.
2 And I know what the Head of Finance is saying; you can come back and revisit this.
3 The likelihood of this being put on the agenda is slim to none and therefore it should
4 always be on the agenda every year. I think it would be bad policy to pass that three
5 years and I'd ask the proposers to have a look at that and maybe revert back to the
6 type that it should be a yearly. Every other Local Authority would be looking at it
7 on a yearly basis and I don't see why we're any different. And while we had a
8 discussion there earlier in regards to people's local rents, I myself was in visiting an
9 86-year-old woman in hospital yesterday evening, and she actually raised this issue
10 in regards to the Local Property Tax. And we say it can be deferred but her response
11 was that she didn't want her family members to have the burden of trying to solve
12 that issue after she's deceased. It's the most unfair tax. Unfortunately it's something
13 that we have on the table. There's no way around it but -- sorry. Are you cutting me
14 off? No.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: No. I am going to put you back on.

16 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Sorry. Yeah, so I won't be supporting the three years, and
17 I want to hear more in regards to that. And in regards to going over the 5 o'clock
18 deadline, I think we should be rescheduling this meeting to give more dialogue. We
19 haven't had an opportunity to talk to the Head of Finance as independent councillors.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: You have got to put -- I have to let you in.

21 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, sorry, Cathaoirleach. I'll be very brief. That in
22 itself is very disrespectful, and it's presenting a two-tier system within this Local
23 Authority. There's no need for it. My constituents pay Local Property Tax the same
24 as yours, irrespective of what the decision is here today, and we shouldn't be driving
25 a wedge between the 32 members. Give us all the information, let us hear everyone's
26 point of view, and move on. The decision will be made. But I don't think we should
27 tie ourselves down to three years. And I think we should have a proper debate. It's
28 very, very rushed.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, sorry. You have had over the time now. So as per the
30 standing orders, item number 44, I have the permission to grant extra time for this
31 meeting, so I am going to grant that we continue the discussion if everyone is in
32 agreement. According to the standing orders we can continue. You don't want to
33 continue the meeting today?

34 MS O'GORMAN: Just to be really clear, any members of staff that are a member of

1 a union are welcome to leave the meeting now because it is outside of the normal
2 working hours. I myself can continue, but members of staff here that are members of
3 unions and are operating under their work to rule are entitled to leave the meeting
4 now if they want to do so.

5 MS PURCELL: Yeah, a request for an extension of the meeting is required in
6 accordance with standing orders before 4:30, but there is standing order number 44:
7 "Matters not covered by standing orders: The Cathaoirleach shall have power to deal
8 with any matter not covered by standing orders." And we're taking that that the
9 Cathaoirleach can extend the meeting as the item has already commenced.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: But it is also fine, if you don't want to continue the meeting
11 today I have no issue with that. I just didn't want to cut people off mid-flow. Like
12 we can have a vote on it if you want.

13 MS O'GORMAN: By the 15th of October. So if there's a proposal to suspend the
14 meeting and have it again, you can propose it and second it and vote on that, and
15 then if that vote carries all well and good, if that vote fails we proceed with the vote.
16 No, a suspension to the meeting that has to be I suppose considered.

17 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: It was made quite clear by Helen, the director, acting
18 director, that no extension was proposed. Councillor Snell made a very good point
19 which is there's been very little consultation with maybe just less than half the
20 members of the Council. Additional information was provided to other members. I
21 have asked a question with regard to the extension, Councillor Snell has backed that
22 up. We need proper time to discuss that as well, with respect. And I also firmly
23 believe that anybody affected by the work to rule, if they're members of the union
24 they should be free to go. I fully agree with the Chief Executive on that. So
25 realistically I think it has to be put back to another date. Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am trying to go through the order but in fairness Councillor
27 Behan was on. But you are doing exactly the same thing. Yeah.

28 MS O'GORMAN: Members, if it is helpful, there's been a proposal to suspend the
29 meeting and have a separate meeting for the LPT before the 15th of October, if it is
30 helpful can we take a vote on that matter? If that matter, that motion passes the
31 meeting is over. My secondary, my follow-up to that, if the motion is defeated and
32 the meeting continues, the Cathaoirleach has the authority to consider matters that
33 aren't covered in standing orders, and I would propose with your agreement that we
34 proceed with the vote or with the proposal as put forward by Councillor Stapleton.

1 But we will take the suspension first.

2 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Just on a point of clarification, and I appreciate the Chief
3 Executive is trying to be fair to everybody but the motion is defeated I would like the
4 opportunity for anybody who hasn't met the Head of Finance to have the opportunity
5 before you go ahead because not everybody has asked questions. So it's not a case of
6 just going straight to the vote. It's a very rushed thing, and this will have
7 consequences for everybody in County Wicklow. Everybody.

8 MS O'GORMAN: I mean we have had two adjournments to the meeting already to
9 consider, and there was an opportunity there for people to talk with staff as well at
10 that point. If the members are in agreement, will we proceed with the first, the
11 motion as proposed by Councillor Snell to stop the meeting and have another
12 meeting with the LPT? Now in bear in mind that will have to be, I'm going to say
13 next Monday, it can't be any later be that to give time for notice.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am just letting you in.

15 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Cathaoirleach, go raibh mile maith agat. I just think
16 we're in an intolerable situation now where we're distinguishing between union
17 members and non-union members in relation to employees of the Council, and I
18 think out of solidarity with the Council staff I think for the Council meeting to even
19 continue to this point is really unacceptable. I just want to voice my support for
20 those workers who are involved in industrial action and I think by continuing with
21 the meeting we're undermining that demonstration of solidarity. Go raibh maith
22 agat.

23 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Look it, I think this is very unfair and it's put a lot of
24 pressure on -- You know, if it had have been suspended earlier on in the meeting I
25 could have made -- You know, I have somebody outside waiting in the car and I
26 have to go now to an appointment. So it's put a lot of pressure -- And there's been no
27 proper speaking time on this, it has just compounded the situation and I would be in
28 favour for postponing the meeting. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Stapleton, do you want to come in or do you want
30 to go to the vote? Okay.

31 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Yeah, I will come in quickly. Essentially I don't
32 feel it is tying our hands for the next two or three years. I just think it is a very
33 reasonable base case assumption to assume that actually Council's costs aren't going
34 to go down over the next year or two. And of course as they've clarified if

1 circumstances change, if we all of a sudden get a big boost in funding then we can
2 come back and have a discussion then. But if things don't change I think you're
3 giving people fair warning, good signalling that their Local Property Tax is going to
4 be the same for the next two years, and I think that's a reasonable thing to do.

5 MS GILLESPIE: Just for clarity: Proposal by Councillor John Snell to suspend the
6 meeting and hold a special meeting, and Councillor Joe Behan is seconding that; is
7 that correct? Yes. Okay. I will proceed to a vote. Councillor Danny Alvey?

8 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Against.

9 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Mark Barry?

10 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Against.

11 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Joe Behan?

12 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: For.

13 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?

14 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: For.

15 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

16 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Against.

17 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Avril Cronin? Not present. Councillor Erika
18 Doyle?

19 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Against.

20 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Malachai Duddy?

21 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Tá.

22 MS GILLESPIE: Tá. Councillor Gail Dunne?

23 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: For.

24 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?

25 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: For.

26 MS GILLESPIE: Oh sorry, she is present. For. Councillor Orla Finn? Not present.
27 Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?

28 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: For.

29 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Tom Fortune? Not present. Councillor Patsy
30 Glennon?

31 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: For.

32 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Pat Kennedy?

33 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: For.

34 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Shane Langrell?

- 1 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Against.
- 2 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 3 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: For.
- 4 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 5 COUNCILLOR MAHON: For.
- 6 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 7 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: For.
- 8 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Miriam Murphy?
- 9 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Against.
- 10 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Ian Neary?
- 11 COUNCILLOR NEARY: For.
- 12 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 13 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Against.
- 14 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Gerry O'Neill?
- 15 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: For.
- 16 MS GILLESPIE: Sorry? For. Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 17 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: For.
- 18 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 19 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: For.
- 20 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Lourda Scott?
- 21 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: For.
- 22 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor John Snell?
- 23 COUNCILLOR SNELL: For.
- 24 MS GILLESPIE: For. Councillor Peter Stapleton?
- 25 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Against.
- 26 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Stephen Stokes?
- 27 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Against.
- 28 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor John Ward?
- 29 COUNCILLOR WARD: For.
- 30 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Ned Whelan?
- 31 COUNCILLOR WHELAN: Against.
- 32 MS GILLESPIE: Against. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?
- 33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Abstain.
- 34 MS GILLESPIE: Abstain. That is 18 for, 10 against, 3 not present and 1 abstaining.

1 Therefore the motion is carried. Thank you.

2 MS O'GORMAN: Just before the members rise, I am going to propose a meeting
3 date on Friday morning potentially for this. I am trying to fit it into the diary with
4 MD meetings and everything else and given the constraints of the industrial action as
5 well. So we will come back and revert to you with time. Obviously it'll be online
6 and otherwise. Thank you members for the patience. Just before we rise as well, if
7 you don't mind -- This Friday. The decision has to be made before the 15th October.
8 We have to work with the availability on it, members. Look, we'll come back to you
9 and we'll be reasonable. The decision has to be made before the 15th so can you
10 please try and work with us on that?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. The meeting is closed. Thank you.

12

13 (Meeting concluded at 5:13pm.)

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