

ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

ON

ON MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2023 AT 2:00 PM

STENOGRAPHER: Niamh Kelly-Leahy, RMR, MBIVR

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1 PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED ON MONDAY, 4TH DECEMBER 2023 AT
2 2:00PM, AS FOLLOWS:

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4 MS PURCELL: If you are having any issues remotely, you can contact myself or
5 Teresa and we will do what we can to get you back, and we will be keeping an eye on
6 it as we go through the meeting. Thank you very much. We'll start with the roll call.
7 Councillor Tommy Annesley.

8 COUNCILLOR ANNESLEY: Here.

9 MS PURCELL: Present. We've apologies from Councillor Mark Barry.
10 Councillor Joe Behan?

11 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Here.

12 MS PURCELL: Councillor Vincent Blake?

13 COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Here.

14 MS PURCELL: Councillor Sylvester Bourke.

15 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Here.

16 MS PURCELL: Councillor Melanie Corrigan.

17 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.

18 MS PURCELL: Councillor Avril Cronin?

19 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Present.

20 MS PURCELL: Councillor Shay Cullen.

21 COUNCILLOR CULLEN: Present.

22 MS PURCELL: Councillor Erika Doyle.

23 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Present.

24 MS PURCELL: Present. Anne Ferris.

25 COUNCILLOR FERRIS: Present.

26 MS PURCELL: Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?

27 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.

28 MS PURCELL: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Present.

30 MS PURCELL: Councillor Tom Fortune.

31 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Present.

32 MS PURCELL: Councillor Patsy Glennon.

33 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Present.

34 MS PURCELL: Councillor Mary Kavanagh?

1 COUNCILLOR KAVANAGH: Here.

2 MS PURCELL: Councillor Pat Kennedy.

3 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Present.

4 MS PURCELL: Councillor Pier Leonard.

5 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Present.

6 MS PURCELL: Councillor Derek Mitchell.

7 COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Here.

8 MS PURCELL: Councillor John Mullen?

9 COUNCILLOR MULLEN: Present.

10 MS PURCELL: Councillor Miriam Murphy?

11 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Present.

12 MS PURCELL: Councillor Dermot O'Brien?

13 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Anseo.

14 MS PURCELL: Councillor Paul O'Brien?

15 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Present.

16 MS PURCELL: Councillor Rory O'Connor?

17 COUNCILLOR O'CONNOR: Anseo.

18 MS PURCELL: Councillor Gerry O'Neill?

19 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Anseo.

20 MS PURCELL: Councillor Lourda Scott?

21 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Here.

22 MS PURCELL: Councillor John Snell? Councillor Stephen Stokes?

23 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Present.

24 MS PURCELL: Councillor Edward Timmins?

25 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Here.

26 MS PURCELL: Councillor Gerry Walsh.

27 COUNCILLOR WALSH: Here.

28 MS PURCELL: And Councillor Irene Winters.

29 COUNCILLOR WINTERS: Here.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, members. You are all very welcome

31 to the last meeting of 2023. I will just call now for any votes of sympathy.

32 Councillor Gerry Walsh.

33 COUNCILLOR WALSH: Thanks, Chair. I would like to propose a vote of

34 sympathy to the family of Brian Thompson from Greystones. Brian passed away

1 after an illness on Thursday last. Brian was well-known in Greystones, particularly
2 on sporting circles. He was a great supporter and volunteer with Greystones Soccer
3 Club and Eire Óg GAA Club. Condolences to his wife Paula and Evan, Shane and
4 Sam, and his daughter Sophie. Sam is a current player Greystones Eire Óg Senior
5 Team and also represented Wicklow Senior Team at Gaelic football. Thank you.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Gerry
7 O'Neill.

8 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yes, I would like to offer knew
9 condolences to the Quinlan family of Pollaphuca/Ballymore area. Young Dani, a
10 promising young point-to-point jockey, she passed away yesterday. A lovely family.
11 She was only a young girl, but she died just yesterday, so I would like to propose my
12 sympathies to Paddy and the family on the death of Dani.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Mary
14 Kavanagh.

15 COUNCILLOR KAVANAGH: Thanks, Chair. Yes, I would like to propose a vote
16 of sympathy for the family of Willy Dunne who passed away a couple of days ago,
17 relatively young and very sudden. Condolences to all his family and children.
18 Thank you.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Helen.

20 MS PURCELL: We extend our sympathies to the families of Mary Murphy, mother
21 of our colleague Margaret Dunne; and Dr Sean Byrne, brother of our colleague Bernie
22 McBride.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will stand for a minute's silence.
24 (Minute's silence)

25 MS PURCELL: May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the
26 mercy of God, rest in peace.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, members. Okay, we will move onto item number
28 1 to confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council
29 held on Monday, 6th November 2023. A copy was issued. Can I have a proposer?
30 Councillor Paul O'Brien. And a seconder? Councillor Patsy Glennon. Is that
31 agreed? (Agreed) Thank you very much.

32

33 Item number 2, to consider the disposal of 0.32 hectares of thereabouts comprised
34 within Folio WW2198F adjacent to Greystones Rugby Club, Mill Road, Killincarrig,

1 Greystones, Co. Wicklow to Greystones Rugby Club Trustees:- Mr Gene Murphy,
2 Mr Jerome O'Brien and Mr Joseph Devine, as per the notice previously circulated.
3 I am going to invite the Chief Executive in to give a bit of background to this. Thank
4 you.

5 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and good afternoon, members. For
6 those of you who are not familiar, this particular disposal has been ongoing for a
7 period of time, probably going back to Frank Curran's time as Chief Executive here.
8 The Rugby Club looked to acquire a sliver of land from the IDA in Greystones just to
9 regularise their own site and just because of the way the IDA is established and set up,
10 they aren't able to dispose directly to the Rugby Club, so they asked us, as Wicklow
11 County Council, to be the intermediaries in the transaction. So we acquired the site
12 from the IDA a number of weeks ago, finally concluded it, and now the disposal is
13 before the members to dispose of it to the Rugby Club. As I said, really our role in it
14 was just to facilitate the transfer of the land from the IDA to the Rugby Club. Thank
15 you, Cathaoirleach.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Chief Executive. I will open it up to
17 the floor. Councillor Gerry Walsh.

18 COUNCILLOR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I would be happy to propose this
19 disposal. The land in question is 0.7 of an acre. It abounds one of four pitches there
20 in the rugby club. It is not a full-size pitch. The pitch in question is about a
21 three-quarter size pitch, so the intention is that with this piece of ground it will allow
22 them to have a full-size pitch, which would allow them to facilitate their
23 every-increasing female participation members. The club has over 1200 members at
24 present and is ever-growing, so this would be a welcome addition to give them that
25 extra pitch. Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Stephen
27 Stokes.

28 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. I would like to
29 second this motion. I certainly believe that Greystones Rugby Club do tremendous
30 work in the community. I was a youth player there myself up until under 18 level and
31 they cater for up to, I believe, 600 youngsters every week playing rugby and I believe
32 that this is earmarked specifically for the development of women's rugby and girls'
33 rugby within the club. It is a note of personal pride for me to be supporting this,
34 because my grandfather, George Stokes, helped to get the first floodlights for

1 Greystones Rugby Club. So for me I am delighted to be associated with this. Go
2 raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Derek
4 Mitchell.

5 COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: I am pleased to support this. It is very important for
6 the Rugby Club, I think, to use this spare piece of land and make a full-size pitch out of
7 what is incomplete at the moment. Thank you.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. I see no other members
9 indicating. So we have a proposer and seconder. Is everybody agreed? (Agreed).
10 Okay, that's great. Thank you.

11 Item number 3 is: To consider the casual vacancy arising from the resignation of
12 Councillor Grace McManus in accordance with section 19 of the Local Government
13 Act 2001, as amended.

14 My understanding is this item is going to be deferred. So you are proposing the
15 deferral, Councillor O'Brien? Thank you. Can we get a seconder to propose that
16 deferral? That's great. Thank you.

17

18 I am assuming the same for item number 4 and item number 5. Is that okay? If you
19 both propose and second; that is okay? Is that agreed, members? (Agreed) Thank
20 you very much.

21 Okay item number 6: To consider and to make, with or without amendment, the
22 County Wicklow Polling Scheme 2023, a copy of which was issued. So I am going to
23 invite Lorraine Gallagher to speak on this.

24 MS GALLAGHER: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. The members have been circulated
25 with a copy of the Draft Polling Scheme and a letter from the senior executive officer
26 in Corporate Services, Helen Purcell. So local authorities are obliged to make a
27 polling scheme and review it at least once every ten years. So the last polling scheme
28 was made in 2013, adopted by the members of the Wicklow County Council in 2014.
29 We are obliged to put it out to public consultation, which we have done. We have
30 also consulted with the Returning Officer of the county, Mary Delahunty. There are
31 no changes proposed to the previous scheme as the changes made to the Bray LEA
32 were implemented by ministerial order in 2018. So basically there is no changes to
33 the previous scheme. So it's a reserve function of the elected members to adopt the
34 polling scheme.

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And just to mention, just by way of information, as set out in the Electoral Commission's Constituency Review Report, once the legislation is passed we will have to come back and look a new polling scheme having regard to the reconfiguration of the Wicklow division and the Wexford division, but again, that will entail public consultation, consultation with Mary Delahunty, consultation with the elected members where the boundaries are effective and the team, the franchise team are looking, while we are awaiting the legislation to be passed, we are reviewing it to examine all possibilities. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Lorraine. I am going to open up to the floor for any questions or queries in relation to this item and we do also require a proposer and seconder if we are going to approve it. Councillor Joe Behan.

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Cathaoirleach, I want to propose it first of all, but I have a question which maybe we can take after you have made your decision on this, which is about the electoral register being made available to the members and the general public because of the fact that the formulation of the register has changed now from being a fixed one to being a rolling one. We would normally have received a copy of the draft register in previous years in November. We didn't get that. In normal circumstances, there would be a full register available from the 1st of February. There's no indication from the office that we are getting these registers. But I think it is very important that we are all getting access to these registers sooner rather than later (a) to ensure that it is accurate and up to date, and (b) obviously with elections in mind later on next year.

So perhaps we could find out what are the arrangements going to be made for us to be provided with copies in our own local electoral areas. But I am happy to propose the adoption of the scheme.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. We will get a response to that before we make a final decision. Is there anyone that is willing to second the proposal? Councillor Peir Leonard. Thank you very much.

Lorraine, perhaps you could come back in on those questions from Joe.

MS GALLAGHER: Yes. Thanks, Cathaoirleach. We can make a copy of the register available at any point in time, but it is a soft copy as opposed to a hard copy. I don't know does that make a difference to you, Councillor Behan?

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: No.

1 MS GALLAGHER: A soft copy, well perhaps we can do that.

2 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Can I propose that everybody gets a soft copy of the
3 register for their own relevant district, relatively quickly, please?

4 MS GALLAGHER: Yes.

5 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thank you.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Perfect, that's great. So we have a proposer,
7 Councillor Behan; and seconder, Councillor Pier Leonard. Is that agreed by all the
8 members? (Agreed). Thank you very much, members. We will get that soft copy
9 issued out.

10 Item number 7: To consider the Chief Executive's Monthly Management Report for
11 November 2023. So Chief Executive.

12 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to start really by thanking
13 the members for your support on the issue of HomeBond. As you know, we
14 thankfully got it to a conclusion last week but I just want to put on public record my
15 thanks to you all for support and for calling it out loud in the chamber the issues that
16 we had with getting it over the line. Just, again, to thank the staff of both the Housing
17 Team and the staff in the Law Department for their tireless work in trying to bring this
18 to a conclusion. I am pleased report that we had, I think, four sales closed last week
19 as well and any of the properties or persons that are in a position to close, we will close
20 on them as quickly as we can. Of the 36 units, I think seven of the proposed
21 purchasers haven't made any contact with the Council up to now in terms of trying to
22 get closing. They are not in a rush to close, whereas other people were in a rush to
23 close. We are moving through them as quickly as possible.

24

25 I suppose the last month has been quite a successful month for the county. We had a
26 winner at the Chambers Ireland award under the Age Friendly Initiative for our
27 Intergeneration Digital Learning product, which was run by our libraries and
28 supported by our age friendly office, where we saw students, TY students primarily,
29 teach older people how to use their devices and work with them and mentor them, and
30 it has actually built lifelong relationships, which is really, really lovely.

31

32 Post the Council meeting this evening, we are celebrating those projects that
33 represented Wicklow in the Pride of Place Awards that were held in Armagh in the last
34 month. Those again, I suppose, of the four projects, all four received an award which

1 was great, a really, really successful evening for Wicklow. Again, congratulations to
2 all involved there.

3

4 And finally, just an update on Brides Head and Rathdrum sports and recreational
5 plans. There will be public consultation commencing in January, so after Christmas,
6 on those two plans, to work with all the stakeholders involved in the two areas to get
7 those two plans moving. And, obviously, we are all here happy to take any questions,
8 Cathaoirleach.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Chief Executive. And before I open
10 up to the floor, I just want to express our thanks on behalf of all the members for the
11 work you did in relation to the HomeBond issue and the personal approach you took to
12 it. I know there were numerous phone calls and chasing people. We have obviously
13 come to a successful conclusion, but I am not sure that that would have happened
14 without your efforts. So my thanks for that.

15 Okay, I'll open it up to the floor. Councillor Stephen Stokes.

16 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. Could I share and
17 echo your sentiments, could I thank the Chief Executive for your leadership in relation
18 to the HomeBond issue. It is very much appreciated by everybody. Thank you for
19 that.

20

21 I would also like to thank you for meeting me at the clearance site between
22 Charlesland Wood and Burnaby Mill. It was a very positive meeting and I appreciate
23 your time on that. Could I just follow up on that just to get the full report, I think that
24 was to be circulated to everybody. If I could find out where we are at. Also, I
25 welcome that Sispar are doing work, or work is being done on their behalf in relation
26 to the north beach access. That is to be welcomed. And it is good to see that there is
27 action happening with The Morrough in Wicklow Town. I just want to press again in
28 relation to the north beach coastal erosion in Greystones, and just see if there is any
29 update because it is quite severe and I would like to see if there has been any additional
30 information since last month. Go raibh maith agat.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Paul O'Brien.

32 COUNCILLOR PAUL O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I also want to thank
33 the Chief Executive not just the report, but her work on the HomeBond issue. I was
34 contacted by two prospective new homeowners and they are absolutely delighted and

1 relieved, especially coming up to Christmas. One was only one week away from
2 losing their mortgage offer. So it is good timing all round in terms of the timing of
3 year and also the mortgage.

4

5

6 Just to follow on there from Councillor Stokes there, we had a long discussion last
7 month about The Morrough. I am wondering has there been any further update on the
8 works? Thank you.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Joe Behan.

10 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I apologise now for being repetitive but I really want to
11 thank the Chief Executive sincerely for the absolutely exemplary leadership she
12 showed in resolving the HomeBond issue. I think you said, Cathaoirleach, it might
13 not have happened without her input; it most definitely would not have happened
14 without her input. And the fact that she went to so much trouble to listen to us as
15 elected representatives and the people who are affected, to get it that this was life
16 changing, possibly life changing for these applicants who were being stuck in this, if
17 you like, twilight world for the last number of months. The fact that she absolutely
18 exhausted every single option: Speaking to the Minister, speaking to the department,
19 speaking to colleagues, and then eventually getting directly to the nub of the problem
20 with HomeBond and ensuring by her own actions that the issue was resolved during
21 the week. So I want to thank her sincerely on behalf of all of the people affected, but
22 also my own behalf, on my own part as an elected representative for the fact that you
23 listened, Chief Executive, and also you communicated with us right throughout the
24 whole process. We were able to go back and tell people what was happening. And
25 obviously they were very upset, they were very worried. But we were able to
26 reassure them that you were doing everything possible, and we got an absolutely
27 hugely successful result. And I want to say well done and it is a good omen for the
28 future as far as I am concerned. Thank you. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Mary
30 Corrigan.

31 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you for the report,
32 Chief Executive. There are two issues I want to raise. We discussed public lighting
33 there at the budget meeting, but our public car park in Enniskerry has no public light.
34 There is a light there, it's not working. I have emailed down to public lighting,

1 received no response. There's no facility to report it, I am dead sure, because it is not
2 a streetlight. I just think this needs to be looked at urgently because it is dark winter
3 now, we are trying to encourage people to use the car park, and it is just not safe
4 without light.

5
6 Also, there is another issue on the Quill Road in Kilmacanogue. The residents on the
7 road there have had a serious issue going over a long time with flooding on the road,
8 where they can't actually walk their kids to school. They have to drive around to get
9 through. This has been going on for a long time. And I know our district engineer is
10 looking at it and trying to resolve it, but I would like to see this done with a bit more
11 seriousness to it. Thank you.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Lourda Scott.

13 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yes. Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks Chief Executive,
14 for your report. I just wanted to start by thanking the staff in Greystones Library who
15 hosted two very successful swap shops, that I was involved in organising; one for
16 Halloween and one more recently with Christmas jumpers, and I want to thank them
17 very sincerely for offering up the space and for advertising that. It was a really good
18 community event, both of those swap shops.

19
20 I have a couple of comments. One is on the outdoor recreational infrastructural
21 scheme. I just note the Cliff Walk in receipt of funding was dependent on land being
22 purchased. Am I right in making the assumption that that is the Bray to Greystones
23 walk we are talking about? And if so, I was just wondering will that funding be
24 affected or lost if that purchase of the land, something doesn't happen around that
25 rapidly? I was just wondering what the status was.

26
27 My second comment was, I just note that Wicklow County Council was invited to visit
28 France to see how a three-day trail running festival is run after the success of our own
29 EchoTrail festival, and I just wanted to welcome that. Obviously our own EchoTrail
30 festival was extremely successful this year. I did want to make the comment that I
31 hope there is a view, and certainly if there's staff attending France, that there is
32 information sought through the lens not just of tourism, but also through a
33 sustainability lens and just that we are looking at how we run events such as this
34 without having huge impact on the environment. I think that is important and as we

1 are going forward and as the EchoTrail develops as well.

2

3 Two specific questions then was: One, I note that the blue flag and green coast
4 awards, the closing date for applications is November 30th, which I was surprised to
5 see because we had agreed here that the Municipal Districts in the relevant areas on the
6 coast, I suppose, would have a presentation on applications and how to apply on the
7 green coast award. We discussed this. I brought this up at a Council meeting I think
8 it was in May or June this year, noting that Wicklow is one of the very few counties
9 around the coast that has no green flag or green coast awards for any of the beaches at
10 all, and I sought some clarity in a presentation from the MDs as to how we would go
11 about applying for this. I have been chasing up a presentation from our own MD, I
12 think we do have environment coming in January, but I am dismayed to see that we
13 may have already missed the clothing dates for applications.

14

15 One final question then was, I was just wondering is there any update as to the status of
16 the Greystones media campus? I believe the last update we had was that there was a
17 delay due to the writers' strike in Hollywood, which I believe is resolved, and I was
18 just wondering if there is an update on that. Thank you

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Chief Executive, I might
20 bring you in on those items first.

21 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members, and thank you for your very kind words.

22 Look, we just have to do what is right sometimes, and just keep going until you get the
23 result that is needed and there was no way those people were going to lose their homes,
24 and that is just the bottom line I suppose.

25

26 Councillor Stokes, on the site, yes, I will get that report to you. I got a bit distracted
27 with the HomeBond piece, so I will get that to you. Apologies for that.

28

29 I might ask Breege to come in on both the north beach coastal erosion and The
30 Morrough works in a moment; Lorraine might talk the Greystones media campus, if
31 you have anything on that, and on the trail running, the eco tourism piece on that; then
32 Leonora on the public lighting issues, if that's okay; and Michael will come on ORIS
33 Scheme, on the Bray to Greystones.

34 MS KILKENNY: I am happy to start in relation to the coastal erosional works.

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Firstly, just in terms of The Morrough, as you know we have been working relentlessly with Irish Rail and it sometimes does take a little bit of effort to try and get them to move forward, but we have made space available for the storage of materials like rock armour, et cetera, and Irish Rail will need to progress the planning process.

In relation to Greystones, yes, with regard to the level of erosion that has occurred in Greystones, we have asked Sispar to have another look. They normally do their laser surveys around March, et cetera. So we have been in touch with them and we have asked them to expedite that because from our point of view, visually, there is a lot more erosion this year than we have even expected in previous years. In particular, we are concerned in relation to the undermining of the public park and that is where we are bringing in Sispar just in relation to that. So they have taken on board what we have said and they are going to start doing that work very soon. You have probably seen some of the stuff happening down at Greystones at present, but as soon as we get a report on that, I will make sure it is brought to the members.

COUNCILLOR WINTERS: Sorry, Chair, could we have someone from IT come down, because I can't access any of the documents.
(Technical difficulties resolved)

MR NICHOLSON: In relation to the ORIS and the Greystones Cliff Walk, yes we did receive funding under the ORIS Scheme for the Bray to Greystones Cliff Walk. We received 200 grand last year. Now you cannot buy land under the ORIS Scheme, so the land purchase was always going to come from our own funds in any event, so that is not going to affect the ORIS, and we have until the end of next year to spend the ORIS money. We are working very hard to try and resolve the land issues because obviously that affects the rest of the work. We can't do the work until we buy the land. So while they are related, the land is not going to be affected by the ORIS grant. However, if we don't finish the work next year we might be in difficulty with the grant itself. That is where we are working hard to try and finish that, and we are working very hard, looking at alternative options for the land. So that's the update on that.
Thank you.

MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. In relation to the public lighting in Enniskerry, so I have just sent an email there and we will chase that up with the contractor to see what the delay is. And with Quill Road, we can follow that up with

1 the district engineer in Bray. Thank you.

2 MS GALLAGHER: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And just in
3 relation -- Councillor Lourda Scott, in relation to attendance at tourism conferences
4 and representations, Fred Verdier our tourism officer represents the Council at those
5 events while submitting back a report, obviously, to the management team. But I will
6 get in contact just about the sustainability piece, and just tease that out a bit more.
7 And just in relation to the Greystones media campus, I don't have any information. I
8 understood it got its planning permission and it is being constructed or certainly it is
9 supposed to be up and running in 2024. But I think there's no harm for us as an
10 economic development team to reach out to the management of that organisation and
11 maybe get some more information and get a working relationship going with them.
12 Yes.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much, Lorraine. Councillor Winters, I believe
14 they are looking at the IT issue at the moment. Will I keep proceeding? I'll keep
15 proceeding with bringing people in, but just that it is noted that they are calling people
16 in.

17 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Just on the green coast.

18 MR NICHOLSON: Yes, we will get back to you on that, Councillor. Myself and
19 Breege have to have a bit of a liaison and we'll get back to you on it. Thanks.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Gerry Walsh.

21 COUNCILLOR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks to the Chief Executive
22 for the report. Firstly on housing, just looking at the HAP figures, maybe this is a
23 misprint, but the figure is actually down, the October 2023 figure, even in comparison
24 to last month, and in comparison to last year. So whether that's a misprint or is it
25 anything to do with an increase in the notices to quit on the other side. Just a bit
26 clarity around that.

27

28 Looking at the arrears situation, again it is good to see that there is movement in the
29 right direction, although the figure remains stubbornly high. Just reading the report
30 there at last week's budget meeting on housing rent and tenant purchase
31 administration, it stated: "The income of all tenants is assessed on allocation of a
32 property by the differential rent being calculated. Any change of household income
33 should be notified to the Rents Team and rent can be adjusted accordingly. Rents
34 Team are engaging with tenants in arrears and focus on reducing rents." That is

1 welcome, to see that interaction. And that compares, when you compare with
2 national rents and there was a report in the media recently again about rents pressures
3 being ignored and private rents going up, increasing all the time. So really there,
4 should be no excuse for this situation to prevail here.

5
6 Look, I will move on. On the local authority home loans, I take it that is the year to
7 date figure, the 55, and the approvals are 16. Just wondering, maybe a bit of an
8 update on that, if possible.

9
10 Just on the age friendly initiative there, the homes coordinator, that is to be welcomed.
11 I see there is an appointment of a local coordinator there to be made. That is a
12 welcome initiative, as I say, where somebody visits older people in their homes,
13 carries out assessments of their needs and creates a support plan to meet those needs.
14 Again, that is great to see.

15
16 The Cliff Walk I was going to ask, that has been addressed. Just under special
17 projects then, there is a reference to the site on Mill Road, that's the Council owned
18 site, it take it, on Mill Road, being on a hold pending a PRA of the site, registration. I
19 wonder if there's anything more on that. And, finally, it is great to see that the
20 Greystones, Delgany, Kilcoole LAP process, the public consultation process around
21 that has commenced. Thanks again for that.

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much, Councillor. Councillor Shay Cullen.

23 COUNCILLOR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, just two quick points. I don't
24 normally repeat what other people are saying, but I do think the issue of HomeBond
25 that has been discussed, I want to thank the Chief Executive as well as everyone else
26 because this was an extremely stressful period on prospective purchasers of Homes in
27 Greenhills Road and I think the amount of work that was done behind the scenes here
28 was a credit to the Chief Executive. I very much want to thank you on that.

29
30 My second point is to do with the master plan for Brides Head in Wicklow. I know
31 this has been on the agenda now for quite a while in terms of our district in Wicklow.
32 It is an urgent piece, in my view, in terms of sporting facilities in Wicklow Town and
33 the lack of facilities for clubs in the area. And, I suppose, we all know about the
34 amount of building that has been done and is continuing to be done in Wicklow Town

1 and surrounding areas and, as I say, the lack of amenities and sporting facilities are
2 paramount to be addressed. So I very much welcome that and I am very much
3 looking forward to working with the Chief Executive and her team to make sure that
4 this project comes to fruition in the very near future. So thank you for that.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Gail Dunne.

6 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to join
7 everybody's views on Morrough View. It was unbelievable. In fairness, we got it
8 across the line. Well done to the team and the staff. There's a lot of people -- there's
9 noise coming through --

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Councillor, you just proceed ahead. We are having
11 some technical problems with those online. Go ahead.

12 COUNCILLOR DUNNE: There's a lot of people very happy over what happened.
13 So well done to the team and staff. Great work.

14

15 I have only one other thing to raise. We have a lot of older housing estates in
16 Wicklow Town and last week I got a request from one of the estates looking for work
17 to be carried out and when I checked to see could that work be carried out, I am led to
18 believe that we don't have any funding for works in estates. I think this is quite
19 serious because I think there's accidents there waiting to happen with the likes of road
20 markings, signs, there's footpaths that need to be done, you know, you have got people
21 claiming against us. Whilst I mightn't get the answer today I am wondering going
22 forward, do we have any plans for estates within the county to get funding to do
23 necessary works? I think it is important that we do, because I don't think the
24 Municipal Districts have the money. So going forward I am just wondering what
25 plan we have. Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Can I just check
27 Councillor Corrigan and Councillor Murphy, if you give me a thumbs up that you are
28 still hearing everything from the chamber. No. Councillor Corrigan? They have
29 lost their sound. Members, we need to adjourn the meeting just for five minutes to try
30 and get them back up online. Is that okay? Can I get someone to propose and
31 someone to second? Councillor Shay Cullen. Councillor Peir Leonard. Thanks
32 very much members. Just give us ten minutes. It is 14:36 now, so say 14:46.

33 (Short adjournment)

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, members. We are going to proceed. So I can actually

1 see the members on Teresa's screen here in front of me and all the members online can
2 hear us. Can you see us at all? Councillor Corrigan.

3 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: I can see you, Cathaoirleach.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: You can see us. Amazing, that's fantastic.

5 MS GALLAGHER: Can the elected members online hear the elected members in
6 here?

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: They can hear me. Perfect. Okay. Thank you very much,
8 members, for that. We will proceed.

9

10 Is there responses? I will take another few. Okay, Councillor Irene Winters.

11 COUNCILLOR WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I had notes in the margins of
12 the documents that I can't access, but anyway. I just saw just a thing, I think there was
13 an invitation to a launch of the, sort of, Glendalough master plan. And my last
14 memory of it is that we had an environmental, a draft plan, then it was to go for an
15 environmental impact study and then a draft was to come back to us to be approved. I
16 may have read it wrong and I can't bring it up in front of me. But I am wondering why
17 Minister O'Brien is coming down to do a launch of something that we haven't actually
18 seen.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Pat Kennedy.

20 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. First of all, I just want to
21 thank the Chief Executive and the staff for the reply on the Rathdrum master plan
22 because this is badly needed and I am delighted to see that it is now moving forward.
23 If I could ask the Chief Executive that maybe if we could ask for the consultant that is
24 involved in this, if he would come back and meet the with the relevant groups and
25 organisations in January just to move it forward. And so I very much welcome that.
26 I also just wanted to ask a question: Because we're coming to the end of the year, is
27 there any possibility of getting extra funding or rural roads, because they're in
28 shocking state some of them. We only had a bit of frost last Friday and Saturday
29 night, already you can see the roads starting to break up. I mean, I was at a funeral
30 yesterday and the road between Killaduff and Ballymanus is in a shocking state, that
31 the funeral had to go through. Our rural roads are bad and we do need extra funding
32 next year for our rural roads. Thanks, Chief Executive. And thanks, Cathaoirleach.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Edward Timmins.

34 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Thanks, Chairman. Just two items. The library part

1 of the Botanist or the 600,000 allocated a number of years ago to repair and maintain
2 existing courthouse and library there, but no work has been done to date and there is
3 probably no real good reason why that shouldn't be moved on. I believe it may be
4 starting to move on now, but I would just like to highlight it here, I brought it up here
5 before. And the second issue is something that all members bring up from time to
6 time, the repairs of public lighting, and replacement bulbs and fixing of public
7 lighting. I believe there is a tender in process at the moment to do with the supply of
8 that maintenance contract. And might this be an opportunity to extract the better deal
9 out of whatever company, Airtricity or whoever does the maintenance because the
10 service they provide today is very, very poor. Thanks.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Chief Executive, I will let
12 you come in on those ones.

13 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I will get Joe to come in on the
14 housing queries that Councillor Walsh has raised. In relation to the master plans for
15 Brides Head and for Rathdrum, yes, the consultant will be engaging directly with the
16 groups and representatives in both areas in January. That's the commitment being
17 given here, to move those plans on.

18
19 Councillor Dunne, in relation to the older housing estates and work to be carried out,
20 footpath repairs. Will you recall from the budget discussions at other Council
21 meetings that we have put aside a fund to go to the Municipal Districts for footpath
22 repairs, and that is the start of a fund coming from capital funding. My understanding
23 is, once an estate is taken in charge that there is a requirement for us to maintain and
24 carry out works, obviously subject to funding, but we are trying to put an ongoing fund
25 in place to start to remediate older parts of the towns that we are responsible for.

26
27 Councillor Winters, the Glendalough's master plan, it is not Wicklow's plan. It is not
28 this Council's plan. It's a multi-agency. It is ourselves, Coillte, National Parks and
29 Wildlife Service and the OPW and as such it goes directly to the Minister for his
30 approval and signoff on. And Fáilte Ireland were the lead on the project. Obviously
31 stakeholders were involved from the Council and from the liaison group in the area
32 and from other State agencies. So that is why it didn't come back here per se.

33 COUNCILLOR WINTERS: It is just the stakeholders are the ones saying to me in
34 the area that nobody came back to them.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Councillor, I would ask you to put your mic on. Sorry,
2 Councillor Winters, there's actually too many people with mics on. I will bring you
3 back in, if that's okay, once the opportunity presents. I think what you are saying is
4 that it is actually the stakeholders that are saying to you that they haven't had anyone
5 come back to them.

6 COUNCILLOR WINTERS: Yes.

7 MS O'GORMAN: Okay. I know as part of the ongoing governance and kind of
8 oversight of this plan as it moves forward, there will be a consultative forum and group
9 which the local stakeholders will be very much part of. This is a plan. It is really
10 just a blueprint. And what happens to it after that will be down to the local
11 community and councillors and other agencies with the local community. So they
12 will be very much involved on the consultative forum, but happy to talk to you about it
13 separately.

14 COUNCILLOR WINTERS: Okay.

15 MS O'GORMAN: I might get Michael to update on the library in Baltinglass and
16 then Leonora just on the public lighting contract. So I will go to Joe first on the
17 housing issues. Thank you.

18 MR LANE: Yes. The HAP, I think that is a timely issue. In the break I was trying
19 to balance national figures against ours. We will see where that is in November to see
20 is there a trend. I think it will just be a timing issue, but we will watch the trend for
21 November and December figures. On the ground we're not losing that many. There
22 was earlier on, there was a little fall back between, as some of the people were moving
23 in, where they had the notices to quit, they weren't always being replaced by HAP,
24 they were being replaced by other units but we were getting new HAPs in. So there
25 wasn't as big a trend as that, but we will watch the trend. It wasn't anything we
26 worried about. And particularly this year we had Ushers Glen and the two in Bray
27 and Greystones, we did have a lot of supply. It wasn't anything we were worried
28 about on the ground. Like I said previously, the HAP and allocation team were well
29 in control and were dealing with it three and four months in advance.
30 It wasn't anything to worry about, but I will watch the timing.

31

32 On the other issue, it would be disingenuous of me not to comment that sometimes -- I
33 benefit this month from the rents and the timing issue, where sometimes I say there is
34 a timing issue in the negative, in this time where there is a lot of work, I am benefitting

1 a small bit from a timing issue in October, I think, beneficially. Okay.

2 MR NICHOLSON: Just a couple of issues for me on the age friendly healthy homes
3 appointment. A person has been appointed and will starting in the first week of
4 January. As Councillor Walsh rightly says, that person's job is to find out what is
5 needed to keep people in their homes as opposed to moving them to nursing homes.
6 That person will be accommodated. It is a housing function, so even though it is an
7 age-friendly initiative, the person will be appointed and work through the housing
8 department because it is a housing accommodation issue.

9

10 With regard to the Mill Road site, I went up there this morning -- it is now at mapping
11 stage in the PRA and we have asked for it to be expedite and we should know in the
12 next week. So that will be the last hurdle required. That's a site we are selling to
13 HSE for the primary care centre, and also it is holding up the master plan on the Mill
14 Road. We have stalled both of those. There is no issue with the land, the land is
15 owned by us, but there was just one small little detail which hopefully will be resolved
16 in the next week or so.

17

18 In relation to the library part of the courthouse in Baltinglass, members will be aware,
19 in particular Councillor Timmins will be aware, that that was stalled. The original
20 plan was just to do a tidy-up job on that and repair the roof and make it safe, give it a
21 bit of TLC. But then we decided to go for a bigger plan involving making more of the
22 building. We weren't successful in funding for that so we have now gone back to the
23 drawing board and we have gone back to plan A and I had a recent meeting and we
24 more or less signed off, having consulted with the CE on the funding available, and we
25 will be going back to a slightly different version of plan A, if you like. That is being
26 costed by the architects and by the QS, and we hope to go to tender very shortly on
27 that. So things are moving very quickly on that site

28 MS EARLS: In relation to funding for the rural roads, there won't be any additional
29 funding this year. This Wednesday is the closing date for submission of the final
30 claims to the department and we submitted ours today. Having said that, we did get
31 two additional amounts of money this year and they were well spent. As you say, we
32 probably will never have enough money to do all the roads, but I can assure you we are
33 continually looking for more one and we take any money that other local authorities
34 aren't in a position to spend.

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In relation to public lighting, there's about 2% of the public lighting out at the moment and I appreciate when it is the light outside your house or business that has a big impact. We are working through the tender assessment at the moment and it is our intention to sit down with the successful tenderer and clearly set out what our expectations are during the year. I suppose the difficulty is that there's only two contractors in the entire country who tender for these jobs. But we are keeping the pressure on them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much. Councillor Vincent Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach and thanks for a detailed presentation once again. I'll just raise two points: First of all in regards to the fire service, we had some industrial action earlier on in the year and there was a substantial amount of money put into the budget recently in terms of additional staff. Can I just ask, where are we actually in terms of recruiting staff? I know I have seen signs around recently where they were endeavouring to have some conversations with them. So look it, it's a big issue out there. It caused problems, as I said, earlier on in the year. It is obviously something very important that we endeavour to try and recruit that extra staff as soon as we possibly can to ensure that we don't end up in a situation again where we have industrial action. And, you know, what kind of numbers are we actually talking about there in terms of recruitment?

The second point is in relation to an issue that was very prevalent here back a few years ago and that is the Japanese knotweed issue. I was of the opinion that we would have probably sorted it out to a great extent. But I just see in your report that there is a contractor, I never knew there was a contractor officially doing the work. I thought we were doing it on an in-house basis. But I still see it on your report here that it is still a problem out there. I thought we had got to the stage where we had addressed it, but obviously it is still there and it is still an issue. And to what extent is an issue out there? Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Peir Leonard.

COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you. I just want to thank the Chief Executive for her report and also her communication. I think everybody will agree that it has been brilliant and very much appreciated.

1 I have a couple of things. In relation to the approved housing bodies and the role of
2 county councillors, I have had a few representations in and I would just like to seek
3 clarification on what are our roles with the approved housing body? Because it
4 doesn't come under the remit of the housing department and making reps into the
5 Council now. So if we have somebody that needs help or needs a little bit of
6 advocacy, what is the procedure around that, because it is an approved housing body?
7 And maybe there could be a little bit of work on communications to get that
8 information out to all of the councillors and the people in the houses because there is a
9 bit of confusion there. A lot of people think they are actually social housing from the
10 County Council, so they are contacting us as councillors to make representations when
11 there's little things wrong and stuff like that. Just to clarify that. And just clarify for
12 us as well, is there a line of contact for the approved housing bodies for us if it is
13 needed for us to help people.

14
15 Then just in relation to the coastal protection, I just want to congratulate director
16 Breege Kilkenny on all the great work that she is doing and her team there. Just to
17 add, I know we have spoken about Arklow North Beach being added to the OPW to
18 get the feasibility studies done for the coastal protection there, but I would like to
19 Clogga Beach and Clogga Strand, I have had a lot of people on to me from Clogga
20 Strand, there has been substantial erosion there on that as well. So maybe the team
21 could go out and look at that and while we're on the roll of getting OPW funding, it
22 would be great to get the whole county done. I would like to thank our own manager
23 down in Arklow for all the great work of active travel. We have one of the schemes
24 completed on the north exit. I know the whole town is delighted. There's been a lot
25 of extra work going on, a lot of investment in infrastructure and around the harbours
26 and that in Arklow. I would just like to say -- I know I am always usually giving out,
27 but I would just like to thank them. We do see the investment and it is brilliant for the
28 town and especially around the harbour area and our exits into town. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Tom Fortune.

30 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for the report. I
31 would like to be associated with Councillor Behan's remarks in regards the
32 HomeBond. It reflects my view on the situation very clearly.

33
34 Just a few things I want to bring up. The first thing I want to raise is the continuation

1 of what I would describe as the attack of the CLG on councillor roles. My question
2 falling out of that is, we have a motion here that we passed here at the Council, so I
3 want to know when we are putting that in place. I am on the KWETB representing
4 the Council, as you probably know, and there was a conference in Portlaoise last
5 Tuesday after our board meeting. The EBTI is the Educational Training Board of
6 Ireland who are the governing body of the ETBs of which there are 16 ETBs, each of
7 them have a CE. The AGM normally goes on for up to an hour. Up to now it 0has
8 been an association and there has been lots of members on it. At this particular AGM
9 there were two resolutions that only became obvious when we were at the meeting. I
10 was there as a delegate, so we weren't flagged about them in advance. The first
11 resolution was to abolish the association. I won't go into the detail because you
12 probably know that yourselves. Then the second resolution was to replace the
13 current, the association that was with a new body called the CLG and then that was to
14 be made up of the CEs basically. A similar kind of structure to what we have in place
15 now here with the Greystones Town Team, for example. The board. Four board key
16 members and then a structure underneath it. In the preamble to leading into it there
17 was reference made to the local authorities, the way the local authorities were moving.
18 Obviously no surprise to any of you, it got my antenna up and full of attention because
19 it is something that I am very, very interested in. So needless to remark, I didn't
20 support the second resolution.

21
22 There was an EGM organised, it was part of the setup, there was an EGM following
23 the AGM and before we got there our understanding was we would all be voting at the
24 EGM, but we were informed at the AGM resolution bit that at the EGM we wouldn't
25 have any vote, that the only people who could vote were the CEs. There are 16 CEs,
26 so they needed a quota of nine. There were ten CEs in attendance. So obviously
27 they voted the thing through. It was over in about 25 seconds. So I think it just tells
28 me the points I am raising here on an ongoing basis are very real.

29
30 So I have a question falling out of that as well and you may not have the answer, but I
31 would like someone to get me the answer. What I want to find out is, who actually is
32 driving this whole CLG concept? Now I don't want the answer that it's the
33 department X or Y. There has to be somebody in the department that's driving this,
34 and in the driving of it councillors are basically being left outside the door. So I

1 would like to get clarity on that. I am like a dog with a bone on it now because it is
2 obviously a strategy and I am just trying to figure out what is driving the strategy, what
3 is the real thinking behind it. But the big thing is, and lots of councillors don't seem to
4 be concerned about it and that is fair enough, every councillor has their own role or
5 what they want to do, but it is certainly the undermining councillors. And following
6 the conference that myself and Councillor Behan attended in Sligo where on one of the
7 panels there was five senators from Dáil Eireann and surprise, surprise a lot of them
8 now are contacting me on different things. We put it on the table with them what is
9 going on and obviously it has an impact on them. I think their organisation will be the
10 next organisation that will be tackled. Anyway, that is something I feel very, very
11 strongly about and I would like to get responses to what I am asking.

12
13 If I can just move on to just a couple of other quick bits as well. On the public
14 lighting, there are four lights on the way into Kilcoole as you approach the community
15 centre from Greystones direction and they haven't been connected now for over four
16 and a half years. I can't for the life of me understand how that can happen. There has
17 to be somebody in the ESB that someone here can talk to and say, will you ever get
18 your whatever out and get it sorted. But it is really ridiculous.

19
20 I spoke this morning to Lorraine on the SPC review that I had asked the question about
21 and we will deal with that in a different scenario.

22
23 In case I forget as well, I would like also to thank Tanya, the district administer in
24 Greystones. She is doing a super job. She has a great approach. You can talk to her
25 about anything. She will always, always come back to you. Her communication
26 skills are second to none. I think we need to be conscious of that in the head office of
27 the Council, because she does a super, super job.

28
29 I have a question on an email we got from Suzanne Hall. It has got to do with,
30 Wicklow County Council have now advertised this afternoon five service sites in
31 Kilcommon, Tinahely, obviously over that part of the county. I would just like to
32 know a little bit more about that, is that something that's being rolled out across other
33 districts?

1 And was there something else? No, I covered the SPC. I spoke with Lorraine this
2 morning on that. They are my questions. I have a few other things, but I think what
3 I will do is, I will send them in in writing rather than wasting the time of the meeting
4 on them. But I would like the CLG thing dealt with, because I think it is about the
5 undermining of councillors.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Dermot
7 O'Brien.

8 COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN: Thanks Cathaoirleach. I wonder under the parking
9 revenue section, could we get a per district breakdown on parking permits and parking
10 fines, just to give us a better picture of where that money might be coming from.
11 Page 67, the commercial rates. I see the arrears are at 8 -- I know at every other
12 meeting people talk about the arrears in the housing, social housing, but I see arrears of
13 8.4 million in the commercial rates arrears. So I am just wondering how confident we
14 might be that they will come in before the end of the year.

15 And the last one, looking at social housing stock and maybe I need to be -- maybe a
16 have a fleshing out of the story here because it doesn't look very positive. If we look
17 at 2022 we had 4,823 tenancies and in 2023 the same month we have 4,878. So it
18 kind of looks like we have 75 new tenancies. So maybe flesh that story out a little bit
19 for me so that I can understand that it is a bit better than that. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. You might take those, if
21 that is okay?

22 MS O'GORMAN: Yes. Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I will ask Lorraine to come in
23 and comment on the recruitment of the fire service in a moment and you might add a
24 bit more on the CLG as well. I will address it now in a moment.

25

26 The role of the councillor with respect to AHBs, Councillor Leonard, I suppose you
27 have a representational role no matter where the person is, whether they are in private,
28 AHB, social, cost rental, it doesn't matter, but we will see if we can get a list of contact
29 points for each of the AHBs because, you're right, I'd say a lot of people don't realise
30 that there is a different path that they need to travel on so we can make that available to
31 all members, just on how somebody goes and makes a maintenance request, or if they
32 are needing that additional piece of work done. I will get Breege to come back in on
33 the coastal protection piece again and Leonora on public lighting.

34

1 Just on the CLG, Councillor Fortune, I just want to state very clearly here that this
2 Council is not trying to undermine the role of the councillor by the use of CLGs.
3 CLGs are generally established in order to draw down monies and funding
4 opportunities and generally when there's a partnership between a number of different
5 agencies or bodies working together. There is no attempt, let me very clear about
6 this, there is no attempt to undermine the role of the councillor in this county. I don't
7 know what the experience is elsewhere. But in this county, that is not the intention.
8 My experience of working with a CLG is really to draw down funding, because where
9 a funding opportunity isn't open to the local authority, we are precluded often
10 sometimes from that, it is sometimes advantageous to have a CLG to leverage funding.
11 You would see it, for example, Claremont CLG in the enterprise space. You know,
12 other opportunities are open there.

13 I take your point on the town teams, we have had a discussion about it before and you
14 have asked for a review on that which is being undertaken. I know the TRO has been
15 in contact with different areas and Lorraine might want to come in a bit more on that.
16 But just to reiterate, it is not the intention of this local authority, this Council, to
17 undermine the role of councillors by replacing them with CLG. That is not what we
18 are at here at all. I will get Joe to come in and talk on the housing stock numbers then
19 as well, Joe, and if you've something to add on the AHB piece. Thank you.

20 MR LANE: Just on the AHB, as the Chief Executive said, the relationship is a tenant
21 and landlord relationship between the approved housing body and them, and that is
22 first port of call. However, if there's any systemic, myself and Terese wants to know.
23 So it depends. It's a call. But in the first case they deal with their landlord, that is
24 their landlord. But if there is anything systematic we want to know naturally. It is a
25 partnership. That goes back to the one regarding numbers. The numbers last year, I
26 thought they were a little higher than that. It might be a timing issue again, I'm using
27 that for a couple of reasons today, but last year, I am trying to remember, a lot of units
28 were I delivered by approved housing bodies, particularly in the Bray area and
29 Greystones would have been last year's too. Therefore they would have been
30 tenancies -- they're not our tenancies, but they are people off the list. It's not people
31 forget, but it's like I keep saying, it's a partnership. All of these deliveries is a
32 partnership to provide houses for people. It doesn't always have to be local authority.
33 We build our own. But, like, we are delivering on average of 100 a year. Even our
34 best, we are only delivering about 100 ourselves. We're not going to do that this year.

1 We are going to do that again next year. There's going to be others delivering. If
2 you look where it came off the list, it would be particularly in the Bray area, in
3 Bray/Greystones in the last two years, it would be on the approved housing body
4 housing list and that's why partnerships are quite important.

5
6 Councillor Fortune, there was an FAQ sent out to all the members, I don't know did
7 that go to just the six councillors there. There was a pack. I will make sure you get
8 it. But in general, there is a lot of criteria regarding it, it is unlikely it will be in high
9 demand areas because of the land and the land costs. These are service sites on
10 particularly hardened land. We are looking at it with SPC, in the short-term the two
11 at the moment are both in the Baltinglass area. That is where we have got land that
12 we can afford to use at those costs. There is a subsidy but for some of the more
13 northern sites, we just can't give them away, because there is a density issue too
14 regarding service sites. They're standalone units rather than semi-detached terrace.
15 But we are -- like I say, we would pilot it, we always said we would pilot it through the
16 SPC. We have one in hand done; one we're looking at in the same area; and one or
17 two more we are looking at in the context of mixed sites, but it will be slow. It will be
18 a limited amount because we don't have the land. And the land we have, most of it
19 has been used for social, and the next date will be affordable with a higher density.
20 But I will get the FAQ out to you.

21 MS GALLAGHER: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just in relation to Councillor
22 Vincent Blake and the fire service. So yes, we have -- money was provided in the
23 budget, so it is there for 2024. We have advertised for retained fire fighters across the
24 county in our stations. It will move our nine-man stations up to 12. There was a
25 recent open day that the fire fighters held themselves across the county encouraging
26 people to come, telling them about the fire service, what the career would be like for a
27 retained fire fighter. So they are advertised and we should have interviews early in
28 the new year.

29
30 Just in relation to Councillor Dermot O'Brien, information in relation to parking
31 permits and parking income per district, we can certainly get that for you and we can
32 circulate it to all the members.

33
34 And just in relation to the CLGs and the town teams, as the Chief Executive said, the

1 CLGs are set up so town teams or entities like that can access funding, but it also gives
2 a degree of protection for the members of a town team or for those involved in terms of
3 insurance and sets out the governance and all of that. There was a review carried out
4 which was presented to the elected members and I know, Chief Executive, you wanted
5 consistency, we looked for consistency of approach across the districts. We will
6 certainly get the TRO to follow that up with the district managers and move that one
7 forward.

8

9 In relation to your query about -- was it the KWETB you mentioned, you were at that
10 meeting? Yes. I don't have any information about it, but if you could send on the
11 two --

12 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: No, I am sorry, I want clarification.

13 MS GALLAGHER: Yes.

14 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I am just reporting to the members and yourselves that
15 that happened.

16 MS GALLAGHER: Yes. I wasn't aware of that.

17 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Hot off the press. Putting out a press release.

18 MS GALLAGHER: Okay. Thanks Councillor, is that all right?

19 MS EARLS: Thank you. Councillor Blake, the Japanese knotweed, that is a rolling
20 process that has to happen every year. It doesn't die off after one treatment, so it is
21 one that you have to keep doing for a number of years after that. There is a supply
22 gov framework and we take the contractor off that procurement list and we treat the
23 knotweed at the various sites over a number of years to try and kill it off.

24 MS KILKENNY: Just in relation to Councillor Leonard's query in relation to Clogga
25 Beach and Clogga Strand. Just to say, we are really hoping the OPW will take on
26 their role more specifically for our 60 kilometres of coastline and not just on a
27 piecemeal basis. The reason why we made applications for those three different sets
28 of beaches at the moment is that's the only thing at our disposal and each application
29 has to be dealt with separately. So we can add them, but it does actually add another
30 administrative burden on. So if I could just say, if it ends up being that nothing is
31 going to happen we will of course add them, but we are really hoping that the OPW
32 will take on the new role that they now have for our coastal protection and look at our
33 entire coast of 60 kilometres and do it in a much more strategic fashion. Okay.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Brian, do you want to come in on the rates?

1 MR GLEESON: Yes. Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just in relation to Councillor
2 O'Brien's query on the rates, our 2022 collection rate was 88%, so you can see up to the
3 end of October we are at 77%. So we have to have two months of collection left.
4 We would expect to be up around the 88%, which is in line with the national average.
5 I suppose traditionally a lot of businesses do wait until the end of the year to actually
6 make their payment. Now we will obviously have an arrears at the end of the year.
7 It will be brought down from the 8.4 million that it is currently at, but you will see the
8 opening balance at the start of the year was 4.5. So there's a lot of historical debt there
9 outstanding. Our rate collectors do meet with the Law Department on a monthly
10 basis to review all debt and look at different options available and also to point out that
11 at the end of the year we apply our vacancy relief. So that wouldn't include all the
12 vacant properties that would have to get relief under that as well. So that will adjust
13 the figures in relation to the collection rate and the arrears. Thank, you
14 Cathaoirleach.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's great. Thanks, Brian. Councillor John Mullen.

16 COUNCILLOR MULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. First of all, I just want to on
17 behalf of the communities in Knockananna, just pass on good wishes and thanks to the
18 team for CLÁR funding that was announced last week, a very good and positive result
19 and much needed community facility there and to the team that worked year in and
20 year out with the communities there. They are very thankful. Also the ORIS
21 funding for Lug na Coille for a master plan, that is also very much needed. It is an
22 untapped masterpiece really, we should really be getting a lot more out of it. And I
23 think the master plan to make it safe and to increase accessibility for Lug na Coille is
24 vital.

25
26 But in a related matter, I was just wondering, some councillors have point out we are
27 very good sometimes at applying for various grants and stuff, and being aware. As
28 soon as we are made aware, making a grant application fit the criteria which
29 sometimes can be imaginative. But at the same time where we are probably falling
30 short is when we receive a grant, making sure that we get the grant spent as quickly as
31 possible. You know, the departments will always follow through to see what you
32 have done with a particular grant, particularly with rural regeneration and those bigger
33 grants in town and village, I wonder have you made any progress in putting together a
34 team that would be across the delivery of big grant fundings that we are looking for.

1 Thank you.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Tommy
3 Annesley.

4 COUNCILLOR ANNESLEY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to commend
5 the Council and the harbour staff in Arklow. I was at the opening of the pontoons
6 which is a great asset to the harbour in Arklow. When you have investors coming
7 into the harbour and they see sunken trawlers and derelict boats on the side of it, it is
8 not very impressive. But now when you go into Arklow and you see the pontoons it
9 is very impressive and especially if you are trying to attract new investors into the
10 town of Arklow, I want to say well done and compliments to the harbour master as
11 well.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Patsy
13 Glennon.

14 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I am not going to go over
15 a lot of the stuff that has been covered by my colleagues, but I would follow on from
16 Councillor Timmins in respect of Baltinglass, the pedestrian bridge across the River
17 Slaney, we have for a long time been hearing about how bad the Dutchman's pub was
18 on the corner. It now has been done up but we are still way behind in getting our
19 pedestrian bridge on the other side of it. I would like an update on that. It did come
20 up at our Municipal meeting. We had our November Municipal this morning earlier
21 so it did come up, but I would like it to get more emphasis from the top table, please.

22

23 The second thing is in respect of the Glendalough master plan, and I did hear what the
24 Chief Executive said about that. Just to follow on from what Councillor Winters said,
25 your predecessor, Mr Clarke when he was here, certainly included Roundwood,
26 Rathdrum and Hollywood in association with that master plan, and to some extent that
27 is where the park and ride facility came at Hollywood could be dual purpose, i.e., for
28 people commuting to Dublin, but also it could be used in respect of Glendalough and
29 taking traffic out of Glendalough. So I would like that re-emphasised.

30

31 Councillor Kennedy mentioned rural roads and how bad they were where he was
32 travelling last week. Again it came up at our Municipal this morning. I don't think
33 we are getting our fair share of the county pie or allocation when it comes to the rural
34 roads. We have a lot of the rural roads out our parts and they're in an awful state.

1 They're certainly way worse than what was earlier mentioned in my view.

2

3 Finally, and I am looking for a bit of poetic licence here, I would like to congratulate
4 the Pride of Place people that are coming in at 4:00 today. My own little village of
5 Hollywood won first place in the category of up to 500. I would like to be publicly
6 associated with congratulating the entire community in respect of same. Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Erika Doyle.

8 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thank you to the Chief
9 Executive for the report. I just have three small notes. I wanted to ask about shop
10 front schemes. I know or I am pretty sure that there used to be shop front grants that
11 businesses, independent businesses, not chains as far as I can remember, used to be
12 able to apply for from the Council and I think some other counties still do that. Now
13 I know there is central funding in the form of streetscape initiatives and that kind of
14 thing. I am just wondering what happened those schemes? Are they just gone?
15 Have they been replaced by something else? Some businesses have been asking me,
16 you know, things are tough and they are looking for support and I suppose they're
17 aware that these used to exist. So maybe if I could find out what happened with that.

18

19 Just on lighting, I think this is something I started looking into, I contacted the ESB but
20 I haven't got very far so I will maybe take advantage of the fact we are in meeting now.
21 The GAA club in Newtownmountkennedy, the street lighting that is along there is not
22 connected. It is ducted but not connected and it has been that way for a considerable
23 amount of time. It is pitch black for people that are using that pitch which at this time
24 of year is from 4 o'clock onwards. I am wondering if anybody would know
25 off-hand has the cert been issued? Where is the delay, is it with us, is it with
26 somebody else? Because it would be great to get action on that as soon as possible.

27

28 And then just finally, as we finish up the year I just wanted to voice my hope that the
29 NTA schemes in Bray that were cancelled last year are maybe on the table for next
30 year. We lost two really big, really important schemes that would have been hugely
31 important for pedestrian safety, for cyclist safety and for road safety, for driver safety,
32 and they are the Vevay Road Scheme and the Southern Cross Scheme, and I really
33 hope to see them on the table next year. Thank you, Cathaoirleach

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Tom Fortune.

1 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Yes. I just want to just come back on a point of
2 clarification. Before I do that, my question I asked on the public lighting wasn't
3 addressed.

4 Just to go back to what the CE was saying about the CLGs. Look, when we started
5 off this session, Chief Executive, you just said one of the things is that you just wanted
6 to do what was right. Well, my position on this is the very, very same. I want to do
7 what is right. I passionately believe and I haven't spent -- I am not doing this flimsily.
8 I can see what is happening with the councillor role, the way it is being -- it is being
9 undermined and it is being done in a -- I don't ask me why, and I think also from the
10 research I have done even the rolling out of the town teams here in Wicklow has been
11 like a coach and horses compared to other counties. Most of the responsibilities we
12 have is being taken back to the centre. All that's happening. Now I don't expect to
13 have a big debate on it today and I don't expect you to answer me necessarily today
14 either, but it is getting to a stage where I think it needs a real, real proper discussion
15 and also the town teams, we are told continually by yourself now and by Director
16 Gallagher on an ongoing basis, that they were set up to get funding. Fair enough.
17 Why does it need the big army that is being put in place. Four people could easily
18 look after all of that in a given town if they are set up that way. I don't understand
19 why the structure is there. But they are doing a lot, lot, lot more than going after
20 funding. And also I don't accept as a public representative democratically elected by
21 the people, that I am not in a position where I can sit around the table with the
22 executive of this county council and go and get the funding and look for the funding
23 and talk about it funding. Basically the role of the county council is being duplicated,
24 and by duplicating it therefore it is being undermined. And that is what is happening.
25 And we can kick it around the house as much as we want, but that is what is happening
26 and it is accepted now at a higher level than our kind of pay grade around the table
27 here. That is what is going on. And, you know, nothing will convince me otherwise.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Mary Kavanagh.

29 COUNCILLOR KAVANAGH: Thank you, Chair. I just have a couple of points I
30 want to raise. The cold weather initiative, could all councillors be written to and
31 updated with the nearest centres in their districts, because as we are all very aware the
32 weather has changed drastically in the last week and it's, you know it's minus 3 one day
33 last week. I know there are initiatives still in existence from last year, but I just think
34 that everybody should be updated every year as a matter of course.

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I want to add my thanks to the Chief Executive for her wonderful work on the HomeBond scheme. I was contacted by people who were delighted and it really is a huge relief and I really want to thank you sincerely for that, for your efficiency and the speed with which you dealt with it.

And then finally just as a kind of, we all sit around and complain about a lot of things but I just want to basically send out huge congratulations to our library service. I think the work that they have undertaken in the last decade has been nothing short of phenomenal. I have just listed some of the activities they are involved in. We have -- apart from obviously, you know, books, lending books and DVDs and music, CDs. We have computer clubs, we have exhibition spaces, we have talks and historical presentations, arts and crafts, storytelling sessions, creative writing, poetry circles, Christmas wreath workshops, arts and crafts for children, Lego clubs, film making, chess clubs. There's rooms for neuro diverse children. They are wheelchair accessible. They have been the absolute success story of this decade, in my opinion. I suppose, I only really became aware of it in the last couple of months when I was researching a film club that I wanted to start in Wicklow. There was one over in Baltinglass as well. And it wasn't until I tried to book a night I realised how much these libraries are being used and it is just phenomenal, and I just want to thank the chief librarian and all the library staff and the branch librarians for their continued good work. And Wicklow County Council, obviously, for supporting them as well. I think it is just wonderful. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Miriam Murphy.

COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you for the report. I just want to ask some questions: One is on housing, I know some years ago there were windows and doors replacements of our own stock and I am wondering is that still in situ, and if it is not, why not? Because I know we have some windows that would certainly need replacement in lots of our tenants' houses, and doors. And also I am just wondering about the -- I am hoping that there will be changing places included in the Glendalough master plan and also the Baltinglass library facility that is planned, and anywhere that can be planned like that as well, just to make sure it is in the draft plan. Thank you.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. And finally,
2 Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

3 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I want to concur with my
4 colleague, Councillor Glennon there, in congratulating the people of Hollywood on
5 the Pride of Place. They will be presented, I think, after meeting with some awards.
6 They are a great bunch of people in Hollywood and over the years, it's not only in the
7 last year or two, you know, I have known Hollywood people a long time and for
8 donkey's years they are our there making Hollywood a better place. It didn't happen
9 overnight. I want to say well done there.

10

11 The second issue I wanted to mentioned there was, at our last meeting here I raised the
12 issue of the houses at the rectory, which would be 44 units there which are lying idle
13 months and months and months, although completed. We were informed here two
14 weeks ago that it was now being rectified. Just before the meeting today we were
15 informed here that there are still outstanding issues. There's 44 families waiting to go
16 into these houses and they really had hoped they would be in them by Christmastime.
17 I'd really like every effort to be put in that we can get this sorted out rapidly, you know.
18 I think it is unfair and I know there are issues there and some of these issues mightn't
19 be related to -- we mightn't be at fault as a Council, but whatever effort can be put in by
20 anyone, you know, it would be great to see the houses which as I say are completed a
21 while.

22

23 And the third issue I wanted to raise here was the -- and it's really direction I am
24 looking for, for the people of Blessington. The people of Blessington are good
25 people. We have taken our fair share of people from direct provision, which I am
26 involved in. I am involved in helping and doing what I can as the councillor in the
27 area. We have in one unit, we have 244 people in direct provision. We have a
28 second just out in Kippure, there's 233. In the town there's 135, plus a lot more now,
29 you know, we have up to 200 in the town. But what I am looking for direction on here
30 is, and I think it is an absolute scandal, that there are people that I would be meeting
31 during the week and they are now put on notice to vacate their housing, their units, and
32 these indeed are actually non-national and they are in these units maybe five or six
33 years and now they are being asked to move on and are given notice, which I have
34 copies of there, and these houses, because they're deemed holiday units, will be then

1 relet to people in direct provision. And it's very clear and it's been pointed out that
2 instead of the €1800 a month that can be collected as it is from the ordinary tenant, it
3 can be up to 10,000 a month with direct provision. But what I am really -- sorry, and
4 I know we were talking about that, you know I understand where the Council is
5 coming from and, you know, we talked about the public land in Baltinglass and
6 Dunlavin before and we voted against it. But as I say, the people of Blessington, they
7 are neither left wing head cases or right wing head cases and we don't want to know
8 anything about this extremism either way, but we are looking for some direction that
9 this carry on is not allowed to continue. It is not right that people are getting notice,
10 tenants are getting notice to vacate their housing and we all know quite well what's
11 going on. It is happening all the time, where there are poor unfortunate people, direct
12 provision people put into these houses and the amount of money that is being made by
13 greedy people throughout Ireland, not only in Wicklow and Blessington, but surely to
14 God we all want to help them, we all want to do what we can. I am putting my money
15 where my mouth is in all walks of life as regards helping these unfortunate people who
16 are coming from war-torn countries, et cetera, et cetera. We can't allow this to
17 continue. And we see the same thing throughout Ireland, where it could be a lad in
18 Leitrim and he has these units all over the country. It is a money-making racket now.
19 It has just turned into a complete money-making racket

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.

21 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: What I am looking for is some direction there that this is
22 encouraged not to continue any further. It is not fair on --

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: I will let the Chief Executive come in on that.

24 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: It is not fair on the refugees and it is not fair on the people
25 of the areas. Just some form of direction, if there can be a direction --

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am in the sure. We will check. Thank you, Councillor.

27 Councillor Murphy, I will let you come in very, very quickly because we are going to
28 let the Chief Executive respond. If you want to come in quickly there again.

29 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Yes, I forgot to ask is there any update on the Arklow to
30 Shillelagh Greenway.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Perfect, that's great. Thanks, Councillor Murphy. Chief
32 Executive, I will hand it over to you.

33 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you, members. I will fly
34 through these as quickly as I can.

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Councillor Mullen, on the funding and access to the funding and then the implementation and delivery of it. Yes, it is something that I think every local authority struggles with. We try and make projects fit an application process and then you get awarded funding, hopefully. We do have in place a multidisciplinary team across directorates particularly on the larger projects, the RRDF and the ERDF projects. So there is a steering group there that is led jointly by Lorraine Gallagher, Director of Enterprise and Leonora Earls who is the director of the infrastructure side of the house. I am, I suppose, as well in the process of restructuring how we operate, how the different directorates function and operate. I do think we probably need a standalone place making side of things that looks after, from concept to deliveries the whole way through for all of our town and villages and to make that work more seamlessly for us and we have been discussing that at management team as to how that might work.

Councillor Annesley, thank you for your kind words about Arklow Harbour and the staff in harbour. They are doing great work. The pontoon is certainly a fantastic addition to Arklow and it should help with further investment into the town.

Councillor Glennon, I suppose to address the master plan. Yes, certainly, the areas around Hollywood, the park & ride, yes, it absolutely makes absolute sense that that should be rolled into any solution as part of the master plan. As I said, the master plan really is a blueprint of how we see the national park develop and the areas surrounding it. So certainly the constituent areas around that on the park & ride in Hollywood would be a key player, I would say, in that.

Councillor Doyle asked about shop front improvement schemes and grants. Yes, I suppose outside of the Streetscape Enhancement Scheme that the department funded directly, a lot of local authorities did have their own smaller schemes that they would fund to do paint, you know, painting or paint schemes in a town centre. That's generally self-funded by the local authority. So I would imagine that when it ran in the past in Wicklow it would be at a Municipal District level. So it would be open to the members of the Municipal District if they wanted to put such scheme in place to do so and fund it from the Municipal allocation.

1
2 I will get Leonora to talk about the NTA schemes in Bray and public lighting, again,
3 around Newtownmountkennedy.
4

5 I would say, if there are particular issues with non-connection of lighting standards, if
6 you want to email directly to us we can compile a list and then we can go directly and
7 talk to ESB about those ones, because there seems to be a couple of them where the
8 ducting is in place that haven't been connected.
9

10 Councillor Kavanagh, on the cold weather initiative, we will certainly get a
11 communication out to everybody and thank you again for your kind words on the
12 library service. Yes, they do a wonderful job. It is far more than books these days, it
13 really is. It is a warm and welcoming space. I am not surprised that you found it
14 difficult to book a room. I have to say, I really am not surprised.
15

16 Councillor Murphy, on the window replacement. Again I might get Joe to talk on
17 that and the housing stock. The Glendalough master plan, any scheme or works that
18 take place will all have to be done with the mind of universal design, so they have to be
19 accessible in all manners from accessible car parking places to access to facilities and
20 amenities as well.
21

22 Councillor O'Neill, in relation to I suppose the tenants receiving notices to quit and
23 then being supplanted, or new tenants coming in place, the Council has no role there
24 save for if the individual that is being served with a notice to quit is in need of social
25 housing, then I suppose it kicks into our housing side of things. This issue has been
26 highlighted at a national level. It has been highlighted at the CCMA about this
27 turnover, this constant churn and I suppose the reality for the family that is being
28 displaced, it is a real issue. So we will continue to raise that and I will certainly raise
29 it at the next meeting of the Chief Executives on that.
30

31 I will go to Leonora maybe on the Baltinglass pedestrian bridge and on the lighting,
32 the NTA schemes, and then Joe follow up with a couple of housing things. Thank
33 you.

34 MS EARLS: Thank you. Just in relation to pedestrian bridge. You will be aware

1 we got funding from NTA for a study, so that is ongoing at the moment. We already
2 have had discussions with the NTA seeking additional funding for next year in relation
3 to the project, to keep it moving and to get the consultants to move on it. We are
4 aware of the works around the path and we share the position that there will be more
5 pedestrians crossing that bridge now as those areas get developed. So we will keep
6 you informed on that.

7
8 In relation to the rural roads. You do get a fair share, Councillor Glennon, honestly
9 you do. And again, as I said, we never get enough money but we do keep -- we got
10 two additional amounts this year and we will keep pushing for more for next year and
11 we do recognise with the weather that we are getting now, it is creating a lot of
12 difficulty with the roads.

13
14 Relating to the lighting at the Kilcoole Community Centre and at Newtown GAA, we
15 will investigate that. There's probably about 34 sites around the county that require
16 ESB intervention. As I mentioned at the budget meeting, we fall into three different
17 ESB districts so it was making it a little bit more challenging. I can assure members
18 we keep the pressure on both the contractors and the ESB as best we can.

19
20 In relation to the NTA schemes for Bray, we are currently working with the NTA on
21 the 2024 allocation so we can certainly mention the schemes. We have kept all the
22 schemes that we had on our original list, we kept them there in the hope that we might
23 be able to reintroduce some of them. So we will see how that goes for 2024.

24
25 In relation to the Arklow and Shillelagh Greenway, we did have a very successful
26 public consultation and we are working our way through the submissions on that. We
27 are actually moving towards developing what the preferred option is. So once we
28 have that agreed and set out, we are then moving onto phase 3 which is the design of
29 the greenway. Thank you.

30 MR LANE: Two issues I think. One, Councillor O'Neill, as I detailed, this is not a
31 contract with local authority involved in a contract between the 2000 body and the
32 vendor. Every effort has been put in by a number of people within local authority to
33 move stuff. As I detailed previously, it is a contract issue. There's due diligence,
34 there is a whole load of issues, and when the contracts are ready they will deal with it.

1 There is nothing that the local authority has delayed it all the way through. There's
2 planning permission, business control issues that need to be tidied up because the
3 others can't buy it. That's all the issues, so it's just what happens on contracts and
4 what happens on construction sites. We have been watching. We are always
5 watching. As the councillors are aware, I kept you informed with the best
6 information that's available to me. There's nothing we are delaying on it.

7
8 The windows and door programme, per se there is no windows and door programme.
9 There is a fabric upgrade programme in certain areas, but that has particular criteria.
10 We are awaiting direction from the department regarding conditional survey and this
11 will inform involve future programmes, that will be a comprehensive overview of our
12 stock, but that will be a fairly big programme and subsequently it will inform works
13 that will be required. But it is extremely likely that that just won't be windows and
14 doors, it will be fabric upgrade and, like I said, it will require extensive funding.
15 I think that clarifies that.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, you might just mention the cold weather initiatives.

17 MR LANE: Sorry, the Chief Executive answered that. We will circulate that.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: You'll circulate it, perfect. Thank you very much.

19 Councillor Murphy, are you looking to come in again, I am not sure, or is it just that
20 your hand still is up?

21 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Yes. No, I am Cathaoirleach. Thank you. I just
22 wanted to say to the CEO, yes, I know the universal design will be adhered to in all
23 designs, but I particularly want to have inclusion of the changing places, especially in
24 Glendalough which is one of our main tourist attractions in County Wicklow. That is
25 specific funding and a specific design and it would be very, very sad if that was not
26 included in the Glendalough master plan. Certainly I would be pushing for that, and I
27 hope all the councillors would support that. Thank you.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. I have two more people
29 looking to come in and I am asking you to keep it very, very brief because people are
30 coming in a second and third time. Councillor Shay Cullen.

31 COUNCILLOR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. It is a point of clarification on
32 issue that was raised there by Councillor Erika Doyle in terms of lighting from the
33 footpath at Rossmore over to the GAA club in Newtown.

34

1 Just to give a little bit of background. The footpath was constructed a number of
2 years ago through our discretionary fund and the ducting was put in at that particular
3 time for the provision of lights. Under budgetary constraints we never got around to
4 getting the lights. I suppose on a positive, there has been planning permission got by
5 Rockfield Development, it is a residential estate that is being built at the moment, and
6 there is a condition of planning there that a new footpath is to be constructed on the
7 left-hand side of the road, from the roundabout at Rossmore over to the GAA club
8 which will include lighting as well. So that will obviously act as lighting up that
9 particular road and access to the GAA club, but also will light up the new development
10 at Rockfield. I think that will certainly ease the problems in terms of safety on that
11 particular road. And, sorry, that is due to commence the first week of February
12 CATHAOIRLEACH: That's great. Thanks for that clarity, Councillor Cullen.
13 Councillor Gerry Walsh.

14 COUNCILLOR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Part my query earlier in relation
15 to the housing issues related to the local authority home loans, with the number
16 received year to date I take it is 55 and approved rate is 16. Just around those figures,
17 is there a high attrition rate around that in terms of approval rates as against the overall
18 applications received? Thanks.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I think the other two were just
20 comments. I won't invite the Chief Executive and Joe maybe you will come back on
21 Gerry's question there.

22 MR LANE: Yes, as I said before, we have an underwriter in the housing agency who
23 looks at those and ensures affordability. Yes, there would be a high attrition rate.
24 Bearing in mind what happened ten years ago, we are ensuring the people who took
25 loans are in a position to repay it, so there is quite care taken to ensure in those
26 situations. We do have a bit -- give a hand, we go down through the form, but
27 sometimes the application may not, the finances may not justify the application. And
28 you have to be fair on people going forward too, that if there is concerns that there is
29 affordability issue or there is particular a stress test, and if it doesn't achieve that it's in
30 nobody's interest to progress with the application. Or maybe you'd have multiple
31 applications where people have to relook at their application and tweak one or two
32 areas.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Okay. Thank you members. We
34 are going to move to item number 9, just in advance of item number 8, if members are

1 okay with that, just because we have a number of people here in the chamber. So this
2 is to receive a presentation on the Codling Wind Park from Patrick Sammon. So
3 Patrick, you are very welcome and if you want to come on up. Thank you, Patrick. I
4 will let you do the round of introductions.

5 MR SAMMON: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. Actually, I am joined here by
6 my colleagues, Erlend Christiansen, Seán Leake and Pamela McCann and Erlend is
7 just going to start the presentation.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Fantastic. Thanks.

9 MR CHRISTIANSEN: Thanks Pat, and thank you all, members, for your time today.
10 So we have a couple of slides, there's nine or ten slides here and the purpose of this
11 presentation is to provide an update on the Codling Wind Farm project.

12

13 My name is Erlend Chirstiansen. I have been working on the project now for nearly
14 four years. You might be aware, Codling Wind Farm is an offshore wind farm being
15 developed off the coast of County Wicklow. So we have a couple of slides. Seán
16 Leake is going to take over after slide five. So I am going to take the first five slides.

17

18 So firstly, the first slide we have just sets out the context and the need for projects like
19 Codling Wind Park. As you can see, there are the two green circles here in this slide
20 and it highlights two significant challenges we have today. One is the climate change
21 challenge and the other one is the energy security or the energy independency.

22

23 So in terms of climate change, we have a commitment to carbon neutral by 2050. We
24 also have a commitment to generate 80% of our electricity from renewable sources by
25 2030 and these are set out in the Climate Action Plan. So quite ambitious targets.

26

27 In terms of energy security then, this is another significant challenge that we are living
28 with today. Ireland, we are very heavily dependent or reliant on other countries to
29 import our energy, such as fossil fuels and gas. In 2021 we imported 80% of Ireland's
30 energy. A lot of it was brought in from Scotland through the gas pipe. These are
31 very significant challenges we are facing today.

32

33 Offshore wind, like projects like Codling, it offers low cost sustainable energy source
34 for Irish consumers and businesses. Then there is an ambition as set out in the

1 Climate Action Plan to deliver 5 gigawatts of electricity from offshore wind by 2030.

2
3 This slide provides a high level summary of the project. It is a 50/50 joint venture
4 between Fred Olsen Seawind and EDF Renewables. It has been in development for
5 nearly 24 years, so it has been ongoing now for a number of years. It was first
6 identified in 1999. It is located off the Wicklow coast. So the north of the site or the
7 offshore site would be perpendicular with Greystones and the southern part of the site
8 would be close to perpendicular to Wicklow Town. The distance changes. The
9 nearest point to the coast is circa 13 kilometres, that would be the western side or the
10 backside or the eastern side is close to 22 kilometres. It is out by the territorial waters.
11 The size of the offshore site is 125 square kilometres. Then it has a capacity of up to
12 1300 megawatts. It is quite significant in terms of the number of homes it can
13 produce energy to. When built it will contribute to 26% of Ireland's 5 gigawatts of
14 offshore wind. Basically that 1300 megawatts, it translates as, it will power over a
15 million homes.

16
17 Next slide. Thank you. This slide sets out the areas and various elements that are
18 required. So the top right there you can see the site. It is a small enough map, but
19 that indicates the location of the offshore site itself. Then as part of that we need to
20 have a power cable that links the site to the shore. So that is called the export cable
21 corridor. So that is going to go to Dublin. It is going to go into an area called
22 Poolbeg and that is where the existing EirGrid substation is. Now it is not just
23 offshore infrastructure, there is also onshore infrastructure required. There is an
24 onshore substation that requires to be built. The landfall site. The landfall is where
25 the offshore cables come ashore and then there is also underground onshore cables that
26 are required to be installed. Then there is another substation which is EirGrid or the
27 ESB one. As part of that construction there would also be temporary construction
28 compounds for machinery and installation equipment.

29
30 Next slide please. So this slide here kind of highlights the key milestones. It looks
31 back by a couple of years and it also looks forward. So the first line it says MAP, that
32 stands for Marine Area Planning Act. Basically that is the consenting regime that we
33 are going to be submitting a planning application under. Right now, looking back,
34 the key consenting requirements, we submitted a MAC application, which is a Marine

1 Area Consent. It's like the State consent. Before we submit a development or a
2 planning application, we need to have a MAC in place and that was done under the
3 Marine Area Planning Act which was the new marine legislation enacted in 2021.
4 We were awarded a MAC at the end of last year. What we have been doing now over
5 the last few years is preparing a planning application and environmental impact
6 assessment reports.

7
8 Then with grid, similarly we have reached some significant milestones. We
9 submitted a grid application in 2022 and we were issued from EirGrid what is called a
10 GCA, it is a grid connection assessment award.

11
12 Then finally there is the RESS, it's the offshore RESS, it stands for Renewable
13 Electricity Support Scheme. It is a government-run auction that you compete to
14 provide electricity, basically. Lots of other projects would have competed in that and
15 Codling were lucky to be successful in that offshore RESS which was earlier this year.

16
17 Then the yellow line, this highlights the high level development and construction
18 timeframe. So the developments will continue on until 2025 and then it's FID, your
19 finance will close in 2026 and then the construction is envisaged to begin in 2027 and
20 that will last for maybe two or three years.

21
22 I think that is it. There are other areas there. It is probably worth mentioning that the
23 operation and maintenance base, it is a separate application to the primary application
24 for the offshore and onshore infrastructure, and that will happen down the line. So
25 that is the kind of first five slides.

26
27 I am going to hand you over to my colleague now Seán Leake. Thank you.

28 MR LEAKE: Good afternoon, everybody, and thank you again ever so much for
29 your time. My name is Seán Leake and I am the offshore EIA and consent manager
30 for Codling Wind Park. I just thought over the next couple of slides I will talk
31 through a couple of the key topics for the offshore part of the application that I thought
32 might be of interest to the members here today.

33
34 The slide you can see on the screen there illustrates the planning application boundary

1 that Erlend has just talked through. You have got the offshore array area and then
2 what we call the offshore export cable corridor, which connects the array to the
3 landfall area. On the screen you can see there are a number of European or
4 international designated sites, special protection areas for ornithology for birds, and
5 special areas of conservation for features such as stony reef or biogenic reefs, so reefs
6 that are formed by types of worms, sublayer spinulosus. Then once you come into
7 landfall you have got a combination of habitats and ornithological features there.

8
9 This is forming a key part of our assessment, obviously, the Natura Impact Statement
10 and the Environmental Impact Assessment. I wanted to illustrate it here today so
11 show that the Array area itself is obviously outside of any internationally designated
12 sites, indeed outside of any nature conservation designations at all. We do have
13 special protection areas nearby which means that we are finalising now a very detailed
14 ornithological impact assessment to understand the potential impact from the project
15 on birds that may be flying through the area. So undertaking collision risk
16 assessments.

17
18 The cable corridor then goes through special areas of conservation. So there is the
19 potential there for interaction with these biogenic reefs I just mentioned and we will be
20 introducing mitigation measures such that we will be undertaking a survey in advance
21 of construction to avoid those sorts of features.

22
23 So our impact assessment is really focusing on survey data that we have, so
24 site-specific survey data and those international designated sites and then national
25 destinations as well, of course.

26
27 So ensure we have correct mitigation in place, things like the avoidance reef features
28 that I have just touched on, but also we have reduce the number of turbines from 400
29 turbines originally down to around 75 will be the maximum number of turbines.
30 Principally to reduce that potential ornithological impact, but also it is the number of
31 other impacts that we will be seeking to avoid. Once we come into landfall, there will
32 be further mitigations that we are looking at, things like seasonal restrictions to avoid
33 impacting the ornithological features during those key sensitive periods, really.

1 So I just wanted to touch on that as a kind of flavour of the marine ecology aspects that
2 we are talking about, considering in our assessment. I am very happy to come back
3 and answer questions on that a bit later on.

4
5 If we can move onto the next slide, please. So then one of the other key areas,
6 non-ecological, but the picture you can see on the screen is what is called a zone of
7 theoretical visibility. So this looks at the potential distance that you will be able to
8 see the turbines from. You can see there is a predominantly blue screen and then with
9 a kind of purply-pink I think it is on this screen. The blue is the smaller of the two
10 options the project will be seeking consent for, the purple represents the slightly taller
11 turbines that you will be able to see from a greater distance. Clearly they are visible
12 across sea as a flat environment but as you come onto shore, into land, you can see that
13 there are patches of visibility or potential visibility of the project. As I say it is called
14 a zone of theoretical visibility, so it assumes things like a flat earth without trees in the
15 intervening space, and also it doesn't take into account any change that you may have
16 in visibility due to meteorological conditions, mist and so on. What you can also see
17 on this figure is a number of viewpoints from which the technical leads for the
18 seascape/landscape impact assessment, will be taken at those locations. There will be
19 photographs presented from those locations, wireline images as well so that we can
20 gain an understanding of the potential visual impact of the project from those
21 locations. We have got 36 visual viewpoints to give a clear understanding of the
22 potential interaction there with whether it is areas of visual importance or residential
23 importance and to give us that understanding and to have photo montages that are
24 representative of then a wider area. Clearly you can't have a viewpoint at every
25 location, but it is to gain that understanding of the potential impacts from the project.

26
27 And, again, I am happy to answer any particular questions on the visual aspects.

28
29 The next slide, if you wouldn't mind, is really just to touch on some of the
30 commitments the project has been making which are important, but also just to bring
31 in some of the -- we touched on ecological, landscape and also some of the other
32 aspects that we are considering as part of our impact assessment that are clearly
33 important. The sort of human aspects and then the potential benefits that the project
34 can bring.

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First on the screen there then, the Commercial Fisheries Fund, the project announced this earlier this year as part of the release of a sustainable fishers charter. So a €500,000 fund that is available for the offshore fishing community, for local fishers to be able to access that funds and really bring benefit to their activities and to seek funding for initiatives that they may feel will support the sustainability of the fishery.

There is the charter for commercial fisheries that I touched on already, and there is also the biodiversity charter. It is the first fisheries charter in Ireland, but I think also one of the first biodiversity charters which really seeks to demonstrate how the project will ensure we protect biodiversity on the Codling bank throughout the development of the project. I touched briefly a moment ago on the mitigation measures we are bringing forward, but we are also seeking to potentially enhance the project area as well. Consider options there for nature inclusive design offshore. So what does that look like? What does that really mean? For the project we will be installing monopile structures onto the Codling bank, that will be the base of the turbines. There is potential for scour as the tide moves back and forth past those turbines. The industry would ordinarily put rock placement down to protect the seabed from scour or reduce the scour. One of the things that we are looking at is actually modifying that to have concrete structures or similar structures that enable an enhancement of the existing biodiversity. It can bring in things like habitat for lobster. It can bring in a hard substrate that you get, bryozoa, so things like Ross coral and other species. It really seeks to build on some amazing science done in the North Sea and Dutch waters in the Netherlands. Some of it is these rock structures. Some other aspects are oyster reefs as well, where it is building to redevelop and reinstate and enhance existing oyster stocks. As we know across northwest Europe generally, oyster reefs bring huge biodiversity gain and they have reduced over time. So we would seek to draw on some of that amazing research that is being done in the North Sea but also there is a great deal being done in the Irish Sea. University College Dublin, for example, have done some amazing research on eco structures, eco engineering, to look at these types of structures and how we can seek to introduce them into the wind farm either, as I say, for scour protection around the monopile bases, or indeed for cable protection as well. If a cable can't be buried because it is crossing another cable or because of the hard ground, we will need to put rock placement down on top of it to protect it, or to protect

1 fishes and anchoring damage and so on. And if we can, be looking to increase the
2 biodiversity that may be associated with that.

3

4 And then just to touch on one more -- well a couple of more bullets and then I will
5 hand over to my colleague Pat. Biodiversity enhancement, we touch on it. Offshore
6 we are looking at nature inclusive design opportunities, potentially some of these reef
7 cubes that could be introduced offshore. But that desire to enhance biodiversity will
8 increase through into Poolbeg as well.

9

10 There is some onshore developments that we are hoping to bring forward, really
11 landscaping and enhancement but also looking at these aspects such as reef plates that
12 you can have alongside port developments or terrestrial structures within the marine or
13 river environments to really enhance. You can structure them in interesting ways so
14 that, you know, local schools can participate in the development of these things, for
15 example, but they then have an ecological benefit. So it helps seaweeds, limpets and
16 it can effectively form rock pools on some of these structures. There's a whole
17 programme there really to look at opportunities there for biodiversity enhancement
18 across the offshore into the onshore.

19

20 Then as it says up on the screen, there's a number of proactive stakeholder engagement
21 events, one of which is today. So thank you again for your time. Then there is a
22 much broader Community Benefit Fund which will be developed over the coming
23 years.

24

25 What I might do then, again that was a bit of a whistle-stop tour. I thought I would
26 give you a flavour, but I would very much welcome any questions or interests that
27 members have here today. In the meanwhile, I will hand over to my colleague Pat.
28 MR SAMMON: Go raibh maith agat arís, Cathaoirleach. As Sean has mentioned,
29 we have had a number of public engagements and consultations over the last couple of
30 years. The first one was in March 2021. That obviously had to take place under the
31 Covid restrictions, that took place online. But earlier this year we were able to have
32 our second phase of public engagement, so that would have taken place across
33 different events; in Kilcoole, Greystones and Wicklow and in Sandymount where the
34 cables come ashore there and our onshore substation is being constructed. And our

1 next phase of public engagement will take place to align with the lodging of the
2 planning application which will take place, which will go into An Bord Pleanála in the
3 early part of next year.

4
5 So over the last couple of years as well obviously we have been involved in different
6 sponsorships and engagements with the community through that. So there would be a
7 lot of sporting clubs and different organisations around the county that we would have
8 sponsored. Actually, we are just after coming from a really lovely sponsorship events
9 up in the tennis club, just up the road. We sponsored a pool table up there. So you
10 will have the benefit of seeing my face in the Wicklow People early next week.

11
12 So there is a range of those and obviously you know Codling is about -- part of the
13 legacy of this project will be a healthier community, a healthier Wicklow through
14 cleaner air and a stronger environment, but the health of the community in terms of
15 enriching the community through the sporting and cultural life is obviously a big part,
16 will be a big part of our legacy. Through this phase as we develop it through the
17 sponsorship, but obviously then onwards through the Community Benefit Fund which
18 will come into play once we go through the consenting process and during the
19 construction phase, that will ramp up then.

20
21 And obviously next year we're going to have a bigger focus on supply chain. It is a
22 big project and we will have -- we will be looking to engage with businesses to see
23 how businesses in the community can engage with our supply chain more. We have a
24 predisposition towards looking to -- like even from our own side of the house in the
25 communications side of things, we like to deal with people locally if we are holding
26 events and that kind of thing. But obviously it is a much bigger project than our
27 corner, so as we progress towards the construction phase, we will be looking to engage
28 with businesses around the county to see how we can share the benefits of this project
29 with the business community in Wicklow as well.

30
31 Just one last thing on public engagement as well, you will see it there, we had youth
32 engagement. There was a couple of members present in Coláiste Craobh Abhann in
33 Kilcoole about a week and a half ago. And we had, actually I am just going to say it,
34 it was an amazing conference. We sponsored it. It was led -- we worked on it, but

1 the real leadership provided for this was from the students in the schools. It was
2 focused on transition year but there were students from different classes there as well,
3 and I have no doubt about it, like, some of the people who were there on the day will
4 be, you know, your colleagues in the years to come. They were just amazing. And
5 just dealing with that first slide there on the context to on climate action, there was a
6 ferocious energy in the room and you could sense the urgency for the need for action
7 on that. They were giving it back to us as well, you know, keep moving fast and get
8 this done. Because we had a number of different panels, including one laying out the
9 scale of the problem and what needed to be done and the solutions on a more global
10 scale, and then talking about the skills, opportunities and how to get involved in
11 renewable energy. And there was another panel where students were talking about
12 their own anxieties around this issue and the need for us collectively as a society to act
13 and to make progress on this, because it is an anxiety that young people unfortunately
14 have to live with all the time and they need to see progress, and they made that clear to
15 us on the day.

16
17 Now, sorry, before we run out of time or anything, I just had a quick mention, sorry,
18 the next slide there, please. Just on the Community Benefit Fund, this will kick into
19 play, as I said, once we go through the consenting process and after the
20 commencement notice is issued for construction, and there will be a significant annual
21 fund. We will be making an announcement early next year around the time of the
22 lodging of the planning application on the fund. But it will be a significant fund. It
23 will allow communities, the really important thing, and this is laid out in the
24 department's Community Benefit Fund handbook that they published in January of
25 this year, and there is one line and it is kind of buried in the middle of the document,
26 but it says that the fund isn't to be considered compensation of any kind, rather it is
27 to -- it is the mechanism to share the benefits of offshore renewable energy with
28 communities. So that is how we have approached this. This is the mechanism to
29 share the benefits of offshore energy with the community in Wicklow, and even
30 though it is a little away, you know, we are always keen to make sure that we say to
31 people and to say to organisations in the area that it is a little off yet because we have to
32 progress through the planning process before this ever comes into being, but it is
33 significant and people should start to think about the projects that they would like to
34 see progressed through it.

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Our first job in respect of the fund will be to procure the services of the independent administrator for it, and once that administrator has been appointed they will form the committee and dispense the funds to the appropriate causes laid out under the terms and conditions and they will also define the local area as well. We can provide, probably, a longer explanation on another time, because there is a lot to be said on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Absolutely.

MR SAMMON: We are happy to take questions now.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Brilliant, Patrick. Thank you so much and I know when we get to that point, the community fund, there is going to be a lot of questions. So there's a number of speakers. I will ask speakers to keep it brief if they can, just to give everybody an opportunity to come in.

And before the speakers come in, just from myself, Patrick, I am based in Bray, and question is why is Bray not included? We do believe that the visual impact will have an impact on Bray as well. We widely welcome it, but we are just wondering why you stopped at Greystones?

What we do normally here is, we take a number of questions first and then we invite you to respond to a few. That will be one of them. But I better let one of my colleagues in first before you answer. Hold that thought. I will invite a few more in. We normally take it in threes. You might want a pen and paper. There might be a lot. Advance warning.

Okay. Councillor Gail Dunne.

COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thanks, Pat, and your team for your presentation here today. It is not the first time we have heard you and, in fairness, to the Codling Wind Farm they have always kept us in the loop. They have been at a number of Municipal District meetings. We have had open days in The Bridge Tavern in my area. Going forward, we're looking at construction jobs up to 1,000 and then, hopefully 100 to 200 jobs when the project is completed. So I personally have been on board with this from the start and I think it is a great project. Sometimes I think it's going slowly but I understand you have to go through different hoops.

1 Just on the community fund, I suppose this is probably not a surprise to you, just the
2 make up of the committee, how is that going to be made up? And how will the
3 independent chair be picked? I am interested in that.

4
5 I am also interested in clubs and organisations, how will they apply? You know what
6 is the mechanism for them to apply? What kind of projects are you looking for?
7 You know, what type of projects? Like, is it going to be like a name on a jersey or
8 some really big projects that, you know, you could do a thousand little things and
9 maybe three or four really big things might be a better project. So I am just interested
10 to find out them questions because, to be fair, and I probably speak for most of the
11 councillors in our area, that we are getting people wondering the timeframe and things
12 like that. It is important that we can go back to them and say, right, it is going to be
13 next year and you need to get your ducks lined up and things like that, because people
14 are waiting.

15

16 But going forward, I just want to wish you and your team the very best. I hope you
17 are very successful. I think no matter what happens the benefits are really -- you
18 know they are outstanding and we should be really in support of your project. Thank
19 you

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Derek
21 Mitchell.

22 COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yes, for our national
23 objectives we clearly need to get on with this. It has been going on for a long time
24 and we need to get this green electricity. However we should not spoil the sea vistas
25 over the Wicklow coast. This gives a sense of escapism from industrialisation and it
26 provides calmness for people. We can see how important this is from the very large
27 number of people who walk beside the coast all along this wind farm.

28

29 Planning for this, as well as the Dublin Array needs to take into account the combined
30 visual effect. We didn't have a mention of the other development, the Dublin Array,
31 which is closer to the coast and also is more disruptive visually because of that. But
32 planning so far seems only to have dealt with each wind farm. And this will result in
33 a line of turbines taller than Bray Head, close to the shore from Dun Laoghaire to
34 Wicklow Town. Now in Greystones and Kilcoole they would take up almost the

1 entire sea horizon. So in my opinion there needs to be a substantial gap left between
2 the two wind farms and because they are being treated separately all along, this doesn't
3 appear. This gap should be where they meet, in my view, from Bray promenade to
4 Kilcoole and lines due east of those places. This would greatly reduce the visual
5 impact in Bray, Greystones, Kilcoole, Wicklow Town, Killiney, and the Bray Head
6 SAC. They would still have the worst visual impact in the country because of the
7 closeness to the coast and the large scale, but it would be less and I think it would not
8 be as imposing. This would reduce the number of turbines slightly. However, later
9 these could be placed in the shallow waters further offshore, particularly in the north
10 of the area which would meet the green targets. However, the main parts do need to
11 proceed quickly and I think we should get on with that main part.

12
13 Greystones District asked for a visual study to be carried out by the Council as we
14 believe that there should be an independent visual assessment whereby we can judge
15 it. Now I carried out a study with the assistance -- this hasn't been done, but I carried
16 out a study with the assistance of a visual expert who has examined 29 working wind
17 farms in the UK and only two or three of these have a worse visual impact than at
18 Greystones or possibly Kilcoole, and most very, very much less. So I have a short
19 presentation on that, which there wouldn't be time to give now but I would be happy to
20 give at a subsequent meeting, which shows the three wind farms in fact proposed off
21 the coast of central to north Wicklow. And I think it is important that we look at the
22 whole lot of them and consider the impact of them all. Thank you

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Gerry Walsh.

24 COUNCILLOR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And thanks to Pat and his team
25 for the presentation. It is welcome to hear that you are at such a stage there that you
26 are ready to go through planning in early 2024, as you said yourself. Listening to
27 some of the media commentary about wind farms and offshore in particular, there
28 seems to be some concern about delays in the overall process and investors having
29 doubts, et cetera, et cetera. So this definitely is a good news story and you're ahead of
30 the curve.

31
32 Just a couple of quick ones. On the visuals there, you mentioned 75 turbines which is
33 significantly reduced from the initial numbers that were being envisaged for this.
34 You didn't give any indication of what the size -- will there be different sizes? I

1 thought from the presentation that there might be some different size turbines
2 included, or are they all the one size? Maybe you can give a further update on that.
3 The commercial fisheries fund is welcome. Have you been engaging with the
4 fishermen in question that are affected by this so as, you know, to point out, you said
5 yourself the project area will actually be enhanced from their point of view. I am sure
6 there has been some engagement with them. Again, I welcome you coming back to
7 public engagement in line the planning application lodgement. That is important.
8 The environmental issues, the assessments and the studies have been carried out. It is
9 important that that is clarified for the people and all the questions will receive answers.

10

11 And just finally, on the CBF, and I know you mentioned about the independent
12 administrator and the local area to be defined after that. Can you give any advice, and
13 similar to Councillor Dunne's question, to local communities so as they can be ready
14 for what is coming down the track in the CBF? What type of projects? Can they be
15 shovel ready? Maybe you would give an indication of the type of money that could
16 be involved over the period of -- is it just over the period of construction or is it
17 ongoing? Thank you.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Are you okay if I take
19 one more?

20 MR SAMMON: Yes

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: There's so many people looking to come in.
22 Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

23 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach and thanks to the team
24 for their presentation. Just a couple of points. Again, I want to give credit, since day
25 one the value that Codling has put on public engagement. Always available, always
26 ready to have the conversations regardless of where they are coming from or what's
27 involved and I want to pay particular tribute to the work with young people and
28 especially the event last week which, again, is was lovely to see a member of our
29 Comhairle na nÓg as the co-host of the event, which is another testament to this local
30 authority and how it does youth engagement. A couple of points, then. It is really
31 fascinating to me how, I have worked with a lot of young people for a lot of years in
32 relation to this as a particular issue and never once have I heard a young person say
33 that they are worried about the view. I think they are more concerned about the
34 impact of climate change, energy security, and maybe the one million homes that will

1 benefit from the wind farms. Maybe we can come up with some mindful practice
2 when we are looking at wind farms out on the sea, that might help us as well. I think
3 that is possible.

4
5 I really think that the positive future that was presented at the conference in terms of
6 young people not just thinking of themselves as needing to be activists for a change,
7 but that they can actually pursue job opportunities and that's where the change can be.
8 That they don't always have to take to the streets. They don't always have to be living
9 in this anxious hypervigilance about a future, they can actually pursue careers and take
10 roles and see themselves being fundamentally part of the positive change and I think
11 that came across very well and very strongly at the conference. And I think it's really
12 important that we all take, you know, a sense of how, yes, the picture that Codling
13 presents, that it is not just you could say on one side of things yes, it is a venture where
14 investors will make money at the other end of it, but I think you have shown how
15 public engagement in advance of the work but also post work happening is really
16 sincere and I think we can maybe take a leaf out of that book ourselves. I really think
17 there's positive things ahead and I think if you continue in the engagement that you
18 have done so far, I think we will do good stuff. Thanks, Cathaoirleach

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor.

20 Pat, I invite you to come back in here. I might ask that you keep your responses brief,
21 because we know there are six people looking to come in, if that is okay.

22 MR SAMMON: Very good. To come back to yourself, Cathaoirleach, in relation to
23 Bray. We are actually doing sponsorships in the Bray area, the rowing club, we
24 sponsored the jerseys there and actually we are supporting the lights going on. I hope
25 there will be more in the coming while. My colleague Pamela is going to talk through
26 how the local area is defined under the Community Benefit Fund. But without
27 stealing her thunder completely, it is not up to Codling to define where the Community
28 Benefit Fund, when that kicks in, where that will happen. That will be the local
29 committee will decide that.

30
31 Thanks, Councillor, for your kind comments on public engagement there as well.

32
33 Councillor Walsh mentioned the Community Benefit Fund, and just in terms of the
34 fishers, how that will be -- our engagement with the fishers. So yes, we have -- just to

1 answer your question. We have been engaging with local fishers. We have a
2 full-time fisheries liaison manager there and she has been instrumental in -- she leads a
3 team of liaison officers there and they engage with fishers on a regular basis along the
4 coast here. And she was also instrumental in bringing about the fishers' fund which is
5 separate to the community or any other sponsorships or the Community Benefit Fund.
6 It is a half-million euro pot that is there for fishers to use, to identify projects that they
7 consider would be necessary to kind of help support the sector in the area, and they put
8 in the applications for that and the money can be drawn down then as well.

9
10 So I would encourage you to just -- like, we are always publicising this and I think
11 fishers are well aware of it, but just in case, in your conversations with fishers, I would
12 encourage you to point them in the direction of that fund as well, because it is very
13 useful and it is available now, unlike the Community Benefit Fund which obviously
14 kicks in down the road.

15
16 To answer your question on the Community Benefit Fund as well, again without
17 stealing Pamela's thunder, you can draw down 60% of it in year one, after the
18 commencement notice is signed, and that ramps up towards the end of the construction
19 period and then it will be available, 100% will be available across 20 years.

20
21 I think I just have to answer Councillor Dunne's questions.

22 MS McCANN: So just in relation to the Community Benefit Fund. So Codling
23 Wind Park are obliged to secure the services of a fund administrator, and that will be a
24 fully transparent procurement process. That will happen post-planning consent.
25 And once that fund administrator is in place their first responsibility will be to assign
26 the fund committee, and this fund committee, minimum seven, a maximum 20
27 members, two members from local representative agencies and the remaining people
28 are on the committee based on their connection to the local community, if they have
29 specific skills or experiences in community development and the sustainable
30 development goals or community investment. So once they are in place, the
31 committee is the one that defines that target local community, which is a geographical
32 boundary that will benefit from the fund.

33
34 Pat mentioned the rule book which was published in January by the Department, and

1 they really call out what the fund can be used for: You know, sustainable,
2 environmental, economic, social, cultural wellbeing of the target community. And
3 like, it really does call out that careful and due consideration be given to funding
4 opportunities for all stakeholders in the target local community. What I will say is
5 that, you know, there hasn't been a fund of this scale we are aware of in Ireland or the
6 UK, it will be significant. So I know when you are talking about, you know, the
7 application process, again it's up to the committee and the fund administrator to make
8 sure that all of the community is very much aware and fully communicated to on the
9 process and how they apply for funding. It will be significant. There will be a lot of
10 jerseys if you were to put your name on the jerseys. So I would say, I mean that is our
11 advice: To start thinking now of bigger scale projects that the fund will be able to
12 deliver,

13 MR LEAKE: Yes. So SLVIA, seascape landscape impacts. I have worked across
14 a number of projects: I happened to have worked on the recently-consented Awel y
15 Môr project in North Wales and it was a sister project to an existing project
16 immediately adjacent to it called Gwynt y Môr, and also two other wind farms very
17 close by. I also worked on the Rampion Wind Farm in the south coast of England
18 which is having a further wind farm proposed to sit around it. They recently
19 submitted their application. On those two projects, and indeed on Codling,
20 cumulative impact is a critical component of our assessment. It is critical for all
21 aspects, whether it is commercial fisheries or seascape in this case. And what we will
22 be doing is presenting cumulative photo montages? So what does that mean? It will
23 mean that we will present photo montages of Codling as a project and what that will
24 look like on its own, but we will also be presenting illustrations of Codling with
25 Dublin Array from a certain location or Codling with Dublin Array and NISA, the
26 North Irish Sea Array, sorry, and indeed with Arklow in it as well. There may well be
27 certain locations where you will be able to see multiple wind farms from. And so,
28 that cumulative impact assessment is a really integral and important part of our
29 assessment, so I can assure you that will be done. And it will be a substantial number
30 of pages, to not be too trite about it, because we will have those 36 viewpoints, each of
31 which will be presented for Codling and we will have the same viewpoints which will
32 present a cumulative picture, as it were.

33
34 So that is our process in order to ensure that we undertake a robust assessment and

1 meet exactly your request, councillor, that these projects are considered as a whole.

2

3 In terms of the separation, of course these turbines are large. To answer your
4 question, councillor: The larger turbines have a maximum tip height of 314 metres
5 and the smaller turbines, we will be seeking permission for one of two options, either a
6 250-metre rotor diameter or 276-metre rotor diameter, the taller or the larger of those
7 will have a maximum tip height of 314 metres. They will be large turbines of course
8 but the separation between the turbines within Codling's array will be around a
9 kilometre. So you can begin to see that actually these structures, they are a 10-metre
10 wide mono pile at 1-kilometre separations; so there will be a lot of intervening
11 seascape between the turbines. Of course you will be able to see the turbines but
12 there will be a lot of space in between.

13

14 The separation between Dublin Array, I have yet to see their sort of final proposition
15 but I believe it is going to be a couple of kilometres, I think around 3 or 4 kilometres
16 separation between the two projects as it currently stands. So there is certainly going
17 to be that degree of separation, depending on where you are on the coastline of course,
18 you can't always gain the benefit of that particular separation, but the fact that we have
19 1-kilometre spacing, the fact that Dublin Array is likely to bring forward something
20 very similar, and that spacing is in part for visual impacts but also, critically, to
21 facilitate fisheries' access so that the commercial fishermen can still access the
22 Codling bank.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sean, I am sorry, I am just going to have to cut you there. I
24 am just very conscious of time, members, because we are going to stop the meeting at
25 five to four because we have a number of items of correspondence and we can't
26 continue the meeting because we have a presentation later on, so that is why I haven't
27 looked for an extension. So I am just going to bring in a few other speakers, if that is
28 okay, and I would remind members and ask them to keep it tight if you can.

29

30 Councillor Peir Leonard.

31 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes, I just have a few. I am based down in Arklow
32 and I just want to know, does the fund extend down to Arklow, where the
33 decarbonisation zone is part of the Climate Action Plan? So maybe that is something
34 to speak to Director Breege Kilkenny on.

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Just in relation to the impact, I know you are getting ready to go for planning, but you probably heard us speak about coastal erosion in the meeting earlier on, what studies will be part of that and part of the planning? If the OPW -- if we are going to be funding the OPW or if the OPW are going to be funding us to do coastal protection studies and feasibility studies and to have something come in, and this applies for all the wind farms going down, I think we really need to step back and look at the overall picture of what is happening on our coastal -- along the coast as well and how are we going to independently review the impact of different projects coming in as well as what we are doing at the moment with the OPW. I think the whole lot needs to be looked at independently and maybe at a meeting separately with Wicklow County Council outside of all the presentations from the wind farms.

I would just like to ask as well, the energy that comes from the wind farm, is that for the Irish market or will it be for other Irish markets? And I see in Portugal they are actually spearheading a pilot where they give free energy to the communities; is that a possibility to be incorporated as part of the community fund? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Rory O'Connor.

COUNCILLOR O'CONNOR: Thank you very for the presentation. I will try to be as quick as possible. Just one thing I would like to raise. Because I found that timeline very helpful about when the consultation happened and what stage you guys are at. But one part of that stage which I would have liked to have seen is once those turbines come down, I know it is many, many years into the future but we do have to think about these things and plan ahead and I would like to see a thing maybe around, you know, how you will dispose of them in a sustainable way, and commitments around that, because that is a major issue around wind turbines, about what happens to them afterwards.

And just on the topic of the view. To me, when I see turbines it kind of symbolises a brighter future for our own country, having, you know, energy security, and a far more sustainable future. So for me it is a positive thing when I see that out in the sea and I never see it as a negative thing ever to be honest. That is all. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Lourda Scott.

1 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yes, thanks a million and again thanks for your
2 presentation. I just want to say I always find the public engagements that you have
3 done, particularly in our district, really informative and you have always been very
4 forthcoming about the research and work you have done. That is really appreciated.
5 I hope that will continue going forward.

6
7 Just a couple of quick comments, some of which have been touched on before, but just
8 again back to the benefit fund and the committee, the make up of the committee. I
9 was just wondering if the rule book, does that refer to the necessity to have any public
10 representatives on that committee at all? Because I would see that as a key role in
11 terms of sort of representing the wider members of the community on that, the
12 distributors of the fund.

13
14 My other question was just around, you were discussing the visual impacts and how
15 the cumulative effect of the visual impacts is being looked at, which is welcome, but I
16 was wondering if the same is applying to the studies and assessments which are very
17 comprehensive, to be sure, on the biodiversity and the potential impacts on the actual
18 seabed, and I know you have done a lot of studies and I have asked you this before in
19 terms of the impact even of noise as well as the physical impact of the structure that
20 was there. And again, I am just wondering, is there any -- obviously you have a lot of
21 data that you have generated yourselves, and is there any mechanism for the sharing of
22 that data with other wind farm companies so that there is a sort of cumulative effect of
23 all of the wind farms on biodiversity, on the various sandbanks that are there off our
24 coast, which are very bio diverse risk, I was just wondering is there any forum for
25 sharing that information? Obviously you are all private companies but it just would
26 seem to be a sensible thing.

27
28 Just finally I do just want to touch on the visual impacts because it was referred that
29 our own Greystones district, which I represent asked for an independent assessment on
30 the visual impacts to be done. That wasn't passed unanimously. I certainly didn't
31 support that motion. I do want to say I completely concur with what
32 Councillor O'Connor said there. Like, I suppose if we all had the choice we would
33 prefer to leave our coast the way it is, it is familiar we all love it but having said that if
34 our global average temperature exceeds 2 degrees, or what was agreed at the Paris

1 Agreement, what we are looking at outside our window visually is going to be the
2 absolute least of our worries for humanity. And I too would see the wind farms as,
3 you know, they are a signal of future, they are a signal of future for our children and I
4 think we do have to maybe change the way we frame what we are going to see in the
5 future when we continue and get these constructed. Thank you again for the
6 engagement today.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor John Snell.

8 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks to the team for the
9 presentation. As a member of the Wicklow Municipal District I have to concord that
10 your engagement has been excellent to date and indeed at county council level. Just a
11 few points, if I could, Cathaoirleach.

12

13 First and foremost, I haven't seen at first-hand the project Beatrice which is off the
14 northeast coast of Scotland and the benefit that it brought to towns such as Wick.
15 You know it is something that I look forward to and welcome here along the east coast.
16 And unfortunately the landscape is changing and whether it is SSE or it is Codling
17 Wind Farm that is the reality of how we as a nation are moving and I suppose we have
18 to keep up with the times and it is something that is going to happen; but it is to make
19 sure that it is done fairly.

20

21 In regards to the delivery of an independent chair of this community fund, I suppose
22 it's instrumental to trust within the community and it is something that really has to be
23 looked at really closely and the make up of that subcommittee. Because you
24 mentioned that you have distributed up to €50,000 to date, I am just wondering is there
25 anywhere we could source a list of who has applied and how did they apply and the
26 breakdown and the make up of that? Because in the absence of currently no
27 committee I am just wondering how do people access that funding to date? I am sure
28 there's groups out there that will be looking with interest to see why they perhaps
29 haven't been considered or maybe should they have come forward themselves.

30

31 But anyway, going forward, really, truthfully, you know to benefit a community
32 sometimes it goes far beyond sporting and the voluntary sector, and for me, anyway, a
33 lot of it should come down to employment aspect. And that is where I would like to
34 see the project here, the Codling Wind Farm, engaging with the Wicklow County

1 Council first and foremost but also in regards to the management team out in
2 Claremont campus, about putting in place the upskilling and the training of our young
3 people who are leaving school, college, that they can into the future gain employment
4 within this industry. So I would like to see that we put the structures in place now.
5 This is going to be here off the shore for a long, long time and I think that the young
6 people, rather than having to emigrate to Australia, New Zealand, America, as has
7 happened all down through the history of our Irish nation, that they have employment,
8 gainful employment here on their doorstep through exciting projects like this.

9

10 So just a couple of questions, Cathaoirleach.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Members, I am going to give Codling
12 an opportunity just to come back on some of those items because I am just conscious
13 of the time. You have about two minutes so that we can try and get the rest of the
14 people in. I am so sorry about rushing you like this. Thank you, Pat.

15 MR SAMMON: That is fine. I like a challenge. Just on the Irish market, will it be
16 supplied -- yes, it will be supplied primarily to the Irish market? The connection is
17 into the grid in Poolbeg. It is up to EirGrid. If there is an oversupply of the grid at
18 the time it can be exported through the interconnector, but primarily the power
19 generated in Codling will be used to supply the Irish markets, a million Irish homes
20 potentially we will be able to supply with clean, renewable Irish energy.

21

22 Just Councillor Scott on the membership of the committee. Yes, members of the
23 local authority can be members. It is not -- can be members of the local committee
24 and actually two members of the committee must be members of local -- sorry, the
25 exact phrasing is escaping me might now, but can be members of local bodies, like the
26 PPN or the local authority, and like organisations.

27

28 Just in terms of sponsorships and how they are managed currently. We try to manage
29 them and try to be fair to people. So if people come to us -- like, we are at
30 development stage so it is kind of a small pot. So we try and manage it. We try
31 manage that pot to give a decent geographical spread up along the coast and also
32 obviously we have to think about people who are living where the cables come ashore
33 in Poolbeg. But, like, throughout this development phase our message to people is:
34 Really, you know, the sponsorship fund is great but think about the Community

1 Benefit Fund, because it will be a multiple of what the sponsorship is available, and,
2 like, legacy is really important to us working on the project. The Community Benefit
3 Fund will deliver serious, serious legacy projects for the community and that, so to
4 really engage with ideas, ideas for that.

5
6 I am going to hand over to Sean really quickly, about 30 seconds.

7 MR LEAKE: Thank you I will go as quickly and wrap up some together if I can.

8
9 Decommissioning. Absolutely, it is an integral part of our environmental impact
10 assessment to understand the potential impacts from taking the turbines out. That is
11 the requirement under that OSPAR. There will also be the opportunity to re-power at
12 that time. So if the foundations are fit for purpose and subject to consenting at the
13 time the lifespan of the project could potentially be extended. The lifespan of the
14 project is set for 25 years, but on some occasions they have been extended in other
15 jurisdictions. But fundamentally part of the impact assessment will be to
16 decommission, to remove, and we have to understand the impacts of that and present
17 those for public review.

18
19 In terms of coastal erosion, coastal impacts, absolutely we are undertaking a
20 detailed -- or we have undertaken a detailed hydrodynamic model, presented all sorts
21 of numerical outputs, but principally focuses on reduction in wave height or change in
22 wave height, change in tidal currents and whether there may be far afield impacts of
23 that associated with the coastline. We also present that for a cumulative picture. So
24 Codling alone and then Codling with things like Dublin Array.

25
26 Just to go down on the same theme as cumulative, the benefit for seabed communities,
27 fishing communities and so on. We have undertaken a detailed assessment of the
28 project alone and we are also presenting a cumulative impact assessment of the
29 potential change in a seabed habitat across the region, for example. And we are
30 supporting that with, for example, cumulative noise modelling. So the construction
31 noise associated with Codling being built and then with Dublin Array being built
32 perhaps at a similar time, and so on. So we will have a presentation there of what the
33 potential underwater noise impacts might be.

34

1 Then just to wrap all those things up in terms of the data that has been acquired. I
2 understand the data will be provided by the project to the Marine Institute, I believe the
3 data go into eventually, but we are already sharing some of that data, some of that
4 information across projects in order to inform these cumulative impact assessments.
5

6 I have worked across offshore wind for the last 15 years with all sorts of different
7 developers in different jurisdictions and I have never seen the level of projects
8 working together to really try and present a coherent cumulative impact assessment.
9 That speaks to something you raised, Councillor Mitchell, but also requests from An
10 Bord Pleanála to really try and do the legwork effectively, present something
11 comprehensively that can be understood.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Sean. I am going to stop you there now.
13 Because other people --

14 MR LEAKE: Sorry.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, no, you are grand. I am sorry about this. We have four
16 last speakers and I would really encourage the four last speakers to be very brief just to
17 allow your colleagues in, if that is okay. Councillor Irene Winters.

18 COUNCILLOR WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I welcome it. I look forward
19 to using the electricity that we all get and the energy that comes out of it. I have
20 worked with Councillor Mitchell for a long time on the transport plan and Irish Rail
21 are finally coming around to seeing the good that he has done and the stuff that he
22 suggested ten years ago. So I would be interested if you could engage with him, if he
23 has actually done some work, in relation to things that he thinks might actually be of
24 benefit, because I think you will probably find out that he is actually telling the truth.
25 Thank you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Mary
27 Kavanagh.

28 COUNCILLOR KAVANAGH: Some of my questions have been answered but I just
29 want know to know what percentage of these wind turbines -- you said they're going to
30 range between 13 and 20 kilometres offshore. I just want to know what percentage
31 are at 13 and what percentage are at 22? I want to know are there any other wind
32 farms anywhere in existence that are closer to shore than 22 kilometres? Because it
33 seems to me that, you know, there's an awful lot of money that can be saved by
34 bringing these very close to shore, but it is within that 12-mile or 22-kilometre area

1 that most marine life lives. That's why fishermen fish around those shores. Beyond
2 that point, there's far less environmental damage that can be caused. So is there any
3 reason why you're under the 22-kilometre limit? Thank you.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Councillor Tom Fortune.

5 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And I won't delay. Most of
6 my questions, Pat, have been answered already. Again it was a very, very good
7 session with you.

8

9 I just want to go back to what you said about the conference at CCA. That was
10 fantastic, it really was, and the impact from yourselves was very, very commendable.
11 I learned more at that particular session than I have learned at anything I have attended
12 and today has just added to that. I would just make a couple of observations.

13

14 It was really an interesting conference. One presenter frightened the bejaysus out of
15 everybody. And that is the only way you could describe it. And then the whole
16 thing then evolved and the presenter on climate justice was absolutely brilliant. And I
17 don't hear enough about climate justice and I must say that was a real kind of
18 eye-opener for me and really well done to yourselves. And, as most speakers have
19 said already, you are very professional and you are putting yourselves across in a very
20 professional way and we are all gaining more and more.

21

22 The fund committee, be careful about that one, because there may be an effort to put
23 no politicians into it, it'll be very political at the end of the day because everyone is a
24 politician.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor Fortune. Councillor Shay
26 Cullen.

27 COUNCILLOR CULLEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I will be brief. And thanks to
28 the team there for your presentation and indeed your interaction with the district. I
29 am in the Wicklow district, like some of the members here, and it is good that we
30 continue to speak to you on this.

31

32 First of all, I am very supportive of the project. I think the energy supply for this
33 country and our security in energy is paramount, and, you know, the sooner we have
34 that the better. I suppose my concern, and my major concern, is the planning process.

1 And indeed I listened to an interview this morning on one of the radio stations where
2 with projects like this I think the schedule time with An Bord Pleanála is about 18 to
3 20 weeks and currently some of these applications are taking up to 90 weeks,
4 apparently. So I am worried about the timescale of how we can deliver the likes of
5 this project, a project that is absolutely necessary and urgently required. So it may
6 not be an issue for yourselves to try and deal with that particular thing, but I think
7 leadership and pressure from yourselves in terms of the people behind the planning
8 system, we need to all maybe work together on that to make sure that, you know, this
9 particular project is brought to fruition as fast as possible. Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor. Members, we are going
11 to run over a few minutes, but we're not making any decisions so I have been told that
12 is allowed. So bear with me.

13

14 Pat, if you want to come in on some of those comments, and Sean?

15 MR SAMMON: Yes. To Councillor Winters there, yes, we have met with
16 Councillor Mitchell a number of times and we look forward to doing so again many
17 more times. And we met with Councillor Mitchell's -- the expert
18 Donnacha -- Donnacha's surname just escapes me now.

19 COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Donnacha Gallagher.

20 MR SAMMON: -- Donnacha Gallagher as well earlier in the summer as well, which
21 was a very positive meeting as well.

22

23 Yes, Councillor Fortune, thank you for your kind words about the conference. It was
24 amazing. And John Gibbons did scare a lot of people that day. I mean, he said he
25 wasn't going to sugar coat the situation we're in collectively, and he didn't. And I
26 think he had -- like, there were a few jaws on the floor after he finished. And I agree
27 with you as well, Emer Manning, the climate justice expert there on the day was just
28 excellent, was just kind of refocussing everybody on the ultimate objective here,
29 which is a fair society, powered in a much more clean, sustainable way, in a way that
30 benefits everybody, and that isn't done at the expense of everyone, but there are
31 opportunities within the space that will improve everyone's lives and she really, she
32 provided -- she just illuminated that point really beautifully.

33

34 Yes, Councillor Cullen, I agree with you, there are always issues with the planning

1 process and always concerns with the planning process, and we have made those
2 points repeatedly to relevant people in the Department and elsewhere. I will say, if
3 you go back a couple of years, like, and look at the progress that has been made in the
4 whole planning infrastructure an incredible job has been done, like creating a new
5 regulatory and legal infrastructure that allows projects to move forward. I think a lot
6 of the concerns that would have been aired this morning on the radio relate to projects
7 who, unlike ourselves, don't have the benefit of -- they haven't progressed this far, so
8 there obviously is more -- there are more variables, more uncertainty in their futures
9 than there are in ours. We have had the benefit of having the RESS contract and the
10 MAC award and we have progressed our conversations in the pre-application process
11 sufficiently with An Bord Pleanála that we can say with certainty now that we will be
12 lodging our planning application in the early part of 2024. And those engagements
13 with An Bord Pleanála have been extremely positive so far and the level of
14 engagement has been very encouraging.

15
16 So in the global sense, you know, I can understand why the industry would have an
17 anxiety in this area, but you are right as well, that's for other people to manage, the
18 kind of global aspect of this. We have our heads down, progressing our project to
19 bring that forward and I think the great thing about this project and Wicklow being at
20 the edge and the exemplar in this area, once we get Codling over the consent line and
21 into the new construction phase it will be a huge vote of confidence. Every time we
22 pass a milestone -- because we're in the first phase of this. Every time we pass a
23 milestone, the industry, Irish energy independence gets a step closer, the industry gets
24 a step closer in terms of confidence, overseas investors go 'that is a place where we can
25 invest with more seriousness and more safety', and all of those things are to be
26 welcomed.

27
28 So we will prove by doing and hopefully once we deliver, you know, that will help the
29 whole sector.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: It is okay, Mary, I am going to cover that, just
31 Councillor Kavanagh's question, thank you.

32 MR LEAKE: Yes. Councillor Kavanagh, thank you for your question. So the first
33 part, how many turbines are on the westerly side, I would say it is around 20% of the
34 turbines. There is going to be a series of rows -- a series of columns, sorry, running

1 north-south, if we can look at it like that. I think it is six columns. So the first
2 column will be on that westerly boundary or just within it.

3
4 In terms of your question of how many projects have been built within that 22
5 kilometres, I might flip it the other way and look at it at 12 kilometres. So just across
6 the water, North Wales coast, you have got the Gwynt y Môr project, the newly
7 consented Awel y Môr project, both of which are at 12 kilometres and then extend a
8 similar sort of distance or I think it is a 7- or 8-kilometre distance from coast. You
9 have then got North Hoyle and Rhyl Flats that are inshore of that project, so less than
10 12 kilometres. If we move around onto the south coast of England you have got the
11 existing Rampion Wind Farm which is again at 12 kilometres distance at its nearest
12 point from coast, and then that is subject to a further consent being requested for
13 Rampion 2 which will wrap around that wind farm. If you then go around onto the
14 east coast of England you have got a project called Thanet, which again is at around 12
15 kilometres from coast at its nearest point. So there are a number of analogues there
16 that we will be looking at and using as comparators for our assessment. Several of
17 those have been undertaken by some of the leading experts in north-west Europe,
18 frankly. There is a company called OPEN, or Optimised Environments, there is an
19 Irish company called Macroworks, all of whom are independent seascape, landscape,
20 visual impact assessment experts. And they do bring that independence. So that
21 should give some confidence in the independence of those experts. But that is to
22 answer your questions around the distances and whether we have analogue projects.
23 Each of those have been assessed for seascape obviously but also for coastal erosion,
24 coastal impacts, impacts. And interaction with commercial fisheries, with the fish
25 and shell fish species that those fisheries target, and across the piece for static gear
26 fisheries in particular, so crab potters, whelk potters, lobster potters, static net
27 fisheries, continued access has been available for those fisheries. And subject to their
28 particular method of fishing, you can take mobile gear through those arrays as well, it
29 depends on an individual's appetite for taking their fisheries gear through there and
30 obviously the distance between turbines. Some of the older wind farms in the UK
31 have got a separation distance of 700 metres, 600 metres; we're looking at a kilometre,
32 which is a reasonable distance to get vessels through.

33
34 I think that answers your questions. Apologies, I wrote quick notes down.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you so much, Sean. Pamela, Seán, Pat and Erlend,
2 thank you so much. Because I know you are under a lot of pressure. I just want you
3 to take the level of interest from members as a really positive sign because people are
4 really curious and they are really positive about this project and we just really want to
5 see it done. So thank you all very much for coming in and sorry for putting you all
6 under such pressure. Thank you very much.

7
8 Okay, members. Item number 8 that we went past - To consider NOAC Local
9 Authority Performance Indicator Report 2022 - I just want to acknowledge that that
10 report is there and acknowledge it as read. It was on last month's meeting as well.
11 So if that is okay with members. If members have any queries. Go ahead,
12 Councillor Timmins.

13 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Briefly, I mean like this is a really, really important
14 report and unfortunately it was on the agenda the last meeting but we didn't get to it
15 and today obviously we have no time to discuss it. But, like, I would urge members
16 and the top table to look at it and there are some really significant bits of information in
17 it and one or two in particular jump out to me. Now, I know it is 2022. Again, you
18 know, we're 11 months after it talking about it today. But say on page 42: "The
19 reduction of whole time equivalence of 67 staff (9.8%) is the highest reduction in the
20 country." That Wicklow County Council has a reduction in their staff of 67 in the
21 year 2022. Now I believe that has been addressed in 2024, and it obviously predates a
22 lot of the senior management there, but it was reduced again in 2023. But we were
23 the highest reduction in the whole country for a reduction in staff at a time when we
24 are trying to expand services and budgets, my understanding is we are actually
25 increasing. So that to me is a really significant thing.

26
27 There's lots of other stuff there. One other that jumps out to me, Wicklow relets on
28 houses cost 37,000 on average. It is one of the highest in the country, page 56. But
29 just to say that this is a really important and it deserves more consideration than we are
30 giving it at these meetings. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Absolutely. I agree with you, Councillor. I mean obviously
32 the officials here have read it cover to cover and I would encourage all the members to
33 read it as well. I am going to invite Lorraine in on that item.

34 MS GALLAGHER: Yes. Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks, Councillor Timmins.

1 But just in relation to the total number of whole time equivalence, that figure is
2 obtained from the departments, from the return to the department just at a snapshot in
3 time. So while, you know, there are vacancies, it's fluid. I just want to assure you
4 that all vacancies are filled. You know recruitment is a challenge for local authorities
5 across the sector. But it is not that we are dropping; it is just at a point in time.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Lorraine. Councillor O'Connor.

7 COUNCILLOR O'CONNOR: I have to agree with Councillor Timmins on this. I
8 think this really, really important and I don't think we have the appropriate amount of
9 time to discuss something this big right now, because there are some really figures that
10 I think need a greater discussion, like the relets. Like, we are the second highest in
11 the whole country when it comes to relet costs. Our neighbour, Wexford, can do
12 three times as much relets than us with the amount of money they are spending and
13 also three times as faster as well. I also think there should be discussion around the
14 vacancy as well. I just think there is so much to discuss in this and I don't think we
15 have enough time overall, and I don't know if we can bring this to the next meeting to
16 have a general discussion and hash it out, maybe even a presentation? Because I
17 think there's so much happening on this and there's so many answers we need. That's
18 all. Thank you.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Councillor O'Connor. I absolutely
20 agree, members, that this is hugely important. That is why it was on the agenda last
21 month and it was assumed that people read it then. If any members have any
22 comments or queries in relation to it I would encourage you to bring them to the
23 attention of the relevant directorate. We don't approve off of this report, so it is really
24 just for information purposes. So if any members do have any questions or comments
25 please do contact the relevant director. It is unfortunate, and I do agree with
26 Councillor Timmins, I know you referenced it the last time we discussed this, that it is
27 a year behind because it is nearly like a year on before you are getting the opportunity
28 to discuss it. But yes, a really important report.

29

30 Okay, the next item is for correspondence. Helen, do you want to take that?

31 MS PURCELL: Just a few items. One, to note that we have a joint JPC, Wicklow
32 and Wexford County Councils on Thursday and Commissioner Drew Harris will be in
33 attendance, so we encourage all JPC members to please attend that meeting. It is in
34 person and it is here.

1

2 I also want to note the circulation of the CPG minutes of the 28th of November '22, the
3 1st of February '23, the 2nd of October '23 and the 6th of November '23. All have
4 been circulated to the members. And also to note the circulation of protocol minutes
5 for the 4th of September '23 and the 22nd of October '23.

6

7 And then, Uisce Éireann would like to hold a workshop early in the new year for the
8 elected members. I was going to suggest that you hold it in advance of your February
9 meeting, which would be on the 12th February, if that is in agreement or if anybody
10 has any other suggestions?

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are people in agreement with that, holding that in advance of
12 the February meeting, Uisce Éireann? What time would that be at, Helen?

13 MS PURCELL: We can go with 11 if that suits the members.

14 COUNCILLOR KAVANAGH: What date is that?

1

2 MS PURCELL: The 12th of February. The 5th of February is a bank
3 holiday.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: So our normal Council meeting will be at two,
5 Mary. So it will be at 11. Is that okay with members? Okay?

6 MS PURCELL: Grand. And then, happy Christmas. We look forward
7 to seeing you all in the new year. Thank you very much.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, members. That
9 concludes the meeting. Anybody who is involved in the protocol, can
10 you please hold on for the protocol meeting. Thank you.

11

12 (Time noted: 5:10pm)

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