

ORDINARY MEETING OF
WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

ON

MONDAY, 06TH MARCH 2023 AT 2:00 P.M.

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CATHAOIRLEACH: Members you are welcome. Members of the press and the public as well. I will invite Rachel to cover the etiquette of meetings.

RACHEL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Good afternoon and welcome, Cathaoirleach, elected members, press and the members of the public. To remind you of the etiquette so that mobile phones are switched off, members of the public to ensure camera and microphone are switched off. If you have connection issues, contact Teresa or myself. Thank you, we will take the roll call.

REGISTER ROLL CALL

CATHAOIRLEACH: We will move on to the votes of sympathy, Rachel to ask you to cover from the Local Authority, first.

>> Praying for Miles Kavanagh and Eileen Ivory.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I will open up to floor if anyone has votes of sympathy.

Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: To offer condolences to Joan O'Reilly, involved in the Wicklow swimming club with her husband, Michael. And lots grateful to them, they not only learned how to swim but life-saving, condolences to Peter, Siobhan, Michelle, Lisa and all of her grandchildren. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Counsellor Gayle Dunne?

CLLR GAYLE DUNN: To be associated with the sympathy for Miles Kavanagh, growing up on the same road together. I knew the family well. It was a tough time for the family last week. For Cllr Mary Kavanagh and predecessor, Miles, a tough time for the family and I would like to be associated with that, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are there other votes of sympathy? No. OK, let's stand for a minute's silence.

Eternal rest grant to them owe Lord and let light shine upon them, may the souls and the souls of the departed rest in peace. Amen. Thank you, before we move on to today's business, I wanted to formerly welcome the new Chief Executive, Eomer O' Gorran. For us it is a historic moment as it is the first female Chief Executive, so to note that considering it is International Women's Day this week. So, great to have you in the role. Bringing a wealth of experience to the Local Authority. I think that everybody is really excited to work with you. So I will open it out to the members.

Cllr Irene Winters?

CLLR WINTERS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach on behalf of the group, to welcome the new Chief Executive, we look forward to working with her. Having read what was said about previous employment, I know that you are forward-thinking, dynamic and looking to do the best for county Wicklow, and we want to do that with you. Your success will be our success.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. Councillor Anne Ferris?

CLLR FERRIS: Thank you, I too would like to welcome Eomer to the very first meeting on behalf of the Labour Party. I have heard and read great things, coming with a wealth of experience from the seven other Local Authorities.

Sorry, five other Local Authorities.

And I have to say it is great to look up at the top table and see so many women, particularly you say, Cathaoirleach, on the week of International Women's Day. And it is great to see

you, you are very welcome, do not hesitate to contact Paul and myself if we can be of assistance.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Lourda Scott.

CLLR SCOTT: You are very welcome to the role, Eomer with an incredibly impressive CV, as the Chair of Climate Biodiversity, I particularly look forward to working closely with you as the climate biodiversity pillars are to the fore of all of the future strategies across the county council. So very welcome and as the Chair of the women's councillor caucus, pleasurable to be seeing women on the top seat. I hope to see you in the meeting in the future.

CLLR MCMANUS: We welcome you, we are excited to work with you, from what I have seen in the first week, doing outreach to councillors, you seem proactive, I think you will do a great job. Don't be a stranger, we look forward to working with you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Pat Fitzgerald.

CLLR FITZGERALD: To wish you the very best in your new role. As the Chief Executive, I have no doubt that the reign will be a successful one and to mention the outgoing acting executive for all of his work over the last year, thank you to Brian.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Stephen Stokes?

CLLR STOKES: Thank you, Chair, to welcome you to the chamber, to look forward to working with you, and especially looking forward to welcoming you at some point to the Greystones Municipal District. There are many functions throughout the county and hope to see you at a few of those within the district.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Gerry O'Neil.

CLLR O'NEIL: Thank you, I'm an independent in Wicklow County Council, so I would reign like to welcome you on board. For a young woman, you have lots of knowledge and we are looking forward to you visiting the West of the county, the most beautiful part of the county, anyway! So, can I wish you the very best of luck. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Miriam Murphy?

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, and I would like to welcome the new CEO, sorry I cannot be there to meet you, Eomer but it is great to see a woman in the ring and we certainly have to support each other, so I look forward to meeting you in person.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Peir Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: Hi, Eomer I would like to welcome you as well. Apologies for not being there in person but looking forward to meeting you on Thursday, I believe you are to speak

in Arklow, down here. There are lots of exciting things happening for Arklow, I look forward to bringing you down to give you a tour. Thank as million.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Eomer, would you like to come in at all?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you very much, members for the very warm welcome. It is my pleasure to be here as the Chief Executive. I am looking forward to the opportunity and to the challenge that the role is going to give. My way of working, as I would have said to a couple of you talking to you over the last few days is to work with you, I'm very much a believer in collaboration for what needs to be done for the county, I think by work together we will get what is best for Wicklow to drive this wonderful county forward and to continue the great work that Brian has led over the past year, to pay tribute to Brian and to the team for that work that they have done over the past year, and I will look forward to moving forward.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Moving to assignment one. The meeting held on Monday 13th 2023, a proposer? Cllr Shay Cullen and Cllr John Snell? Is that agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

Item 2 to confirm and sign the minutes of the Wicklow County Council held on Monday 3rd of February, 2023, Dawn Primarolo and Councillor Anne Ferris agreed? Thank you. Item consider disposal of 0.43 acres of land in Rathdrum, Co Wicklow, by way of 18mo lease, 9th Jan 23 to 8th Jul 24, the right to pass and repass to Noel Jacob and Ms Helen Jacob, Rathdrum, Co Wicklow as per the notice circulated. Cllr Pat Fitzgerald?

CLLR FITZGERALD: I second.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

To note Wicklow CC Joint Policing Committee end of year Report 22, attached I will invite Rachel.

>> The JPC report is circulated for year-end to 31st December 2022, outlining the progress and the work of the committee during the year. Submitted to the Policing Authority by the 31st of March.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Open to the floor, Cllr Gerry Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: Thank you, as the Chair of the Joint Policing Committee for Wicklow to outline and reinforce the importance of the committee with the time that the new guard operating model is coming into effect. We were we leaved to get back to hold public meetings last year, that were not interrupted by COVID, so we had a meeting in New Town Kennedy and a meeting in Bray and the ambition to go out again to hold two other public meetings in

addition to the quarterly meetings in the claim. What is coming up, sorry, on the meeting, we had a joint, the first nationally, in addition to the others with in December. We have a new Chief Superintendent, Anthony Petit and the JPC as we know it is to be replaced by what is known as the Local Community Safety Partnerships in the second part of 2024. So the JPC will be a new model, a new approach to replace the JPC with more resources and a more diverse range of representation from the communities. So, that is a little update on that. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor, Cllr Pat Fitzgerald?

CLLR FITZGERALD: Cllr. Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Briefly to thank you the councillor for the presentation. It is also to [inaudible] as the Chair of that committee, over the last two years, we have a new Police Chief for the Wicklow Wexford district. And probably embedded well in the context. We are critical of the fact that we lost our own chief up in the Bray area but the meeting have been well attended by the Guardia and the presentations that we received over the last couple of years has been first-class. We thank all associated with it and the new chief, we wish the best of luck and the new chief also in the Baltinglass district as well. We look forward to that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you. We look forward to working with the new Chief Executive in relation to data issues on the Joint Committees, the Cllr Gerry Walsh glossed over it but it is not his fault. But the powers to nominate a Chair person and a certain number of councillors and the JPC is taken away, another power removed by a central Government. I don't think that we should just accept it as a fait accompli, if it will not happen in the latter part of 2024, we should look to hold on to the Local Authority leadership of that body, whatever it is called in the future. I am also, I'm not in agreement of what Cllr. Vincent Blake said about the fact that things have bedded in well, they have not in north Wicklow. In the county we have lost 100 Guardia. The chief superintendent, the last one was based in Wexford and the new one is based in Wexford. So run by another county, yet again another area of our responsibility run by somebody else. So I disagree with the comments of colleagues. I am not happy of the way that the issue of democratic control or democratic input into the polices is concerned. I want to Reg that fact and maybe to come back to get a presentation as to what the new structure is to entail and where we can influence so that we retain the leadership of it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: I wanted to thank the Cllr Gerry Walsh for Chairmanship of the policing committee, not an easy one, and especially with the hybrid. I recognise the loss of the powers. And what I want to recognise, it is the work done for our community over the last number of years. They may be down 100 but the guards in situ have risen to the challenge, especially in the time of COVID. So, I think that the message is loud and clear from the chamber that we support the guards but the problems is that the powers that be dilute our power but it is not the fault of the guards, we should be praying and supporting them.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. If there are no further comments, we will move on to the next item. The report is for noting, not approval. Enter Section 85 Agreement for the carrying of powers, duties and functions of Kildare CC, respect of event licence application for music and arts festival, with camping and parking facilities at Russborough House and Parklands, Blessington WCC, on 30.07, 1,2,3.07 23 in accordance with the LGA ACT 2001 as amended. A copy attached. I will call in Breege in advance of the members.

>> Thank you, members it is in relation to the Kaleidoscope Music Festival, which has taken place over the last number of years, this year, looking to have additional parking to extend into the functional area of Kildare County Council, so the section area of 85, is to give the granting of the license for the entire event. So in deference to the comment from Cllr Joe Behan, it is a situation where we will be getting the necessary executive functions over an area of Kildare for that weekend. So that it will be a facilitated for a single event, a single event license that the applicants are making application to the Wicklow County Council and that we are to take over the executive functions of the area of this event in Kildare County Council.

It is just over the period of that weekend, from the 30th of June until the 3rd of July. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, I will open it to the floor. Cllr Patsy Glennon?

CLLR GLENNON: I propose that we adopt this Section 85, to facilitate a Conran successfully for the last number of years and to provide the additional parking to facilitate the event.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr John Mullen?

CLLR MULLEN: To second that proposal, it is straightforward, it is a technicality in order to allow the concert to go ahead safely.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Edward Timmins?

CLLR TIMMINS: To speak briefly in support. It is a good idea, expanding the arts offering, particularly in Russborough, it has extended the classical music event, I very much support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr Peir Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: To support my West Wicklow colleagues with my craft hat on. For it to be noted it is a Prime Minister opportunity to tie it in with the Wicklow Craft Strategy. It is greater to see the festivals coming to Wicklow and it is the start of lots of exciting things for Wicklow.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor, it is proposed by Cllr Patsy Glennon and seconded by Cllr John Mullen, agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

Before moving on to the next item, item 7 we have three presentations today. Many of the individuals are in the room. I would like to propose to take the presentations next so items ... item 6, I am sorry, I am rushing ahead. So, consider filling vacancy to the County Wicklow Tourism Board arising from resignation of Cllr Murphy from this committee councillor Pat Kennedy.

CLLR KENNEDY: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I understand it was a Municipal District nominee, I ask the members to give us time. We have a meeting on Wednesday for the Municipal District meeting on Wednesday, we hope to have a name for you at the next meet, to get an agreement to defer the appointment to next month. So, are you proposing that, Pat? And Pat Fitzgerald is seconding it. That is in agreement? Great. Thank you. Now will move on to what I was trying to do. We have three presentations due, 8, 9, 10, I propose to move next, if that is in agreement with the members. If you second it, I can propose. That is great.

Thank you. Is that in agreement, everybody? OK.

So, we have to receive a deputation from the Wicklow Chev, Pat, Dawn, and Peter Behan, if you want to come up. You are both very, very welcome.

Teresa is to put up the presentation on the screen for you both.

>> Cathaoirleach, elected councillor, staff, ladies and gentlemen, thank you all very much for the invitation to come here today, and to make a presentation on the ongoing problem here in Wicklow with dog control.

So, I will hand over to Peter Behan to make a presentation. Then I will come back again.

Peter is our, Peter Behan is our Vice Chairman, he will do our presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is great, thank you, Pat.

>> Cathaoirleach, I am Peter Behan a sheep farmer from Tinahely. On the background here in Wicklow, first of all, we have 155,209 breeding ewes in the county, it is the fifth largest in the country.

233,000 lambs born in Wicklow every year.

The sheep industry supports a large number of farm families in the county. Such is the landscape in Wicklow, many farming livelihoods depend on sheep farming and it underpins the many communities, through the parts, local Co-ops and veterinary practices. Several members present will recognise this from their own farming backgrounds.

I'm going to show a few examples of sheep kills that have made national headlines. Very few farmers have not experienced. 70 sheep lost. 30 sheep on Friday, the 7th of January. 70 sheep lost in a dog attack in Tipperary over Christmas.

A horrific picture of a single sheep in that attack in Tipperary that had to be put down. It survived but had to be put down. That is the distraught farmer, his son and his neighbour. The next slide is the 50 lambs killed outside of Moneygall and the Offaly Tipperary border before Christmas, a financial loss of 10,000. And this particular sheep kill was covered by RTE News, one week after the savage dog attack on the young boy in the area. The pressure is now growing on the ministers to take action.

Those are the pictures of the Moneygall sheep. So, the message to bring today is that we are all aware of the dog attack on the young child in the area.

Of the young child in Enniscorthy. They take a short time. The effects after attacks are abortions and loss. The financial loss of the farmers in the rural areas. Farmers forced to house sheep for the fear of more dog attacks. Financial costs of extra feeding and veterinary costs. The savage attacks are a huge animal welfare issue. As it stands, the law is against the farmers.

We are asking for the Minister for Agriculture to deliver what all farm organisations have asked for.

We would like this council to write to relevant ministers, Minister Charlie McConalogue and Minister Heather Humphreys to ask for a national database for all dogs in the country for microchipping and licensing, all in the one department. Extra dog wardens working flexible hours to ensure there are dog wardens working the weekends.

And the red writing at the bottom: Dog wardens need to be out seen enforcing the law. So, thank you, Cathaoirleach and to the Members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much for that, Peter. And Pat as well. If you both want to stay there, we will open it up to the floor. I will invite Councillor Pat Kennedy, as I know it something that you have brought to the table.

I might ask somebody to turn off... I might ask, Cllr Melanie, would you mind? And, Pat, I should be able to bring you in now.

>> Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and first of all if I can start off with some thank yous. I want to thank you, Cathaoirleach, for allowing this important presentation here today. I want to thank the Chair of the Sheep Owners' Association and Cllr Behan and I think Pat will add some words in a minute. I want to thank the environmental section of Wicklow County Council and in particular Jackie Carroll, the Senior Executive Officer for the campaign that she has been running and the council have been running since February in the print media, radio and social media. It has become a partnership approach and I want to put that on the record and thank them for that. But having said that, sheep farmers are hugely important to this county - in the region of €23-25 million a year, 234,000 lambs born each year in County Wicklow and that is a staggering statistic when you think of it. €23-25 million it's worth. If we had a multinational coming in with a turnover of that, we would be welcoming them with open arms and rolling out the red carpet. We're the fifth largest sheep breeding county in Ireland. So sheep farming is hugely important and the production of lamb is hugely important and what I can't understand is, there is no national database in the country. As the Vice-Chairman and Cllr Peter Behan said, that's what they are looking for and I would second what he said that we should write to the relevant ministers to look for that and I would ask that somebody second that in a few moments.

The other thing I would like to point out is, to the best of my knowledge, the NPWS now have a policy where dogs must be on leads on the hills and the open countryside on their land while it's the opposite with Coillte and they have an open access policy and we are so lucky to have that, but maybe they could add on and develop their open access policy to include that dogs should be on leashes when they are out in the rural countryside. I'm not going to hold up the meeting any longer. I think I've said the important points that I need to say except to thank the Cheviot Sheep Owners' Association for coming here today. It's not easy to stand up and make a presentation, but I think the photographs they had up there

were horrific and I think that would touch base with all of us, the importance of making sure that dogs are under control in the rural countryside. Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks, members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Rory O'Connor?

CLLR O'CONNOR: You often forget about the trauma of the sheep that are around when the attacks happen and not just the ones that died. I wanted to formally second writing to the relevant ministers about this because I do see the seriousness of it and I think it would be very appropriate for us as a council to do and I want to thank you again for your great presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Irene Winters?

CLLR WINTERS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thank you to the gentlemen from the Cheviot Sheep Owners' Association for their presentation. I would agree that we do need extra dog wardens working flexible hours. We keep hearing about sheep attacks and we heard about the poor child in Wexford and other people and children who have been maimed by dogs, particularly prescribed dogs that are not muzzled and not kept in accordance with the laws that are there and actually in county Wicklow at the moment we have more licensed guns than we have dogs. Obviously we have a lot more dogs than we have guns, or hopefully we have a lot more dogs than we have guns in County Wicklow but it just shows how flagrantly the dog licensing laws are abused. So yes, I agree, we should write to the ministers. We do need more dog wardens and we actually need to be doing something as a county to enforce it and to make sure that particularly prescribed dogs are muzzled, since that child was attacked in Wexford. I have noticed on the main street in Wicklow how many prescribed dogs there are being on a very loose lead, by people who, if the dog was to jump forward, would probably not have the ability to hold it and the dogs are not muzzled. Now, if that's on the street where there's people, I can only imagine how lightly they are restrained when you get up into the open fields and wreak the damage that they do on the livestock.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat and Peter, if it's OK with you, I might take a few more members in first. Cllr Shay Cullen?

CLLR CULLEN: Yes, first of all I want to thank the sheep farmers from Wicklow, I want to thank them for the presentation. I suppose, like other members, I've seen first-hand the devastation of sheep kills and the effect that this can have on families and communities, and we talk about financial implications of dog kills or sheep kills, but it's the emotional effect

that it has on people and families and farmers in general. It's hard to describe without actually seeing it first-hand and it's a huge problem we have, there's no getting away from it. We are talking about County Wicklow, but it's a national problem and it's going that's going to have to change. Look, you know, we all know that Wicklow is a recreational county. We've walks all over the county and indeed we're all, here in the chamber, involved in some shape or form in terms of our recreational involvement in Wicklow. But the reality is some people that use our recreational facilities and our walkways around the county are lacking respect for where they are and they're lacking respect for the farmers and they think it's just a playground with no consequences, and we've seen very clearly the consequences that dogs have on sheep in this county.

I agree with sending letters to the Minister, but I want to go a little bit - a step further. We have a problem with the legislation in my view, because the legislation as it currently stands says dogs should be under effective control. Now, in my view, that is far, far too loose and I would like to see a line put in, if it was agreed by the other members, that we need to make it compulsory that all dogs are on leads in public areas. I think this term, "Under effective control" is a waste of time and is not being adhered to. You can just think about those words, "Effective control" - a dog could be 200m away from its owner, it could be out-of-control, it could be out of sight, it normally is out of sight, under effective control. So I'm asking here for support on this that we write to the Minister, but we include a paragraph or a line that makes it compulsory that all dogs are on leads in public areas. I think that's something we certainly should look at. But just before I conclude, Cathaoirleach, I just want to thank the lads again and the IFA in general for their work on this. We need to keep it on the fore. It's a national problem. We're dealing with Wicklow, as we are today, but well done, lads, for bringing it here and thank you for your input on it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr John Mullen?

CLLR MULLEN: Yes, again, thanks, Cathaoirleach, and to Pat and Peter and Philip for the data and the pretty shocking imagery, but it's a reality. It's not nice to see. I suppose I come at this from the context of having been involved in recreational trail management in the Tinahely area where we have agreed walking trails, and when we had our 45k of walking trails agreed it was a very frank conversation we had with the landowners and the rule we had was there was to be no dogs on the hills and the dogs on the railway walk were to be on a lead, and that's our agreement with the landowners who own 45km of integrated walking

trails in Tinahely. We've had to manage that over the last ten years and I have been walking on the hills and I've encountered people with a dog and I've explained the position to them and sometimes you don't get the best of reactions because there's a genuine confusion amongst the dog-owning public, and I'm a dog owner myself. People think that County Wicklow is their playground, as Cllr Cullen said, but they don't realise that it's also a workplace and the livestock that are on those hills are the property of those businesses and a dog could be the most behaved animal at home, but when they're on the hills in the wild environment, a dog is an animal and a predator to those sheep. I think we need to write to Coillte, because I do think there is a genuine confusion amongst the dog-owning public as to what is legal and what is not legal. Because we see it all the time in Tinahely, we have people on the railway walk thinking they can take their dog offed lead and people on the hills thinking they can bring their dog with them T's the worst possible practice. It's also very bad for the dog owner who, if their dog is involved in an attack on sheep, that dog will have to be put down and that could cause a huge family trauma. Nobody wants to see that. But that's the reality of where we're living and sometimes there's a lot of - because we're so up close to Dublin and I know Philip McGuire has talked about this over the years is we also have a concept now of professional dog walkers, where people come down into vans, in our car parks, some of which run by this council, take out up to eight or nine dogs and take them for walks in the hills on behalf of their owners. Now, how regulated is that? And how safe is that? Just think about that - trying to control eight dogs on a walk and then put them back into the back of the van. So we have to do our piece here and, again, I would love to see the stats from the dog walking section on this. But I do think on our social media end we need to be very clear and very harsh and while we've done some good work on this I think there's an awful lot of confusion out there as to what are the rights and responsibilities of dog owners when they take their dog outside their own property. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Pat and Peter, there's a lot more people wanting to come in so if you're OK I will let a few more people in. Cllr Gerry Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks to Pat and Peter for the presentation. Just to outline, this is a matter that I have raised or looked to have raised at our Joint Policing Committee there in February and was addressed by our superintendent as a result of the increase in plants and the reports on national media and the dreadful incident. We had a report at the meeting on statistics from the dog warden, et cetera, et cetera, and one of the

complaints of livestock worrying - and I think there were seven complaints in 2022, and the commissioner was able to highlight that up until February there was ten alone. So it's certainly on the increase. So I would agree with the two speakers, with Peter there, in his suggestion about the microchipping, I mean that's essential. Overall, I think the legislation just is not robust enough to deal with this escalating issue. Looking at the chief executive's report there on the Control of Dogs Act, I looked at it before today's meeting and looking at the dog licensing stats there, 423 reminders sent out so far this year on dog licences and there's 475 actually renewed. So I think, look, there is a big gap there and I'm sure there are a lot more dogs in the county than those figures represent. So again, the Guardia, their advice is to report all incidents and follow up with all incidents and report dog attacks and worrying livestock. So thanks to the two, again, for the presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr. Cllr Scott?

CLLR SCOTT: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for your presentation. I worked in sheep and cattle practice in south-west Wales for many years and unfortunately have seen the end result of dog worrying and dog attacks and it is not pleasant for anybody and I think your presentation highlighted that really, really well. It's very hard to know what the answer is to this. I think enforcement is a huge, huge part of what you are saying there but asking for extra dog wardens seen to be out and enforcing the law, I mean that has to be done, I think that is absolutely key to all of this. It is a legal requirement to have all dogs microchipped and licensed at the moment but Cllr Walsh saying there's 470 licences - I could probably count 470 dogs in Greystones district alone when going out for a walk. So it's clear people don't understand the responsibilities when this comes to dog ownership or they just don't care, I'm not quite sure which it is. I also agree to a degree with what Cllr Cullen was saying there about that phrase "Under effective control". Again, even though I live in an urban area, I live in Greystones, it's quite an urban area but even there you can see when dogs are let loose, whether it's on the beach or in the local park, and particularly around small kids - I mean the amount of dogs that were under effective control off-lead were, you know, zero, and they can come up and frighten children and do whatever - dog fouling is a whole other discussion we have many times here in the chamber, but again it comes down to again dogs not being under effective control and that lack of responsible dog ownership. Not by everybody, by any means, not at all, but by certainly a significant proportion of people, and it is that proportion then that's causing the difficulties for everyone else. I don't think I

would concur with Cllr Cullen's suggestion for asking for all dogs to be on a lead in a public area. I don't think that would be enforced. I don't think it's practical. I don't think it's necessarily required for all dogs in all public areas, but mainly down to the fact I think there would be huge pushback and it just wouldn't happen. It'd be nice to ask for but it's just not going to happen. We can see the difficulties at the moment even just keeping dogs off blue flag beaches in the bathing season and people again either don't seem to be aware or seem to think it's their right to take their dogs into public spaces whenever they want and again that's back down to enforcement, it's back down to control, it's back down to visible presence of dog wardens I believe and similarly with your own situation. So if there's anything else that we can do, just my final comment, in a practical sense as councillors and public representatives to support you in the upcoming lambing season in spreading this message and getting this out there, just let us know and certainly I would certainly be happy to support you in any way I can. Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks to the lads for being here today to give us the presentation, it's very, very welcome. I certainly have no problem whatsoever in writing to the Minister and highlighting the issue once again with him. I know Pat wants to say a few more words as well in regards to it. Pat, it's not your first time in here, you have been in here before talking to the SPCs as well so it's important that we continue to highlight it. It doesn't seem to be going away whatsoever in any way, shape or form. I've seen it first-hand as I come from a farming background, I've seen first-hand as well the damage that is done and it is not just the sheep killed can on the day in question but the damage it does to the rest of the sheep as well. We never see that aspect of it years after as well. Whether they're no more use to the farmer or whatever. So the damage that your pet or my pet is doing out there, whoever has pets today and they want to get out there and get into the wrong company, that's when the damage is done. So thanks again for being with us and anything we can do in any shape or form. But as I said earlier on, Pat, it is not the first time you've been here, we have to keep highlighting it, you are back here to tell us again what still needs to be done in regard to it. So thanks very much for your time.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Melanie Corrigan?

CLLR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you to Peter and Pat for the presentation. I want to add my support to the issues that you've raised. I've grown up on a

sheep farm and been around sheep all my life and I've seen first-hand the damage that it does and as Cllr Shay has said, the emotional effect it can have on a family and on children to see their pet lambs literally torn apart. It's huge, it is not just an economic issue it's an emotional and family issue. Again, I think it really goes back to the lack of control and responsibility. I mean, every weekend in the Enniskerry forum you will see a lost dog. Someone has gone up the mountains, taken their dog off a lead, hasn't had proper control of it, it'll get the scent of a deer and it's gone, and I think public attitude really needs to change, because people are coming in saying, "Sorry you've lost your dog, that's terrible", but there is not a word that the damage the dog can do or the effect on the farmers it has in the area and that really needs to change and I would like to actually second what Shay has said about dogs being kept on leads because, again, it's public attitude and public attitude to their animals and if it makes someone think twice about getting a dog if they know they have to take proper responsibility for it and keep it on a lead they might think twice or think properly about it. We've seen so many dogs being rehomed and sent to the DSPCA or various shelters and, you know, people really need to think strongly before they get a dog that they can look after it and look after it properly and well done on the presentation and you have my full support. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. We have six more people who are looking to come in and speak, but I might just give Pat and Peter an opportunity to speak now if they want just based on the comments that have been made.

PAT: Well, firstly, I want to thank all the councillors for your support. There seems to be a lot of support for what we're trying to do. As Cllr Vincent Blake said, it is not the first time I was in here, it is a good many years I was in here before. The whole place looks different now and it has been revamped but at that time we talked about the need for more dog wardens and we still - we still haven't got any more dog wardens. I'm not taking from what the dog wardens at the moment are doing, as far as I'm concerned, they're doing a good job, but they just can't cover it all. Where I come from, I'm up in Glenmalure Valley, where there is a huge amount of walking going on, we've an agreed access route going right through our place and we have had walkers I think on Saturday, I think there was probably - probably somewhere between 250 walkers went through, just to get - just I was thinking of coming here today and I was just trying to get a handle on the numbers that were knocking about. But I can stop them going through our place because it's on private land, it is an agreed

access route but it's private land so I can stop them. But these people are going to go to Stua Laighean, the highest mountain in Leinster. And the problem I have is there's about six more routes going to it from all different angles that I have no control over. NPWS now have - have come around to dogs are to be kept on leads. Unfortunately there's nobody enforcing that law. They say that they haven't the resources to do it. Coillte have no policy on dogs, just an open forest policy, so anyone can go in there with dogs and do what they like and again there's nobody to enforce even a lot of stuff that undesirables get up to, much less dogs, but I think that there needs to be a co-ordinated approach brought to bear on it. The issue of dog wardens, it was mentioned about flexible working hours - the weekends are the biggest problems when there's no dog wardens on duty and I think that there should be at least a dog warden that would be able to visit hotspots. The difference that it makes having somebody out there with an official jacket, wearing it, as opposed to somebody like myself just walking up and saying to these people, "You can't bring your dog up there," or, "You shouldn't bring your dog," I think that that needs to be followed up on. It has been suggested, and a good suggestion was made earlier today, about information days and it's something that the Sheep Owners' Association and I'm if the ISA and anybody else were to get involved in, we would work with Wicklow County Council to do anything we possibly can to try and get this brought to bear. Sheep are being chased on the mountains all of the time with dogs. We're only after coming out of a very successful project in Wicklow and one of the major findings in that was the need to get more sheep back out to the hills and to get them on at the right time of the year for biodiversity and to make sure that the vegetation is grazed whether it should be grazed and the sheep are the tools for doing that sort of work, the ground is inaccessible with most machinery and it can't be done any other way. So I think it's vital that Wicklow - I would love to see Wicklow County Council taking a lead on this to see what we can do and I look forward to working with Wicklow County Council in any way that we possibly can to follow it up. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Pat. I think we still have a number of other speakers, so if you could bear with us. Cllr Derek Mitchell.

CLLR MITCHELL: Thank you, thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to say I'm in sympathy with the sheep owners. I live in an urban area, but I do hill walk quite a bit and it disgusts me to see the number of people whose dogs are not on leads when they are out hill walking. I was out on Saturday and I would say at least a third of the dogs were not on leads

and they just don't seem to have the concept of what their animal could do. So I do think that the law on dogs needs to be radically changed and enforced. It affects urban areas as well with the dog dirt, but sheep farmers are particularly affected by it as we've seen here and we need a proper enforcement and proper laws to register them, thank you.

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

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I won't repeat a lot of what's been said, but I wonder if I just speak to - I'm really interested in the issue that there seems to be an onus on the farmer to have to pursue a case against someone whose dog is responsible for an attack on a sheep. So I would love to hear a bit more, if you would speak to that, because that again sits for me in a space of the absence of accountability when it comes to the legal issue around dog attacks and why should it be that a farmer has to pursue this in order to get justice, or in order to get sanction, or in order to get some sense of accountability for those who are causing this? Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks to Pat and Peter for an excellent presentation. One of the problems we have with presentations normally is they take too long and councillors don't get long to contribute. You are the opposite, you spoke very eloquently but very briefly and allowed us the opportunity to interact and I want to thank you very much for that. You have a long and very successful track record of engagement with councillors and TDs over the last 20 years and I want to congratulate you for that and for keeping the dialogue continuing. Cathaoirleach, I think we've all seen - there has been an explosion in dog ownership and dog breeding in this country in the last ten years and in particular because of Covid people getting dogs, acquiring dogs, because they were at home for so long, and then not really being in a position to control them or manage them or look after them. I think it's an easy thing to say, "We'll write to the Minister for Agriculture," that's not going to cost us anything, except maybe a stamp, or maybe it will just be an email. But the red print there at the bottom and the point that Pat has mentioned again, that the last time he was here he asked about an increase in the number of dog wardens and they're saying here dog wardens need to be out seen enforcing the law and we need to have dog wardens at the weekends. Now, Jackie Carroll back there in the gallery - and I have to compliment Jackie, as has already been mentioned, because I know animal welfare is very, very dear to her heart because I've heard her talking about it before and I know she is doing

everything she possibly can as a member of the senior management here in the council. But I want to see is how can we increase and improve the number of dog wardens and their availability to deal with the issues that are being outlined by the two men here today? Because it's a major problem affecting your livelihood in the rural areas, but I can tell you that dog dirt and dogs out of control in places like Bray, Bray seafront and other areas that are in urban areas, is also a huge problem. The people who talk to me about it most often are responsible dog owners who pay for their dog licence, who make sure their dogs are under control, who look after them, get their injections, do everything that they have to do, and they look at other people with dogs basically running wild, and unless there is enforcement, talking about having laws is just a waste of time. Our responsibility, I would say as a local authority, is the dog warden issue and trying to ensure that we increase the number of dog wardens and also increase the times when they're actually available to help people in the rural areas and also in urban areas such as seafronts, promenades, and so on. So I would like to hear somebody at the top table, I'm not sure whose responsibility it is, but I would like to hear is it possible for us to consider that issue of increasing the number and the availability, particularly at weekends? And thank you, again, for your presentation.

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

CLLR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, I will be brief. Again, I want to thank the two lads for their presentation and concur with Cllr Behan that it's probably one of the best presentations I've heard because you went straight to the point and it's very clear. Yes, it's something that I've been talking about for a long time and we're in here today and we're talking about the same thing. I'm in a rural area, a farmland area, and we have the same issues and I think it goes down to - it really goes down to ignorance by a lot of people. I'm on these different WhatsApp groups and there's not a day goes by that someone rings in or writes in to say their little dog has gone missing, you know? And then, oh thank God, two days later, their little dog is found. I know in our area that's where the damage is done with sheep - that the dogs - it's not really the dog out walking on a Sunday stroll with the family, it's the dogs that get out at night. We had one here a while ago where a little dog [inaudible] and the lady of the house said there's no way our dog could do that, and it didn't but it does corner the sheep and it plays a part and the damage that is done - I see it there first-hand in West Wicklow and it's horrific, absolutely horrific. But I bring it back to education and I don't know whether - if I thought that the dog wardens, the amount of dog wardens increased,

would help, I personally think that, you know, in writing in the Minister, there should be laws there that people's dogs who are out killing and destroying sheep - and it's the ones that destroy are worse, you know, by abortions and by the fear, it's dreadful and horrible to see it, but I think that the dog owners should be educated first. There should be maybe a leaflet drop to tell these people that the little dog is not the little saint they think it is, but when they meet up with their gangs they do the damage and educate the people. It's sad that we have to do that, to actually tell people, tell dog owners that their dogs are killers at night and a lot of it is pure ignorance when they don't accept that. But I honestly think maybe if the fines were increased... And the dog that is part of the killing, that those people should pay through the teeth. I know in my area that has happened and people say, it's not my dog, you know, it's not my dog, but it is their dog, it is their dog that has killed it. So I think really in order to get it home to people and tell the schools so the children bring it home to mummy and daddy that these dogs are killers at night-time, you know? And if they don't do something they pay through the teeth, if they are caught, they pay the fine.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

>> Thank you very much for the presentation. The pictures were graphic, they hit home, the fact of the matter, the devastation that is caused by dogs. It is a massive problem across the country, not just in Wicklow. It is causing great devastation for the families. Especially in the rural areas where they rely on agriculture.

I'm a member of the JPC, I know Cllr Gerry Walsh brought it up earlier. But it comes up time and time again. The local JPC in West Wicklow, not only the enforcement issue but in relation to the person with the responsibility. Many people with dogs don't realise the devastation that their pets can cause. I fully support, Cllr Shay Cullen's proposal. I think it is something that we should be looking to progress and hopefully, that we will get the support here today that we can at that line and maybe get the legislation changed. If it gets people thinking about the effects that their dogs have on animals and the responsibility that is needed when you do take ownership of a dog. It is not just a matter the getting a dog and cuddling it, petting it, whatever, these dogs can cause huge devastation, if people think and realise that the responsibility that is involved in having dog ownership, we can make changes. So, thank you very much for attending today and for your information. It was very informative. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor, Cllr Edward Timmins?

CLLR TIMMINS: Thank you, chairman and guys for a good and a brief presentation, a pleasure to see that. I would like to focus on what we can do as a council. It is OK writing to the minister but will it be ignored or forgotten? What can we as a council do? I propose at the next meeting that we have a presentation from a relevant directorate in relation to what our situation is in relation to our dog control and our dog warden resources, it appears in a Budget every year, what we put towards the dog wardens in the area. But never in my 19 years in the council I cannot remember a full presentation about the whole dog situation. So, it is a hidden thing. Even from a dog ... from a point of view of view, with the pound, how it operates, I think we are talking in a vacuum in the council we need information on how it operate dog control within the county. I have a dog, renewed a licence is week ago, it is come better some but it is voluntary, there is not a sense that you have to have a licence, and so I ask that we do a presentation, to have a discussion around what is going on in Wicklow County Council in relation to dog control as I think we are speaking in a vacuum. So I propose in the next meeting to have a presentation from the relevant directorate in relation to the operation of the pound and the operation of dog control in the county.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Patsy Glennon.

CLLR GLENNON: I hear what Cllr Edward Timmins said. I would like to thank, Pat, Peter and their colleague for making the presentation. I support the proposal of Ken Cllr Pat Kennedy and Edward and Kay O'Connor about today. And I have reservations about all dogs on leads, I don't think that the sheep farmers would necessarily thank us for that, as we no longer have a sight of a Sheepdog passing a line when herding a sheep herd across the road. Coming back to Cllr Joe Behan, I would be support I have of the council to look at the prospects of engaging more dog wardens, which is within the power of the council to do that, I ask us to focus on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Burke Cllr Sylvester Bourke?

CLLR BOURKE: It is a dreadful thing to happen to anyone, my answer father had to give up on sheep production as he had persistent dog attacks. A neighbour lost 78ewes in a ditch, I witnessed that. It is a horrendous thing to happen. But we do have by-laws for all sorts of things in the council but not for dog control, correct me if I am wrong. Perhaps it something that as Cllr Edward Timmins suggested that we would have a full discussion on by the officials within the environment department, perhaps even setting up a working group within the council to bring forward by-laws that we can high light to the public and perhaps

it may help in solving the problem as it has been ongoing and probably will be unless we do something concrete to help to solve the problem. That is my suggestion. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Counsellor Gayle Dunne?

CLLR GAYLE DUNN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you, Peter and Pat for the presentation. It is horrendous to see some of the situations you talked about. My own father-in-law and brother-in-law are sheep farmers, I hear the stories, it is terrible. But in reality, it is hard to believe that most of the people would be walking at the weekends and Pat alluded to it there and we don't have dog wardens out at the weekend. Surely it is something that we look at where the majority of people are walking. It is like being in hospital and the doctors going home at a 5pm on a Friday. It does not work. But thank you for the presentation, I fully support you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We have two final speakers. I ask you to be quick, if you can. Cllr Avril Cronin?

CLLR CRONIN: Sorry for coming back in again. I wanted to clarify something from my colleague councillor Cllr Patsy Glennon but I think he has left the chamber. It was leads for dogs in all public areas. On walking trails and in parks. We clearly didn't mean to have Sheepdogs on leads on farms, Cllr Patsy Glennon, so, just for clarification!

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you for the clarity. Cllr Pat Kennedy?

CLLR KENNEDY: As I listen to the debate, we live in a beautiful county, no doubt about it. But thinking about it and looking forward, the Dublin population is to grow by 750,000 persons over 20 years. Glendalough is the second most visited place in Ireland and we have the numbers visiting in the region of 200,000 plus and the proposed new Green Way. And while we welcome tourism into the county and it is great to have tourism in the county we have the open access policy, that we are delighted to have and that I think everyone in the country would be delighted to have it, the policy should be in line with the National Parks and the wildlife, that dogs are on a leash, the same as the National Park. And I propose to write about changing that policy, and to have a copy of that letter to go to Imelda Hearn, who is the Chief Executive of the [inaudible] and a hill walker herself. Thank you for facilitating this again today.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Just to bring in Breege.

BREEGE: To the members and to the speakers here today, you are literally preaching to the converted with this issue, the bottom line is that the dog control legislation is not adequate.

That is the first thing. The second thing, that is fortuitous at this particular time, last week I was at a subcommittee the CCMA in relation to the environment. A large part of the discussion was around dog control. There is a lot of people like myself in this audience, saying it is an issue of enforcement, we are strapped in relation to dog wardens et cetera, so, just coming from that, there are part of the problem, and I think that Pat and Peter mentioned it there in terms of control of dog there is are 3 separate departments, one is the department of agriculture, the other is a department of rural affairs and then our own parent department of housing and local government. So, part of what was revealed to us at this meeting is that there has been a Local Authority through the CCMA, a working group, set up to try to bring everything together, that there is one voice. I think it is a comment that you had made, Peter, was that, you know to have it under one point of contact, one department, as I understand it that is the purpose of the working group and that it may be led by the department of Agriculture, so that is a plus going forward. In relation to what was coming out with the group, apparently it has met since Christmas, on a number of times as they have taken this issue, particularly in relation to that child, that was so badly injured, coming together, so, their position of making 9-10 recommendations and one is to increase the number of dog wardens throughout the country. To answer the questions, currently, we have two full-time dog wardens employed by the RSPCA and as you can appreciate, that is not enough to control the entire county, particularly a county like ours where we have lots of sheep farming and lots of open ground. On a couple of the other points, you know, we do have a member of culture as part of the SPC, an avenue to approach, when you are talking about getting effective results, Ken Sweeney is on the group, I am sure he can take the matter seriously, but by all means can also go to Head of Culture but it may be effective in getting more say.

In terms of Cllr Sylvester Bourke mentioning too, that is the avenue open to you as members, that we can bring in by-laws that can be specific to certain areas. As Cllr Lourda Scott mentioned, you know, I have set up a meeting monthly, to do with dog fouling which is a serious issue and the last discussion in relation to bringing in a by-law in relation to dogs on a lead, particularly in urban areas, close to where there is lots of walking, that is something to bring, anyway. But let's say, it is Sweeney up to each Municipal District as well. We can bring forward by-laws associated to having dogs on leads, that is up to you.

I've mentioned the two full-time wardens, enforcement, that is basically what it is about. We are going to need more dog wardens in place. But what I will say, and thank you to the couple of councillors who mentioned it, we have been out of the traps very, very early in terms of the awareness campaign and as everyone rightly said, Jackie has taken a real lead on this, and so, that is the other factor, the awareness for people. We are considering not just leaflet drops but going out to states and maybe with the association as mentioned there, that they may come to assist us in terms of educating people, as they say, your lovely dog during the day can become a killer at night. I remember old ads on the TV, mentioning that years ago but thinking of going out to the estates to have a visual presence in as far as what we can do. That's about it. You know, I have no issue at all, coming, if this is what the councillors want, like another full presentation with regards to what we are doing but rest assured it is an issue that we take quite seriously and we are doing stuff on the ground, within the control of which we have. From my own point of view with regards to we will be pushing for more dog wardens it is a part of the solution.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Breege.

Pat and Peter, and Phillip, as well, I hope that you have seen by the level of engagement here today, that this is a real issue for people. We have four separate proposals.

I will go through to make sure that we have them all covered and, Rachel, maybe yourself and Lorraine can give guidance on how we take them and we also have an outstanding question as well. Will I go through them? So, the first one is to, that is proposed by Cllr Pat Kennedy, seconded by Edward and Kay O'Connor.

RACHEL: Yes, it is the first motion that they would like the councillors, to ask for a national database for all dogs in the county for micro-chipping and licensing, so that is proposed and seconded, is that part of the motion agreed by everybody? Agreed. And Breege spoke about the additional resources for dog wardens, is that agreed?

CATHAOIRLEACH: The second part of the motion was by Cllr Shay Cullen and Cllr Melanie Corrigan according to add that all dogs were on leads in a public area.

>> That was seconded by Cllr Avril Cronin. Cllr Shay Cullen wishes to say something?

CLLR CULLEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I really want to clarify that in terms of the legislation under effective control, in my view, it means nothing ... it's just, it is something that needs to be looked at. I'm quite happy if we put forward some paragraph in that letter

to say that we need to look at the legislation and Breege has rightly alluded to this, that the legislation is not fit for purpose in its current state. So, what I am trying to suggest here is that we ask the minister to look at the legislation in terms of the, certainly the sentence "under effective control" as I say, it does not mean anything. To follow on to that, I believe that dogs should be on leads in public areas, what I mean by public areas, clarified by Cllr Avril Cronin, you are talking about general walkways, parks, that type of area, where there is lots of congregation of people. So, I wanted to clarify where I am coming from with that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So that the other members understand, you are adding on to that there in terms of the letter that the legislation is examined as it is currently not fit for use, is that the line, would that be fair enough? Is everybody in agreement for that? OK, we will take a vote as there is some descent.

BREEGE: Rachel will call names, if you are proposing for, if not, vote against.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Are people clear what they are voting for. No? I will clarify. So, it is anything. The to add into that letter, the line that the current legislation is in effective in that it states that dogs should be kept under control and ...

BREEGE: It is the effective control element, so it could be a whistle or a call, where you are asking for the legislation to be examined, with the suggestion being those leads be used in public space, et cetera and you have clarified. So it is asking the minister to examine that element of the legislation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So, ...

BREEGE: You are either for or against.

CATHAOIRLEACH: To keep it for clarity, Cllr Gerry Walsh.

CLLR WALSH: What we are saying is that the term "effective control" needs to be defined. That is too loose.

BREEGE: It is defined but it is not fit for purpose.

Cllr Shay Cullen?

CLLR CULLEN: That it needs to be examined. It is not fit for purpose. The legislation as it currently stands, "Under effective control" does not mean anything. I don't know how you determine it. It does not mean anything it must be examined by the minister and that they look at putting forward or changing the legislation that dogs are under, that dogs are on leads in public areas. We can define the public areas. As I have said already, I am talking about, parks, walkways, so on, where people congregate. If you are doing a walk, for

example, down the Murragh in Wicklow and a dog is running along beside you with no-one within 100 metres, that dog can bite you, it can cause difficulty, it can frighten kids that is not in my view "effective control" we have seen the scenario, a dog comes up to them, we don't know where it has come from, there is no owner in sight and suddenly the owner appears five minutes later. That is not "effective control".

CATHAOIRLEACH: What is meant is that there is a specific line for you to put in to vote for or against it.

>> I think to ask the minister for a country wide ban maybe overstretching it but Cllr Sylvester Bourke's point about the by-laws, I have looked and Waterford County Council have by-laws in place where they talk about dogs being kept under strong chain, not competed two metres in length or a fixed length or 10 metres if retractable and there is a lot of different places, that may be more effective than writing to the minister, and that we look to set up a working group, rather than voting on this ...

CATHAOIRLEACH: For clarity, there is, that is another proposal put forward that we will have to vote on, so four separate issues so what we have to clarify is that line Cllr Shay Cullen would like added in, as there is dissent in the room, for people to vote one way or the other. Councillor Anne Ferris?

CLLR FERRIS: Briefly, I could not support Shay Cullen's addition to the motion. I agree with what is up there. But really, what it will do it punishing all dog owners and you have to believe that the majority of dog owners are responsible people who have the sense to keep their dogs on a lead where they believe that the dog can cause a threat to have a blanket ban on dog owners, if certain places, liking at our own area, down at the sea park, things like that, I don't think it is fair, I could not support it.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is why we are taking a vote as there is dissent. So, Cllr Shay Cullen for clarity on the line for the members so that they are clear on what they are voting on.

CLLR CULLEN: Again, I know I am repeating myself. I think that the legislation that exists, that clearly states "under effective control" is not, it is not fit for purpose. If we want to maybe get that clarified, if that make it is simpler in terms of a vote. I am happy to put it forward that the minister reviews the term "effective control" ... and leave it at that, maybe that is more acceptable to the members.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is great, thank you, Cllr Shay Cullen. The Chief Executive?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The legislation says "under effectual control" it does not define it, so to ask the minister for the definition, lots of what the members are discussing can be dealt with by a way of by-laws, numbers of County Councils have introduced by-laws in different places in different places with different rules, so, for example, in Fingal, dogs are designated to have to wear leads and it is at different times of the morning. So, asking for the clarification for the control, it may give the members comfort.

CATHAOIRLEACH: The vote is to take just on adding in a review of the term "effective control". So, do we still have dissent? We are all agreed? Agreed. OK. That's great.

OK, the third proposal put forward by Cllr John Mullen, seconded by Cllr Pat Kennedy, relating to the writing to Coilte, in fact that the rules were different, to clarify that.

It is because of the confused nature of the property owners, Coilte is a large area. Coilte have a loose and a non-hands-on approach. So for the harmonisation of the land ownership in Coilte, if they are all on the same page, it may make the enforcement of it and make that better.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So that the proposal is that you write to Coilte to have that clarified. Members are agreed?

>> Can it be circulated to other County Councils around the country as well.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That is great. Thank you. The fourth is the proposal by Cllr Sylvester Bourke to establish a working group to review the existing by-laws if any, to establish new by-laws. Can I get a seconder? Cllr Irene Winters? Cllr Grace McManus?

CLLR MCMANUS: Does that include formal consultation? That is fine. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: All in agreement with that. That is brilliant. OK.

Thank you for that, everybody. So, we just have an outstanding question raised by Cllr O'Brien and around the ownership of the farmer, to look for your perspective. If you can come in there, shall I repeat the question?

>> Sorry can you repeat the question again.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I will bring in Cllr O'Brien again.

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Pat, it stood out from the presentation that there is the other than onus is on the farmer to pursue justice or get recourse when an attack happens, to speak to that and how that they feel that the accountability is not present in terms of enforcement.

>> To answer that, when a dog attack happens, a farmer is under pressure at that stage, himself. The whole family is. Animals to farmers are just like dogs to people.

If they see someone with their sheep being killed, often, you could have saved a lamb's life in birth, at this time of the year, with the ewes are lambing and you often save a lamb's life. And it is nothing as heart filling to be able to see that lamb out playing with the mother in a few weeks' time but nothing as much to gut you as to go out and to see that lamb under the jaws of a dog. Which puts you under horrendous pressure. With have a situation if there are a huge number of farmers, and if there is a small attack, you ask if they reported it, that they will say, "I did not, what is the eff-ing point of reporting it to them when there is nothing done about it." That is the issue, the issue that we must address, in some way or another, that at least, if they are reported it is relevant to the third-parties, that there is a follow-up. They are right in saying that the onus should not be on the farmer but it always falls back on him, there is nobody else to do it. That is the bottom line. Does it answer your question?

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Pat. Pat, Peter, Phillip, thank you, seriously, for coming in today for a meeting with some of us earlier on. It is really appreciated, and you can tell by the engagement that it is an issue that people are learning lots about, including myself, and I also have a huge interest in this, so, I will be back in touch again.

>> Just to say, thank you everybody for all your patience and all the goodwill that seems to be here. I appreciate that very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Pat, take care. The next item is to receive a presentation from the SSE Renewables, Arklow Bank Wind Park. We have Kay Christian and Deborah Coleman with us. You are both very welcome. I'll hand the floor over to you both.

DEBORAH: I'm Deborah Coleman, External Affairs Manager at SSE Renewables, and I'm joined by Kaj Christiansen as well. So I will give you a quick presentation - I think for everybody in the room, brevity is preferred, so we won't hold you up for too long - and maybe we'll fit some questions in as well. If we go on to the next slide, please.

This is just a quick snapshot of our offshore portfolio as it stands at the moment. We include 2 gigawatts of onshore wind and half a gigawatt of offshore winds and half a gigawatt of hydro as well. In Ireland we have three offshore projects in development at the moment, including Arklow Bank. In construction, we have a construction off the east coast of England, the largest offshore project in the world once completed, and the construction of Seagreen

off the coast of Scotland is already completed as well and that will be the deepest offshore fixed spot and project in the world as well.

Just to give a quick snapshot in relation to Arklow of what we've achieved so far, in contributing to our goal to deliver the first offshore wind farm of scale off the coast of Wicklow, we have planning permission achieved for our operations and maintenance facility, which is planned for South Dock in Arklow. Last year we also achieved planning percentages for our onshore grid infrastructure and we achieved our MAC, or Maritime Area Consent, that involves the seabed, last year in December as well. So from SSE's perspective, I suppose a lot of our advocacy is around wider decarbonisation and our net zero goals as well. So just for your information, on a wider level, we see there are three steps and that would be to speed up and maximise construction of offshore wind. At SSE we're looking to deliver up to 5 gigawatts of offshore wind, we're targeting 2030 for this. We need to set out nationally a clear hydrogen vision. We're part of a co-op that's developing Ireland's first hydrogen valley in Galway and we are keen to see the national hydrogen strategy published which we believe will take place in April and we'll be able to feed into that. We need to also enable hybrid connections and at SSE our first hybrid connection project is taking place in your neighbouring county, in Wexford, and that is at our existing Richfield onshore site and it is to be a solar and battery project as well so that's currently in development.

I suppose the purpose of our presentation here today is around our upcoming public consultation. We've had a number of consultations over the past number of years and I suppose in relation to those consents that I've just outlined to you, so for our onshore grid infrastructure and operation and maintenance facility but this upcoming consultation is primarily focused on the offshore infrastructure that is I suppose what we would call the outstanding piece of the jigsaw puzzle. We have two out of three consents so we need this third one to be able to proceed and progress the project and our call to you as councillors, really, is to share with your constituents information about our consultation and to appeal to them to feed into it because I suppose if we don't know what people's concerns or views are we can't incorporate them into our plans or our proposal for our planning application. So in brief, I suppose we have three in-person events coming up starting with Arklow on 15 March. We have one the following week in Wicklow Town here and we will have one in Courtown as well in the third week. It is a four-week consultation and on the fourth week we will have an online webinar, so hopefully that will be suitable for people who can't make

the in-person events or who wish to get their information online. On the 13th when we kick off we will be opening a virtual consultation room. These have become, I suppose, they were - they became our new innovation during Covid and we've kept them through further consultations as kind of an add-on to the in-person events. We found them really effective and they give people a chance to browse our information at their own pace and if they have questions they can offer feedback virtually as well. Just that photograph there is our current ad campaign which you might have seen in local media, that started this week. If you see that, it's about our consultation. We'll have individual meetings by request if anybody would like to talk to our team in person, you know, for a longer period of time. Again, a call for feedback, that is the main goal of this, because it is our last non-statutory consultation and after that once we go through planning it will be the statutory process that will come into effect as well. So I will hand you over to Kaj now for a couple of slides.

KAJ: Thanks, Deborah. Just a quick update on where we are with the project. As Deborah mentioned, we're going through this last piece of the puzzle with the offshore consent and with that is the public consultation. The big milestone coming up is the ORESS, the subsidy auction, coming up in April for the electricity contract with the state. There is a huge amount of work we need to prepare with that. And the planning application itself, so the public consultation is on the offshore application and the final planning application would be for the offshore infrastructure that we hope to submit towards the end of the year. We got our MAC before Christmas, which is kind of like our seabed entitlement, or a lease, and because we're a phase one project that gives us entitlement to submit planning, compete in the upcoming auction in April, and also get a grid connection, which we've provisionally secured. So yeah, looking ahead, there's going to be a lot of stakeholder engagement with the planning and supply chain engagement. Obviously we need to know roughly how much this development will cost before putting in a bid for the upcoming auction. And we'll continue with the sponsorship and fisheries fund. So yes, I think it has been a bit of a slow burn, I think, the whole project, getting to this stage but I think everything is coming together with the grids and the planning and the auction as well and the seabed lease we got shortly before Christmas through this MAC process.

So jumping to the next slide then, I think it's just sort of outlining about the fisheries. I know this tends to get a lot of attention and rightly so, you know, fishermen are a key, key stakeholder. So I think to kind of reflect our engagement we created this kind of co-

existence document that will talk about how we intend to co-develop Arklow and work together with the fishermen not just for development but also for the operational phase, I think, which is a key concern for the fisheries stake holding group. We did launch this document a couple of weeks ago at the Skipper Expo and I think we have a couple of copies here if anyone is interested. That is a general update on the project. I don't know if there are any questions. Happy to take them. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That's fantastic, thank you, Deborah and Kaj. We will open it up. I think some members have indicated already. Cllr Paul O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you to Deborah and Kaj for an informative presentation. They've come to all our meetings and kept us informed and updated at every stage of it and I do welcome that. I was going to bring this to the Chief Executive's Report but now that you are here I said I would raise it. We've spoken often in this chamber about the coastal erosion around the Morrow(?) And I was contacted by a number of concerned residents around Brittas Bay and that is part of the Arklow municipal area as well. So I was out there last week and to be quite honest with you, I was shocked at the coastal erosion on the south beach on Brittas Bay. It seems to be getting worse and worse and worse and for the first time ever. What I've seen - and the residents backed me up - in a sense that the sandy beach is becoming stony now, never before heard of that out there. I'm all for renewable energy, I've supported you all the way and I will continue to support you all along the way on this and that's never in doubt, but it would be remiss of me not to bring this forward that the dredging that's going on along the existing turbines out there at the moment, you're talking about having to dredge it every so often now because there is a build-up of silt which is another material which obviously the tides are washing them down that way but there is a concern by the residents that because of the build-up it could be diverting the tide in and around by Brittas which is obviously having a negative effect on the beach and the biodiversity and the wildlife there. I'm not looking for this answer here today, maybe the executive might be able to answer me, that there was an EPA licence granted in 2016 or '17 for X amount to be taken away. Now, where are we with that at the moment? Do we see a bigger build-up as we go along? And as I say, this is for me to knock the project, I want the project to go ahead, but I want the environment to be protected out there and the residents to have reassurance and I'm sure the meetings you are having over the next few weeks and consultation will help but something's happening

out in Brittas. We've waited too long for the Morrow and we've seen what's happening down there, we don't want to wait too long for Brittas. I'm not blaming and I hope this isn't a signal of me saying it's the wind farm, but we would like it dealt with sooner rather than later. If you know anything send it on to me. Because we just need to keep an eye on it before it's too late. Thank you and I look forward to working with you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, we'll take a few people and come back to you, if that's OK. Cllr Peir Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Hi, Deborah and Kaj. I just wanted to say great work being done and great to see the planning or the three stages being achieved by December. I'm just - just two questions, really. One is in relation to the engagement with the fishermen, because they are the key stakeholders. What percentage of engagement are you getting, you know, are you getting engagement from individual fishermen or is it just through the liaison officer speaking on their behalf? And then also what can we do to support this? I mean I do believe that the offshore wind and renewables are such an important thing and what are the threats if you don't get planning because of delays and stuff like that, what are the implications of that? Because I think that we need to kind of being running in and supporting you as much as we can to make sure this all goes through and that we have you down in the lovely new building down in Arklow as soon as possible. But all the environmental concerns taken into account, of course. Then just lastly, has there been any progression with looking at putting infrastructure onto the base of the wind turbines for the oyster regeneration? Maybe if you could just answer those, thanks a million.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Derek Mitchell?

CLLR MITCHELL: Yes, thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you very much for the presentation. I just wanted to express my concern about the general consultation. We do want to get on with getting these wind farms to work but each wind farm is consulting as if it's the only wind farm that there is that's going to be visible in the area and in fact the whole of the Wicklow coast from the north to the south is going to be one long line of wind farms and very large wind turbines. Turbines bigger than Bray Head, for instance, which is the local landmark where I live. I'm concerned about this. For instance, where I live in Greystones the combined visual effect of this will be the entire sea horizon, 115 degrees arc of view, up with the three wind farms. There is no co-ordination between the wind farms, nor nationally, as to how this is going to look and how it's going to be. Now, this scale of the

entire sea horizon being covered would not be allowed in any other European country. There is considerable literature in other countries about the merging of wind farms from a visual effect and I would like - and I asked at the last meeting in relation to the Chief Executive's Report that Wicklow County Council would do a visual study and look at this literature and see what the combined effect should be. Otherwise it's just as if these are three completely - or five completely separate planning applications and I think that would be - would seriously damage this county if the whole of the horizon is covered in this and in most other countries these wind farms are put more out to sea or else they're very much restricted to, say, 50-60 degrees arc of view if they're close to the shore and I think that should be the case here. So I would ask the council to do this study on behalf of the people of the coastal areas of Wicklow. Thank you.

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

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for the presentation. Just a couple of questions. I would love to hear - and Kaj talked about the slow burn of this and I'm sure you're feeling that, but when you look ahead to the significant amount of construction that's going to be involved in this project, if we presume that things will go according to plan, is that something that you have to consider in terms of the workforce needed and required and can we do stuff now to make sure they're local and localised and that we can benefit as a county from the tremendous amount of work that's going to be required? Because I think that would be really positive. Again, could you give us a sense of your confidence around the auction in April? Or is that something you can predict? Or should we be confident? And then finally maybe a comment on the engagement in particular with children and young people, I see you produced some videos showing children and young people what this means, and I imagine in contrast maybe to Cllr Mitchell's comments that children and young people see wind farms as their renewable future rather than the eyesore that some others might perceive them as. But a comment on how the engagement is going with children and young people. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much. Are you OK for me to take a few more before? Is that OK? OK, Cllr Miriam Murphy?

CLLR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you for the presentation to you both as well. Just one of the questions that I was going to ask Cllr Leonard has asked, but I will ask then about the consultation with the fishermen. Because for us they are a very important

link as well. And also to, what is the response for the public consultation, because, as Cllr Dermot O'Brien just said there, I think it's easy to probably explain the future of the wind farms to children and their future, but I think for us in the middle stages of our lives it's probably hard to understand it all and I'm just wondering, you know, how that consultation goes and what is the response for local people? Because they hear it on the radio and on social media, but as I said, as with all these, do they understand it and how will it benefit us? So thanks again.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr. Deborah and Kaj, I might come back to you now. There's a couple more speakers just to come in, but just on those questions that have been raised.

KAJ: Sure. Just to go to Cllr O'Brien's - about the coastal erosion and the engagement. Firstly, from Wicklow, I'm used to running up and down here, and I see first-hand the erosion. I think it's important to highlight that the existing wind farm isn't owned by ourselves but nonetheless the key principle will apply once we put a key development surrounding it. What I can say is we're doing an environmental impact assessment to accompany the planning application that will assess various different disciplines from the environmental perspective but coastal processes is one of them and it will look at the impacts of, you know, the wind farm on the environment in terms of erosion and deposition and what is going to happen on the local beaches. So I'm kind of confident that that will answer a lot of people's concerns around erosion deposition on the beaches. We did a previous environmental impact assessment under a previous regime previously and it pointed out there wasn't a concern to be had around erosion of beaches and there was actually a small amount of deposition resulting from the wind farm being offshore. But nonetheless, look, it will be in the public domain for public scrutiny and statutory scrutiny and hopefully towards the end of the year, so I think that's - probably that answers your question around the erosion bit.

In terms of the engagement with fishermen, yes, we have a local fishery liaison officer, Brendan Dillon, he is our key conduit with fisheries engagement. He also works on the existing wind farm and also on the Orientale(?) As a skipper. So I think it is different how we manage that interface and I think we're relatively fortunate in the fact that there's limited fishing on the wind farm itself. We are facilitating fishing activity within the wind farm once it is up and operational, if fishermen so wish to do so. And yeah, we had this coexistence

document that I hope will bring attention to what we're doing and how we intend to engage and coexist with fishermen. Brendan is on the pier, he is pretty much there daily, meeting fishermen on ad hoc basis and we will engage all the fishermen in advance of any update on the project or any survey or geotech or physical campaign as well. We invite them obviously to come to our consultation event and Brendan is at the end of the phone 24/7 for those fisheries and stakeholders.

DEBORAH: I think the other question was around delay and I suppose we've always been advocating for as quick a process as can possibly be. It takes about ten years to build an offshore wind farm. So things seem to be finally coming together. We have the process and the auction and the mechanism to submit our planning application for offshore infrastructure. But I suppose the main concern we would have, if projects are - not just ours - are delayed, like for Ireland Inc, you know, as a market, it is going to affect supply chain confidence and investor confidence and we're a very small fish in a very big pond and I suppose if we delay to indefinite lengths of time, you would wonder why those industries would look at Ireland as a viable market. That is, I suppose, a risk.

You asked about the oyster regeneration and biodiversity around the base of the turbines. We're still engaging with various research projects and we've had some really interesting conversations lately, so I suppose we might be able to update you about that further in the coming weeks, maybe, if that is something that is of interest.

I'm not sure if Cllr Mitchell's questions were more for the officials around the study there but did you want to touch on cumulative impact.

KAJ: Just to reiterate we will be doing a cumulative impact assessment as well, on the existing wind farms and the future ones, too. But I acknowledge these are near-shore projects and these are big machines, albeit numbers are going down, but they are near-shore and they will be seen by people and some people, you know, like them, some people dislike them and some people don't care, that is just a reality. But there is work we can do to mitigate the impact as well. We can reduce the numbers and we can microsite them in certain areas so they have less of an impact. But unfortunately all the phase one projects are restricted by their boundary. I'm sure the other guys are telling you the same thing that we can't move them further offshore. But that will come with the next phase of the projects.

DEBORAH: Cllr O'Brien asked about construction and obviously our preference is to support local jobs where possible. We envisage about 80 would be attached to the operations and maintenance facility and that will be turbine technicians, warehousing staff, admin staff, security, storage and health and safety and all of that kind of thing. For construction, though, I suppose we do try and advocate to suppliers that they would go to the local market as much as possible and it would depend on the specific skills, in terms of training and up-skilling opportunities. We are engaging with various training bodies, we have been talking to Minister Harris as well to lend industry knowledge as much as we can and to outline what we feel would be the need going forward and also to our industry body, Wind Energy Ireland as well, so there's a lot of work going on in the background with that. Auction - pretty much top-secret! Very confidential and very competitive but we've been working really, really hard to bid into that and I suppose it won't be long before there will be results announced and we will all see the outcome.

Engagement with children is something that's ongoing all of the time. We have really active community engagement manager, she is an Arklow lady and she has been working really hard getting out and about in the community since everything opened back up again. The biggest highlight in the year is the offshore wind farm for kids workshops we did along the local beaches, we were in a couple of the beaches in Arklow and we brought a non-profit company over from Belgium to deliver some interactive workshops with local children and that was something that was sort of a pilot, we were the first renewables company in Ireland to bring them across for school purposes and it went down well and we're looking at rolling that out further now on the basis of that. Just worth noting as well on the education piece, so the space in Arklow will have an integrated sustainable education centre in that building so the top floor will be given over to educational events, community use, exhibitions, and renewable-themed tours and groups as well. And Cllr Murphy, I hope we answered your question about commercial fisheries there. When you ask about feedback captured, I suppose the purpose of the consultation is to get a fresh round of feedback and based on our most up-to-date information. That is the preface of it. We capture all of that feedback into a consultation report which is appended to our formal application, so that will be made public and it will cover all of the themes raised and our responses to that, whether it's visual or construction or anything really that comes across from the public. So I hope that answers your question.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That's great, Deborah, thanks. I might just ask you on the EPA 2016, I'm not sure about that?

>> I'll ask to have Cllr O'Brien. Could he expand on that a little bit? I'm not aware of what his question was, even, or if they need an EPA licence.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Fantastic, I will come back to you on it separately. Thanks, Cllr. Three more speakers. Cllr Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks to Deborah and Kaj for the presentation. I represent the Greystones municipal district and as you are aware a number of projects are of course to the north, we have the Dublin array and Codling directly opposite us and to the south yourselves, and there's probably another one or two in there! So I appreciate we will have more clarity around the whole situation following June with the results of the ORESS auction. Just a point of clarification, just firstly I note that Codling came back with revised dimensions for their turbines. I think originally they were looking at 140 at a certain scale and height and now it's 100 and the height has increased I think to the region of 300m, which is pretty high. Somebody said it's three times the height of Bray Head, I'm not sure about that but that has been said. So on your particular project, can you give us an indication, firstly, the number of turbines we're looking at here and the distance from shore and the heights? And a final question - just on these turbines, when they reach their end of life, be it in, you know, their shelf life or maybe they have to be replaced with more advanced technology or whatever, what is the process around, you know, disposing of them, et cetera, et cetera? So just on that, thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr. Cllr Lourda Scott?

CLLR SCOTT: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for your presentation. I think Cllr Walsh asked most of my questions there. I'm a councillor based up in the Greystones district so we've had numerous presentations to us from Codling, et cetera, and I would ask the same questions I asked everybody. Clarifications on the number of turbines and how far out and if you could just elaborate a little bit just on what you touched on there when you said you're kind of restricted at the moment as to how far out from shore you can get in this round, if I understood that correctly. But when we are talking about the height, if you can clarify for me what height are we actually seeing above water? I think that's quite important because there is a bit of confusion around that. I also just had a comment - and again I make this to all the presentations - just in terms of really having an active participation in the

consultation process, I think that's going to be a real challenge, because I do find from talking to constituents - and I'm sure the constituents down in the south of the county aren't much different to the north of the county, in terms of that there is a bit of a weariness about public consultations and I think it's the same people that will turn up and the vast majority of people won't participate or aren't aware it's on or don't think it's important, perhaps, until they actually physically see the construction starting. I was just wondering if you've any plans about, rather than just re-treading, you know, the usual paths, as to how to really sort of actively engage? And it's great to hear about those workshops for children, I think that's really innovative and if you've any similar plans with kind of the rest of the population down there? And the other question that I had and again I think you touched on it, but I do ask this of everybody, is that potential cumulative effect in terms of biodiversity, in terms of bird flight patterns, et cetera? Because we are basically going to have a row of wind turbines at some point stretching from Howth down to the south and again it's just reassurance that all of the wind farms are looking at this together, that cumulative effect, and as I said particularly just on bird migratory patterns and the noise effects during construction, I think as much during construction as when they're actually set up, again just that cumulative effect on the underwater marine life as well, just a comment on that would be great. And otherwise, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. And just our final, Cllr Rory O'Connor.

CLLR O'CONNOR: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, I have two questions and one was asked by Cllr Walsh. My first question was on the fisheries fund - if you guys could expand on how and how it works, and giving out the funds for that, is it easy, is it bureaucratic, how does it work on that. And then just about the recycling of the actual turbines, because, from my understanding, I believe I think it's something like 60% of it can be recycled but the other percentage can't. I can't remember the exact percentage but I know it's around that. That's all, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry there, just before you, there will be one more. Cllr Gail Dunn?

CLLR DUNN: Thank you, yes, I was contacted by Brittas Bay and I heard your answers but also if you are sending out any correspondence on that, you might include me as well, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Now Deborah and Kaj.

KAJ: Just to go to the number of turbines and the heights. The number of turbines will obviously depend on the type of turbine we choose. We're looking at between 36-60 turbines at the moment. Because we're going through planning now and it's going to be a couple of years before we actually secure planning, we expect we won't be able to sign any contracts with the chosen turbine supplier for quite some time. So that's why we're going into the planning with kind of a bit of flexibility on the number of turbines and the type. But look, I think in terms of they will be similar enough, I'm sure. I don't know exactly what the other guys are seeking planning on but usually there's not many to choose from so I expect it will be similar enough in terms of the technology. Our turbines are around about 320-330m above NIT, and the grid connection is for 800 megawatts, so I guess the number of turbines will depend on the individual size of the turbine chosen.

The decommissioning, so we're restricted in the Maritime Area of Consent that we got shortly before Christmas. This is essentially a seabed lease for 45 years, so our entitlement to that piece of seabed expires then. We will be seeking planning for a 35-year project and a couple of years before the end of the life cycle, we could apply to bring it up to the seabed lease, the termination stage, but at this stage we will be decommissioning it after 35 years and, with that, to be honest I don't know exactly what they'll do with all the components and how they will recycle it but it's something perhaps we can come back on and clarify. I know it is a hot topic in the market with onshore at the moment, so I think that's... and just to Cllr Lourda Scott on the cumulative impact on biodiversity, it is a big infrastructure project, there are impacts on the environment, we have to accept that, but with the environmental impact assessment, we will look at the impact that it has on the surrounding environment and the cumulative impact. With the other phase one projects there is a lot of other projects in development but I think that the projects have both certainty in the near term with the Phase 1 Projects, that is important to look between the Phase 1 and 2. They are the projects that we are focusing in on from an accumulative impact from the assessment perspective. Of course to include biodiversity.

>> And Cllr Lourda Scott to pick up on the point of stakeholder fatigue, off-shore is a fledgling industry, and all the developers have a duty to keep people informed. It is difficult to get people engaged, as you say, it takes ten years to build and then if it is felt it is not for today but it is felt that consistency is the key. So maybe a quarterly letter and between that

there are no news fine but if we have news to do an outreach on it. Best efforts is to be present in every area of the catchment, to be available. It is that thing of having the community engagement manager on the ground, it does not always have to be a formal presentation or a meeting it can be a cup of coffee with a community manager if someone has a few questions to answer for clarification. We have a website constantly updated and trying to use as many platforms as possible to hit everybody's preferred method, I suppose, really.

The fisheries fund ...

>> I can touch on the fisheries fund. An initiative started in 2019 or 2020, I'm not sure. There is no obligation behind it is a goodwill with the fishing community. We committed to put 50 [sic] aside per year, and at the moment co-developing the plant Australian with the Wicklow County Council securing planning for that and hoping to roll it out later this year.

>> Consulting with the fisheries community before, to ask them to feed in, what would benefit them in the harbour and committed more than a year of use.

We have front-loaded it and we have a sponsorship fund which is a quarterly fund that is for all of their community groups, any biodiversity projects that they would like to roll out.

You can pick up after.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That's fantastic. Thank you very much for coming in to present to the chambers, it is very much appreciated. I don't think there are further questions. Thank you, both.

Members, we are moving on to receive a presentation of the Age Friendly Strategy, copy attached. Clodagh is here with us.

>> At the time of the new strategy we were pushed for business on a meeting to be agreed to hold the presentation until later. Since then we launched the official strategy, Minister Mary Butler. And now we are to make a presentation on the next steps and to remind you of what we have done.

>> Thank you very much, Michael. Again to remind you that you have seen the details of the strategy document in January. So, we have brought it to full production. We will have hard

copies in each of the libraries. There are soft copy available on the website. It was great to have the minister Mary Butler to launch it last Monday. So, I had a few slides in terms of the background, so moving on to the next one.

Just to set the demographic context, in terms of population projections, the increases are expected to increase by 2.5-fold. People aged over 80 are forecast to increase by 3.7, the numbers at the moment. That will put a huge demand on services for both age groups. That's the background to it. Moving on to the next slide, then, the World Health Organisation, the work that the World Health Organisation has done in informing the framework that we used for the strategy to look at the 8 domains of liveability to influence the quality of life as we age. That is also the foundation of the 8 global friendly cities and communities guide introduced in 2013. So, what is an age friendly community? On the next slide there, an age friendly community participates and responds to the needs and the preference of older people. We have obviously done a consultation with older people in the development of strategy. What they have been telling us is to leave healthy or enactive lives for longer, so that they stay living in their own homes as long as possible, being able to go out and about, when they want to go, and to be enabled by the social environment that supports them and feeling safe at home and out and about. So, the needs of older people, we have incorporated into the strategy. Just looking at the national context, then on the next slide, sorry, the mile stones, the development of, from the age friendly cities and communities' framework, in 2014, the 10 of the Local Authorities signed the Dublin Declaration, which committed to creating an age friendly state and then the, there was a national roll out of that under 31 Local Authorities, whether they signed up to the Age Friendly Programme Model in 2016. 2019 before the lockdown, the COVID situation, Age Friendly Ireland established as a shared service function, that is hosted by Mead County Council, so a huge amount of work done since then in terms of the various different programmes that have been designed and modelled and tested. Moving on to the next slide, then, just to give you an overview of national context, this are certain issues that are at the local level. There are local structures and for implementing actions or services needed there, then there are also other issues that would be a national level and may not be able to be addressed at a local level. The governance around the Age Friendly Ireland programme includes the national advisory group to include representatives from a senior level in the

Department of Housing and Department of Health and in Rural Transport. So there is a top-down approach. At the local alliance level who agree with the strategy, includes representatives of the Local Authority, the HSE, the transport providers, and the Kildare and the Wicklow Enterprise Training Boards among others but they are detailed in the strategy so I will not go into detail. Moving on to the next slide to identify the national networks, there is the National Network of Age Friendly Technical Advisers to have a representative from a local level. I would be a representative of the Chair Alliance and then this will be a structure to provide oversight and governance to the programme.

Moving on to the next slide, the older people's council is a two-tier structure comprised of an Executive Committee which is voted in every two years by the wider AGM. It would be representatives, that intention is that there is a wide representation of diversity, older people are not inhomogeneous group by any means. So the aim is that the older people's council reflect the diversity in the older population.

That can prove challenging in getting engagement from some people, and particularly with the COVID situation, there has been people that have disengaged because of the restrictions and have not re-engaged so, we are looking at Age Friendly Ireland to look to do a promotional campaign to encourage people to re-engage and the Chief Medical Officer there and the Minister Mary Butler mentioned on Monday there is a national campaign to that effect. Part of what we are looking to do with the strategy at the local level is to put in structures to allow people to engage, that it is not just a campaign, that we are encouraging people to support them in doing that. The next slide and the local structures comprised of the older people's council and three of those represent the voices of older people on the age friendly alliance. There is myself as the age friendly programme manager and Aileen Clerk the age friendly technical adviser, the interdepartmental group is one of the actions in the strategy to get that set up this year. Again, that is just to ensure that the objectives are working across the organisation at the implementation level.

Coming back to the bigger picture, the vision for the county Wicklow Age Friendly strategy is to make Wicklow County Council a great place to grow old, where people are respected and valued living full lives with their communities.

On the next slide, we are back to the 8 themes.

We have a total of 72 actions in the strategy. You will be delighted to hear I will not go through all of them this afternoon. But to highlight that for some specific participation and employment, for example, this is a smaller number, whereas outdoor spaces and buildings there is a larger number with a on lap, so I would like to run through the slides to take a highlight from each one in terms of what is happening going forward.

So, moving on to the next slide. In terms of the outdoor spaces and the buildings, the key one there is that the libraries as one of the lead partners, for each of these, the lay out is to ensure that older people benefit from improved access to outdoor spaces and buildings to increase activity and engagement with the wider community. The libraries, the engagement is to provide information to them, to encourage them to avail of themselves of the information. The libraries are going through age friendly training programme, and Age friendly recognition programme at the moment. Age Friendly Ireland is launching Age Friendly libraries announcement in May. I will come on to that presently. But the aim is that all of the libraries in Ireland have gone through Age Friendly training and can get accreditation, so that the libraries in Wicklow are undergoing that process since last September. The next one and a key gap identified in the area of transport, was the infrastructure to support in rural areas. We have new local links and new routes but the feedback is that we are still getting gaps. The key objective around the transportation area is that there is a working group set up with various representatives from local link HSE, the Chair of the SPC and the count Wicklow County Council partnership and that was an area to be progressed from that area. Housing and good news on the housing for a change in that there has been funding approved by the Department of Health, and Sliante Care to roll out the Age Friendly homes programme so a Budget of £2.2 million approved there. And the programme [sic] the programme was trialled in 9 Local Authorities, from the success that they have had in terms of supporting people to AI at that point their own homes to live at home for as long as possible, there is a roll out of co-ordinators in each county. It will be a population basis. So some counties have more than others. The recruitment process is under way at the moment and a roll out of that and the intention is April or May of this year. There will be an SLA agreed with each of the Local Authorities for how the co-ordinator would work within the local structures. The next slide looks at respect and social inclusion. An item to note, the support for digital transactions. Sorry, I have gone ahead of

myself. The social participation, again, I mentioned that the Hello Again World campaign. The alliance is meeting on the SAT of March. There is a work plan agreed for focus to go on how we would support that campaign in terms of the support available to people to engage.

Loss here of approximately 2 minutes (16:16:31-16:18:35)

It could be at a crafts level or hobbies level, so there's various different support partners involved in this which could involve the libraries and the education and trainings boards, as well as the Garda Síochána in terms of skills for crime prevention in your home and that sort of thing.

So, moving on to the community supports and health services, the lead partner, health and wellbeing is a key area that we will be looking at supporting people. Again, part of it is providing information on what programmes are out there.

One of, again, there is new programmes coming along all the time. I got one today, a HSE programme that Ireland are organising, an online programme designed to support 57 older adults living in their homes for 6 months to help them to get active and stay active. So sharing the information on the supports is part of the remit.

So, that is a top line on each of those themes, if we can move on to the calendar of events, to focus on where it is going next.

And maybe the bigger font on the next page will help, me, certainly! So, in March we have the Wicklow count alliance meeting on the 15th to review the work plan to start with the implementation of the strategy and the resources required to do that. The next meeting of the older persons council is on the 24th and again looking at the work plan for the year and recruiting more people into the wider OPC, the Older People's Council in advance of the annual general meeting in May.

In April, I mentioned the National Advisory Group are meeting, to review a national strategy for Age Friendly Ireland, I will give you a status update when we have that, part of that to review the memoranda of understanding with the Local Authorities to what they are committing to deliver on this. In April, Age Friendly Ireland are developing a new website. We will have a standalone page on that. In the meantime, I have put the information on the

strategy up on one of the community pages designated for Age Friendly Ireland. That is key for the recruitment campaign that we plan to roll out in April.

So, just in terms of looking at using the local media and rolling out through the public participation network and community engagement week is coming up the 17th to the 24th of April. So, we are trying to leverage that as well. Moving on to May, glad to hear I will not go all the way to November. May we have the national convention for the older people's council convention on the 11-12th of May with four representatives from Wicklow at that.

The AGM I mentioned for the Older Person's Council did not happen because of restrictions last year, happening on the 26th of May to elect a new executive to look to embed the new structure there. The healthy age friendly homes programme roll out, that I mentioned, so I will not go into that, it is at recruitment stage with the public payments service and the Mead County Council are the shared service, the key agent on that. The national launch of the Age Friendly Libraries is scheduled in May and the national awards in November in Wexford, there will be a call for submissions for that for projects for that going out in May. We will be submitted beyond Avondale as the first friendly tourist destination, we got good coverage on that but the timing was mismatched for the timing of the awards as the site was not open when the submissions had to go in, so hopefully in a better position for that this year. So, a couple of other things coming up further down the road. There is a launch of Age Friendly Housing Case Studies in Q3. To include the Wicklow presentation on that and the recognition awards. Moving on to the next slide, I mentioned we have a standalone page on the website. If you know anyone who wants a copy of the strategy, we will have, hopefully as of Wednesday, when I drop them to Margaret, two copies in each of the libraries but you can download it from the website there.

So, that's as much as I have to say, I hope that I didn't run over too long. There is a lot going on.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Absolutely. Thank you very much. We have members looking to come in. Cllr Peir Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and to the whole team up there, Clodagh, it is such a vast area. To make a few comments as anything as a local representative on the ground and through observation what I see happening in our society. Ireland is becoming a

lonely place, not just for age-related loneliness. I think that everything has become so complex and there's been a real move away from community even though the great work that the County Council is doing towards everyone having to be independent and not wanting to, to connect with others, that we all need to be working as one team that look after each other and help each other, with the move towards everything becoming more technology, the innovation of progression of technology, it is adding to the isolation of people. And because of the complexity, their lives are becoming very, very difficult and more difficult to even get a human at the end of a telephone ... you know? Machinery and shopping now, it is all digital to even get out of the car park.

I think training has a place and there is also a place to maintain that human level of connection, or at least to have the very least some sort of support system where there is a real human in place and I think the Citizens Advice Bureaus are probably that to a certain extent and that has been eroded as well and removed and taken online. So I would have huge concerns going forward over things being made so difficult for people and that isolation and a lot of our housing estates are outside of our town centres built on green field sites and as people get older even transport - everybody presumes everyone has a caring family to wrap themselves around the person when they get sick and, again, you know, the supports are just - I just think there's a huge piece of work to be done there. Part of the solution to that, I think, is to try and get more of our - and this could tie in with the regeneration of our main streets, more units available in our town centres so that people can walk and be accessible to everything. As well as that, more schemes that are kind of like supported living schemes, housing schemes, for people that want to maintain their independence for as long as possible but can't, you know, just to have a person to go to at the end of a phone that they need in the immediate vicinity and I'm wondering have Wicklow County Council any plans to roll out any schemes like that going forward? Thanks.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much, Cllr. Cllr Miriam Murphy.

>> Thank you, Cathaoirleach, thanks for the presentation. A lot of detail and I know a lot of work has been undertaken by Wicklow County Council over the last few years on this strategy. I suppose I would have concerns, like Cllr Leonard as well, with some of the issues that I think are more national as well, but for everyday living I think the world has changed for all of us in the sense of, you know, buying online, shopping, you know, even going in, as Cllr Leonard said about car parking, it's so difficult, and if you've any different need, I don't

think it has been accommodated and not everyone is sassy with IT, nobody, I suppose, thinks of that as well. I see a lot of lonely people in our community because, you know, even to ring - I'm just taking this as an example, Sky, television, like you probably get into prison quicker, you know, and that's frightening for people who maybe are living on their own and who have a concern. Even ringing your GP is difficult for people who are living on their own, they can't get a GP.

One of the things that I would highlight on this presentation is - and I really don't know what power the strategy will have and I'm not just saying Wicklow's strategy, I'm sure national strategies, you know, on the last presentation, number eight there, like essential support and services enhanced for home care and provision. Can I just tell you, there is a pure really serious crisis in the health service getting home support. I'm just going to give you an example of myself here. I'm looking for extra hours from the service that I receive. That went in in October, hasn't even been approved yet and I know that the home care services for the elderly, people are looking for even three hours. They can only get one. What would a home care do in one hour for somebody? And the rules and regulations of what they're entitled to do when they go into that older person's house is just ridiculous. I have a real concern about that. I have real concern about these services being brought into place to "Enhance" the elderly people's lives. These are meant to be coming in to give independence to that person but they're not - they're not - and I am really worried about the next five years. I'm worried about myself. I'm worried about myself getting the service I'm getting and there is just a crisis out there. I'm really pleading with the people in government at the moment to have a serious look at this.

Also home packaging, the home care package. There are people who are institutionalised at this moment in hospitals who are bed-blocking because the packages are not being approved quick enough. These people who want to go home to live in their own house to sleep in their own bed. So I don't know what influences and I would really, really hope the strategy would set this. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much, Cllr. Cllr Vincent Blake?

CLLR BLAKE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for the presentation as well. I think the previous two speakers have highlighted some of the drawbacks in the whole aspect of care for the elderly. The Age Friendly programme has been going for quite a number of years and probably has been spearheaded a lot of times by the older people themselves as well in

what was actually needed out there. Miriam has talked about a very, very important issue out there in terms of the home care package and it's not from the lack of finances from the department it's lack of personnel to carry out the home care, that is where a big issue is, and I think it's something that we as a council and as chairman of the SPC for the community, I think it's something that we should take on board as well and highlight it out there to the department. I know we lost a lot during the pandemic and everything else, we lost a lot of staff from abroad that were coming in here and doing that work, but as Miriam as outlined there, it is absolutely serious and serious that we need to follow-up on it. One other thing from my own point of view and that is in terms of people out there, as they get older, in a lots of cases they don't need maybe the €30,000 massive improvements to where they're living but some small improvements as well and this is where maybe the housing and John as chair and the Housing SPC might come into it in terms of small repair works that can be carried out that doesn't need thousands of euros, but hundreds of euros, in order to carry them out and it makes life enormously easier for them as well, whether it be a handrail or steps into the house, and I'm just wondering from the housing association, can we actually streamline a system where small grants can actually be made available for people who are having to go through all the rigmarole of getting quotations and everything else and afterwards in terms of clearance from the department in terms of people being tax compliant and all that. I'm just wondering is there any small way of being able to carry out small repair work for people to make their houses far more accessible in that regard? So again, thanks to both of you for the presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. That's perfect, OK. Cllr Grace McManus?

CLLR MCMANUS: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and I know we have a time extension but still I won't go on about how much admiration I have for how in-depth and broad the strategy is. But I really do appreciate and admire the amount of work and time and effort and consultation that has gone into it, when you even read it or being at the launch there's so much that you can pull at. So a deep appreciation for that. I actually was going to raise this under the CE report but it seems pertinent here. I had an older person ask me recently about our mobility grants or grants for older persons to adapt their homes particularly in relation to - this one was about stairlifts - and they said it would make a huge difference if they could be told a timeframe for a decision. It was actually something I noticed in the CE's report that we do have a lot of open applications at the moment and I don't know whether

that's something that we would need to look at dealing with a kind of short-term sense. But even just getting people to know that here is the date you get your decision by and they don't have to pick up the phone or email in to our staff to see when the decision is due, because it is a very uncertain time and they are anxious or not about whether they get to grant to stay in their homes so I think that is a change that we could make to say you get your decision in X number of weeks that could have a huge impact. But thanks again for the presentation and thanks, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Cllr. Can I just check, Cllr Behan and Cllr O'Brien, I forgot to ask the length of the time extension. Is 5:30 OK? Grand, OK. Yes, perfect, thank you. Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Melanie Corrigan?

CLLR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you for the excellent presentation. I know a lot of work went into it and congratulations on that. I just wanted to ask, it's great to see how it covers the whole county, but we've a lot of different associations, old folks' clubs and different things throughout the county. How have they been linked in with? Because I think there's so much information in that that really needs to get down to the grassroots and for the people who are running the clubs and supporting the old people on a daily basis and weekly basis even, as they're coming out of Covid, you know, they're only starting up again and it's so important that they know they have access to this information so I'm just wondering is there a register or how do we get that information out to them? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks very much. There's one more before I bring you in, if that's OK. Cllr Dermot O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, just a quick one. Again, it has been fascinating to see the evolution of the Age Friendly movement and for me, and people won't be surprised, there is a kind of parallel movement in the youth participation and empowerment piece as well and I see both of those cohorts and I wonder sometimes, imagine those two powerful cohorts, if they got together and decided what changes they wanted in the world, it would be really interesting to see. I'm excited about the potential for - when I look at some of the issues, transport in the county is a young person's issue and an older person's issue because neither them - or sometimes they face challenges in their mobility for different reasons and the barriers are different but it's fascinating to see that they both see it as an issue. Ageism is also an issue that young people and older people experience and, again, it's for those of us in the middle, maybe, to consider how we contribute to that but also how we support

movement and navigation around that. I'm really interested in the whole world of intergenerational solidarity and I think there's real potential there and on the launch on Monday we saw the minister giving us gold stars across the board for how Wicklow does age friendly and I think the building blocks are really there for that and this strategy really shows us that so I'm excited to see it rolling out and I think we should take collective responsibility for how that works and its success is not just dependent on Clodagh or on CCSD but on all of us to buy into this. The last thing I want to say is I was at an event recently where a photo was put on a slide show and it had Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough on the same slide, and I think that to me just captures the power and potential of younger and older generations. But thanks for the presentation.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Declan, I might just bring you in on the grants, just there was a couple of queries, before I bring you in Clodagh, if that's OK.

>> Yes, we're not totally up to date on it now but we can get answers. I know on the houses we can do the smaller works with direct labour, so they can be done quickly with ramps and handrails and that kind of thing and my understanding even on the private houses that those smaller grants would be fairly fast to process as well. But I will certainly go back with the observations and the questions and get some more information on them.

CATHAOIRLEACH: That would be helpful. And there was just one question there about a timeline for receiving the notice, so if we get maybe some feedback on that, that would be great. That's great, Clodagh, I'll hand it over to you.

CLODAGH: There's quite a lot there, there's quite a lot in the strategy as you point out. Maybe to kind of go in reverse order, Dermot, just in terms of the intergenerational projects, there is an item in the strategy around that. The benefit of being part of the national network is that you get to see what others have done and what has worked and what hasn't worked so I'd welcome an opportunity to talk with you in more detail. Again, because the projects that work depend on the nature of the individual county and there's different characteristics, so happy to progress that one. Melanie, just in terms of the grassroots and getting the information out there, that is one of the challenges we face, again, because you know, we're in a digital world, but some people aren't, you know, as digital-savvy as others and, you know, we still like hard copies of things - I do, anyway. But getting information by electronic means. But one of the things that we need to do for the Older Persons Council campaign is to revamp the database, because the database that we

were working from was 2018 and obviously there has been a lot of change, particularly in that age cohort, in that time and you don't want to be upsetting people by sending letters where it's not appropriate. So what we did was from the information seminar in November, we started building up addresses and GDPRs and compliant permission to use and percentages to connect and the other thing because we have the website up now with the strategy, I'm using that as a - and the video on the Older Persons Council seminar last November, I'm using that as a vehicle to engage directly with some of the active retirement groups and speaking to Wicklow and they've about 60 members so I'm speaking to them the week after next so again it's quite a concentrated timeframe in April to work through the PPN, to work through the media, to work through direct presentations because we want people to volunteer that will actually engage and not people who will come along just to, you know, point out what the issues are. The objective of the Older Persons' Council is they represent on the alliance and they co-create some of the solutions. So it's not just identifying the problems, it's identifying potential solutions. Again, you know, in an intergenerational approach, it could provide great results. So yes, anyway, the intention is to build up the database and engage directly - not with all of the groups but with kind of the ones where there's larger number and, again, our challenge is how to filter it out. Filter out the information.

Just in terms of addressing some of the frustrations about the services using digital and particularly in the banks, the National Network of Older Persons Councils, I mean they made representation to the banks about - and we've all had the frustration on the phone, press button one and two and whatever, and ten minutes later you're still there. So the banks were trying to move their customers onto more digital platforms but through representation from the National Network of Older People's Council they've a strong appreciation, let's say, of these are customers, these are paying customers, so giving them due respect in terms of the services you provide. So that's the forum for the broader issues, is to go through the national networks. Just in terms of more back to the local level in terms of the public realm, part of the - one of the objectives in the strategy is to work with local groups in terms of walkability studies and, again, engaging with the local groups to empower them to do the walkability study, but using guidelines from Age Friendly Ireland and then feeding that into the municipal districts. The interdepartmental team that is part of the full structure would be instrumental in facilitating that. In terms of someone

mentioned about loneliness, Miriam talking about loneliness, I noted today the Chief Executive of Alone was talking about the difference between loneliness and isolation, so there are some people living in isolation and are quite happy doing so and there are others who are lonely in a crowd. So you're providing the supports not just in a digital manner but in a social manner to meet the needs of a broad range and, again, that comes back to having a broad range of representation on the council, on the Older Persons' Council so they can help kind of design the solutions to that. Obviously people are living in isolation and fearful - it's more difficult to reach them. So that's where the HSC is important in terms of engaging through public nurses or whoever is engaging with them directly.

So I hope that's kind of addressed some of...

CATHAOIRLEACH: That's great. That's great, Clodagh, thank you, and just on behalf of the members, thank you yourself for leading on the development of the strategy, and the launch day itself was fantastic and it was very evident from the members that were there of the Older Persons' Council that it was their voices that were being represented which is something sometimes I think is hard to achieve. So just a thanks from all the members.

CLODAGH: Thank you very much and again I would just like to pick up what Dermot said there, it's the Alliance's strategy, it's everybody's strategy, it's not my strategy, so we all need to focus on what pieces we can address.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Fantastic, thank you very much.

CLODAGH: Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: OK, members, we're going to move back on to item number 7 which is to consider the Chief Executive's monthly management report, February 2023, a copy of which is attached. Cllr John Mullen?

CLLR MULLEN: Thanks, I will be as quick as possible. Just on the RRDF page, a couple of questions there in relation to an imminent announcement of an additional 2 million in relation to the Baltinglass rural generation project which hasn't been funded yet. We are in spring 2023 and we're anxious that project get off the ground. And second request in relation to the RRDF is when will additional rounds be asked for because I think we're past the normal stage where RRDF projects have been looked for on category one and category two. So do you have any information as to when category one and category two projects will be looked for again? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Gail Dunn?

CLLR DUNN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, again, and I want to welcome Emer. Just Wicklow Town, work has started on that and I want an update on when they hope to finish that. Murray Walk, I know it's only the start of what is an important part of the town and we were very concerned over the coastal erosion there. The second thing I want to talk about is Wicklow Harbour. I'm led to believe that we were going to have an application to go to the department in March. This has continued and continued and the silt in Wicklow Harbour has got worse and worse and we're very concerned over when the dredging is going to take place. But I know we have to make an application. I just want an update on that. Finally very quickly, just something that has bothered me and it has been for the last number of meetings, is when we take estates over it's up to us to look after, and I'm finding a lot of footpaths in these states are in a bad way. Where is the money coming to fix them? Because as far as I can see there's no money there. We take estates in charge and the footpaths are getting worse and worse and I've raised it on a number of occasions and nobody can tell me where the money is coming from to fix these footpaths and I tell you we're going to have a lot of claims coming in.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cllr. Cllr Timmins? [Pause]. Can you drop your light?

CLLR TIMMINS: Should work now.

CATHAOIRLEACH: If you can turn your light on again.

CLLR TIMMINS: OK? Thanks, Chairman. Three points. Firstly, at the January meeting I asked that we report on the number of vacant dwellings by municipal district and in total. I'm happy to see that that's now in place. In February, I see the total is 116. It has actually gone up five since January. So while it's good to see it, hopefully a focus on it will mean the numbers will go down. Also, I would just ask, could we put an ageing on it as well? I don't mean an ageing by every 116 housing but just the total, say, that are vacant for three months, six months, 12 months, 1 year, 2 years? Because I know of a few houses that are vacant for more than two years. So if we could add an ageing to that I think it would be very, very useful and we can watch the trends and hopefully see it going down. Just the RRDF, for Baltinglass. I've been mentioning this since it was announced in October 2019. I think I probably mentioned it nearly at every meeting since then. You know, really shockingly slow progress. Now it's back on the minister's desk, I think we sent a reply about three weeks ago to justify the extra 2 million. We were looking for 3.5 million originally allocated and we are looking for 2 million more. I desperately think we need to actually start some progress.

Something underground. I think maybe tenders may be starting at this stage but we need to get the clock moving on the tender process to try and move this on, because there's such a frustration about it, it's just unbelievable how long it has gone on. I would say to the new Chief Executive, it's one of the standout items, you know, in the council that this central government funding allocation of over 3 million hasn't been spent at all, apart from some money clocked up by consultants.

Lastly, we got a presentation in our municipal district last Monday about modular homes, potentially modular homes for Baltinglass and Dunlavin and I was just struck by the lack of knowledge that the OPW department and the Department for Children had on the background to the modular homes that are proposed. I would just make two very brief points on this. First of all, the land in Baltinglass, 4.5 acres, was previously zoned before any contact by the LPW for a sports centre and I also asked what other lands to council have and the council have a raft of lands and a lot of them are not suitable but 137 different sites over 4.5 acres which is the size of the site in Baltinglass and I know most of them would not be suitable but we were told five sites were considered suitable, five sites - sorry, only two sites were submitted to the department out of the five and I just think the whole process of how that was conducted is fundamentally flawed and I'm very annoyed about what has happened and the same for the site in Dunlavin, also a very unsuitable site. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, we will take one more before we allow the officials in. Cllr Joe Behan?

CLLR BEHAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. First of all, could I start by thanking Leonora the director for transport for her fantastic and very timely assistance for a number of residents who are struggling to buy properties in Bray and their waiting certification and Leonora and her staff are doing everything they possibly can to facilitate that and I want to put on record my appreciation for what she has done there. Also, with regard to transportation, if the Chief Executive, or probably Leonora could just indicate to me, have we received approval to install the noise mitigation measures on the residents affected by the noise resonating from the works at the mechanics on the [inaudible] road. I suppose as a new Chief Executive, the Chief Executive will obviously be dealing a lot with strategic matters and I'm sure Brian Gleeson will certainly be briefing you if you hasn't already because he did everything he possibly could with the fact that the government are refusing to continue to fund the proposed improvements on the N11/M11, which is the main route for thousands

of people from both Wicklow and Wexford to Dublin to work every day, and we unfortunately have a Minister for Transport who has proudly professed his anti-motorist credentials at every opportunity. I think there's probably going to be even more bad news on that front coming down the tracks from him soon. But with regard to this particular project, we have spent, as a council, through using public funds provided by the government, over €5 million getting consultancy, preparations, policies, plans drawn up to improve the capacity of the N11/M11 and it has all effectively been wasted money because this particular minister has decided not to continue that funding. I'm asking the Chief Executive to make it - I know Cllr Timmins has his priorities as well. This is also a priority for many thousands of motorists in the county, that this be continually addressed with the Department of Transport and the minister. The other issue and this is my final issue, Cathaoirleach, which you are also aware of. I want to thank Cllr Ferris who raised this initially a couple of meetings ago and the officials here at the top table have got advance notice of this request for answers from the senior management of Wicklow County Council regarding what exactly is going on in the Old Bray Golf Club. They have had to take the extraordinary step as residents' groups of making a planning enforcement complaint to the council because work is proceeding at pace on a site which effectively is centred on an old planning permission and the new planning application is currently with An Bord Pleanála. But a road which was being constructed is effectively being taken up by an owner of that site and that was predicated on a new public transport bridge as we all know which is now the subject of a judicial review and has also received no funding this coming year. So the residents, and I'm sure the councillors, want specifically to know from the council officials what is your understanding about what is happening on that site at the moment? Are you satisfied that the work that is being done and that has been done is in accordance with planning? And that it hasn't resulted in serious environmental damage, which may prejudice any other environmental study that has been ordered by An Bord Pleanála, because digging up an entire road is obviously going to upset the flora and fauna on that site and are you aware of what exactly Irish Water is doing on that site? Now, the residents, unbelievably, as far as I have been told, were told to go and ask Irish Water yourselves what they're doing. Now, if someone from the planning section said that to residents, that is completely, utterly unacceptable. We are the planning authority. We have links directly with Irish Water and we should be able to get that information from residents who are putting their own money into

developing or taking an application for a judicial review. So the officials know this request is coming, you got emailed on it last week. I would appreciate if we get straight answers to those questions, so we can get them back to those residents. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, Cllr. We will maybe just look at responding to some of them. I'm not sure who wants to cover the RDFF funding for Baltinglass?

>> With the absence of our leader, I will jump in there. I know I was part of the RDF application as regards the library element of it. As the members know we have sought extra money. Loads of reasons why. Primarily increased costs and a change in the work programme. We had hoped to have word by today and we were really excited to announce it today but it didn't happen. It is on the minister's desk and we expect a decision very shortly on that extra 2 million. We will keep the members posted. I can assure you, councillor, we are just as frustrated about this job as you are. It gives us no pleasure at all that it has taken this long and you raise it with us and we raise it with the department every day so I assure you we are on top of this and we want to get this started and I will tell you as soon as we have progress on that.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. The Murray Walk erosion and the Wicklow Harbour? Thanks.

>> That's Cllr Dale's query, yes? Just to say, we have been in constant consultation with I would say the representatives that may have been coming to Cllr Gail Dunn. Just basically, again, it's frustration on our part as well but there are processes that have to go through. There is the Foreshore Unit application, there is the Dumping at Sea application and there are significantly complex statutory processes that depend on numerous specialist reports. So just to give you some idea in terms of the foreshore, we have to have information on appropriate assessment screening, a mature impact statement, a non-statutory environmental statement, species risk assessment, and national marine planning framework compliance statement. That's just on the foreshore application. Then there's the Dumping at Sea aspect because you can't just take up ground and just dump it literally. Material analysis, alternative options to dumping at sea, that has to be done, what is the plan B, you know? So just in terms of the impact. Loading operations, impacts on the receiving environment. Again, AA screening and NIS report, a report on the dump site, on the loading areas, dispersion modelling, marine mammal risk assessment, non-statutory environmental statement. Now, as you know, from all of last year, you know, our previous Chief Executive Brian Gleeson spent a huge amount of time and went to many of the meetings, not just with

the locals but with the particular statutory bodies regarding this project. There is no let-up on the effort that this council is putting through to get this through. We had hoped to get emergency works approved but we were told quite categorically that they won't even look at emergency until the application for the full licence, which includes everything that I've just mentioned there in terms of the foreshore application and the Dumping at Sea application. So again, through our correspondence, with the harbour operators and again we do share their frustration, what we will commit to is to give them an update report every two weeks. That's as much as we can do. But basically, we are on this and we're on it on a daily basis and we know how important this is for Wicklow and the port and everything else that's associated with that area. So that's as much as I can say on that. We can't do any more, the processes are there and we have to follow them.

CLLR CULLEN: To add to that, there is no separate emergency dredging application, that was clarified. The process is that you must make a full application, and then to make a request to undertake merge works, that is the process we undertake now, we have to get the full application in and then to make a subsequent request. As you are aware, Counsellor Gayle Dunne, we increased the dredging Budget by 150,000 and increased it in the previous year as well. So we are fully committed to addressing the issue, 100 per. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: There are too many lights on, I will bring you in two minutes. And some questions relating to housing, how the report may be done.

How things can be done.

>> I will pass it back.

CATHAOIRLEACH: The rest of the issues are for yourself, so the funding of the items and estates and the issues raised by Cllr Joe Behan.

>> In we legislation to footpaths I don't have a Budget within the road Budget but will talk to the directors and the management team to discuss it further to come back with a solution. In relation to the noise mitigation, we received funding from TII to move that along so have met with the consultants to start the design process and had discussions with the residents last week and going back out to them this week with regards options we may have. In relations to the M11/N11, we are pushing any opportunity we get with TI and with the minister to get the funding back.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Apologies as Breege is to cover the item that Cllr Joe Behan raised.

BREEGE: Thank you very much for the prior notification, Cllr Joe Behan, it gave us time to research the issue. Just to confirm that a written enforcement complaint was received by the planning authority on the 28th of February and we will commence investigations in relation to the complaint to establish if unauthorised has or is being carried out. I will say that the investigation is ongoing. We will get completion.

Just in terms of the questions, we are somewhat constrained with regards to what we can answer but what I can say to you, Cllr Joe Behan, is that immediately on receipt of the complaint, officers of the planning authority went out to carry a site examination of the site. A couple of things that I can, again, confirm, is that the realignment of Schools Road is part of the permitted HSD development, coming within the scope of that relevant permission. The second thing I would like to say to you is

that some aspects of the complaint related to the storage of construction equipment and materials, again, as observed by our planning officers on site, it indicates there is no non-compliance with conditions attached with the permission of the SHD and the final thing, no construction compounds were located within the flood zones A and B as defined by the planning application documents. In terms of clarification, the public transport bridge over the River Darg that the complaint centres around, that proposal has not proceeded. It is really not a matter for us to investigate further, only to say is that any of the works we have seen at the moment, indicate it is working within the SHD development area, with reference to the other question you mentioned Cllr Joe Behan, in relation to Irish Water, we confirmed that the realignment of the sewers on the site, were subject to facilitate of the SHD, the works of which carried out by an issue Waters contractor and to complete that investigation and as necessary revert back to the complainant and contact the developer in relation to the subject development.

This, as this is a live construction site we do have our compliance team, there are many other issues associated with the conditions that are constantly monitored so that will form part and parcel of it. So, I have written down some of your direct queries, I hope it addresses the specific queries you were asking about.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Cllr O'Brien?

CLLR O'BRIEN: Thank you for the report, to support Counsellor Gayle Dunne and to thank her for the answer in terms of the footpaths in the council states and all estates of Wicklow town, last week it was brought up in a state in Wicklow town as neglected so long, it would cost up to half a million to repair the footpath, my thing is that the longer we wait, the more expensive so I appreciate the urgency. So, affordable housing and the notchy, were we to have an accessible, affordable housing scheme, over 140 applicants for 36 properties, to put on record thanks to Brian Moyles who did a fantastic job to explain the process to everyone, as obviously there were lots of disappointed people, people who felt that they should have been up there, and as usual, lots of stories and heart breaking stories and fairness to Brian, he dealt with it in a professional manner. Over 140 applicants for only 36 properties and there was controversy about the percentage allocated to Wicklow. And there was disagreement, and differences of opinions. I am reading through the report, what was the final outcome in terms of how many were allocated to people from Wicklow? I know I was dealing with a lot of them. I got a lot of happy people texting me when I was away, that this e received the keys to their first home or about to, as it was such a successful scheme, are there any others planned for around the county? With the housing list the way that it is, people falling through the net unable to get on to a housing list, I think that the scheme proved a huge success. I call for more such schemes around the county. Thank you very much.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Gerry Walsh?

CLLR WALSH: Thank you to the Chief Executive for the report. Trying to understand the overall impact of the housing figure as presented to us, looking at the housing list, more or less the same as last year in spite of the number of units that came on stream, that we completed 147. I will not go through the figures with the part 5s and then a number of turn keys in the system, 599 to be exact. Over 200 in Bray, over 174 in Greystones, an area where there is acute demand for housing, as we all know. So, on the turn keys, a specific question on the allocation of the areas, I with regards to Greystones for example, is there a focus on individuals or applicants that have connection to the area, or can they be from another area when the allocation process is undertaken? Overall with the nurses due to quit [sic] and the [inaudible] eviction, and the increasing of interest rates, the situation is obviously going to be exacerbated. Another question on the housing is the SHDs, I see there are 1961 in the system going back possibly to last April, May, I know there is a log jam there. So, on the specific questions on those, although I cannot pre-empt the numbers to come from that but will the council get 10 or 20%? In other words there is an extra 10% of housing for all affordables, I wonder if

it applies to whatever figures come from that? And one thing that jumped out was the boiler maintenance access rates, 60%, just, what is going on there? Where does it leave the council, if the boilers are not maintained? Will they be dangerous, if there is a fire, if there is an explosion, if there is an injury, does that leave the council culpable? I think it is a situation that cannot be ignored.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

>> I wanted to acknowledge the approved allocation of the development contributions to the Enskillies [sic] renewal team and thank you to the management, this is an important situation for the residents of the area and for those using it, I look forward to seeing it progressing, not forgetting the importance of the other projects that lost funding to the NTA, I would like to see those progressing at some stage, the scalp feasibility study and the road user improvements that are important for the Municipal District and I don't want them forgotten about and lose funding in the future.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Dawn councillor Dawn. DAWN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, to thank Breege for her response. In my opinion this has been going on since 2014. That is when the process should have started again. The fact it did not start, it is fair enough. But we have serious problems in the Wicklow harbour with the fact that the shipping owners are starting to say that they are worried to come into the Wicklow harbour, that the pilot is having problems getting the boat into the harbour but when the people who own the ships are saying that they will not come to Wicklow harbour because they are worried about the draft of Wicklow harbour, it is serious, it means we will lose trade from Wicklow harbour, already thousands of tons of trade have been lost. This is really important Wicklow harbour closes, how are we to answer the question? Importantly, I would love to see the report from the foreshore people, letting us know why it was closed? This is a serious thing. I am not doubting there is a councillor working hard but the foreshore department, every time we go to see reports there is another to be done. It is not fair.

Cllr Sylvester Bourke until.

CLLR BOURKE: To raise a couple of issues, the URDF application for Arklow. To get an update on what is applied for in relation to that one, please. Also, I mentioned at the last meeting, it would be appreciated to have update on the sites for businesses, some local businesses would like the opportunity to buy a site from the council to develop businesses. We have a site earmarked for that, I believe but nothing seems to have happened for a long time. The final point, I know that Leonora is aware of this, it is the noise on the M11 as a result of safety works. Lots of vegetation has been cut down, causing the problems for the residents living close to it with noise pollution. They are finding it difficult to sleep at night with heavy vehicles because now the sound barrier of the trees and the vegetation that was absorbing sound waves is no longer there. Is there anything we can do about that? Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: One more Cllr Peir Leonard?

CLLR LEONARD: Thank you to Cathaoirleach and to the Chief Executive for the report. To raise two items one in relation to the public toilets at the beaches. During COVID, lots of beaches don't have facilities at all. During COVID we had funding for Portaloos, it was not ideal, permanent facilities would have been preferable. Are there proposals for installing toilets for the coming bathing season ahead? They are used by lots of walkers and older people. They were well-received when we had them there is no proposal to put them in, can we look to incorporate it into the Budget for next year or probably too late for this year but I would appreciate it if it was incorporated into the Budget as it is I think an essential facility at the beaches. The other thing is the commercial rates.

I have been investigating our town centre regeneration, and it has come to light that we seem to have, we have commercial rates, there are a lot of small businesses talking about the cost-of-living and the energy crisis but there is a lot of dereliction in towns. We seem to have a few different categories with commercial rates and then vacant commercial rates and then the derelict sites, I believe there are only two derelict sites in Wicklow in the County Council's website, I don't know if it

is up-to-date. But many buildings that are sitting to the public they seem derelict but don't fit the criteria of the derelict site levy, so therefore don't have to pay anything under this levy, so I believe that the buildings have zero value rates so they don't pay rates as they don't have commercial rates value ... so they are paying zero fines for being a derelict building and not paying rates at all. So I wonder, can the Wicklow County Council put a list of all of the buildings that fall into the criteria, maybe for the next meeting and so that we can look at the figure and also will these buildings fall under the new vacant site levy, which I know is for land zoned residential. I am not sure if it is for the town centre buildings as well, so clarification on that, thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much, councillor. Four more people looking to come in. I will ask officials to be as quick as possible as they can to give people an opportunity to raise issues. Declan, I know there is a large number of housing inquiries, if you can respond.

>> On affordable housing, I don't have exact figures on the final outcome on the Green Hill Road Scheme. I understand it was about between 60 to 70% were successful of people being from the area, so that worked out. As regards other schemes there are a number of mixed tenure sites that we are looking at in Bray, Greystones and Kilcool and a number of private affordable housing schemes, one in Rathnew and one in Baltinglass that we are about to start and looking at private sites in a number of areas, Tinahely and possibly Shillelagh, and a scheme on affordable sites that we are trying to develop. Cllr Gerry Walsh, I am not sure on the housing figures, but I will look into that to get an answer. The turnkey allocations, it is the same, the turnkey housing when brought into stock are allocated in the same way as any council housing from the housing list based on points so, it follows the same procedure. If it is an AHB turnkey it is the same. Allocating to the AHB-based on the housing list coming directly from that.

The boiler maintenance, I know that has always been an issue with access, with the contractors that we appointed to maintain the boilers have made attempts to get access to the house. It is at least three attempts to contact, they were given contact details to the residents and make 3 attempts to make contact but, it is just not possible to get access. I thought that the rate was higher than 60%. I thought we were close to 80% or higher but it may have changed since I was involved in it, but I will check into that to get an answer for you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Declan. Lorraine, Arklow inquiries?

LORRAINE GALLAGHER: I did hear you, ask about industrial sites, was it, in which particular area? Was it the wrath rum site or the [inaudible], that land is not on the market Rathdrum. That site, Rathdrum, there are challenges and issues to be resolved. I can give you a call and walk you through it but there are not unfortunately, they are not available at the minute. I don't have details of the new application for the new RDF application, Brian, do you?

>> There is a call for RDF, moving away from the traditional scheme, whereby it is going to be applications for derelict buildings in order to flip them over to generate money and to regenerate them into the local towners, specifically, a town centre initiative, I suppose, as part of the Housing for All, linked into that. The traditional RDF call we hope is later in the year. Obviously, previously, we stated our plan would be to look at Arklow and Wicklow harbour and the regeneration plans in relation to the areas, but they would fall under a traditional URDF call, which I said is later on in the year. It was a new, specific, derelict building scheme introduced now.

Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Great, thank you, Brian, there are inquiries from the councillor in relation to the public toilets on beaches and derelict buildings from Cllr Peir Leonard.

BREEGE: In relation to the public toilets, we can look at it but the funding has to be looked but we take on board what you are saying if there is no funding this year but we can certainly put it forward as the proposal for the Budget, but it will be voted in by councillors, if that is OK. On that one, then

to answer the question, Peir, the Lifeguards will have toilets, so, it was an issue last year that they had proper welfare facilities.

I will also take the question then on the derelict say. Which is another query from Cllr Peir Leonard, the planning officers were in Arklow, and the whole question of dereliction and the vacancies, the vacant site register and the new tax that is coming in now, residential zone land tax, they are not applicable in Arklow as it has to do with the residential zone but if you have specific questions, Cllr Peir Leonard, we can direct them, I am sure, Sorcha can come back to you if there is a particular issue to address. Is that OK.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Brian?

>> In relation to the commercial rates, for the vacant premises we apply 60% of the rates that is payable for the vacant premises, there are situation whereas the buildings can be de-listed, so, I suppose derelict buildings that have not been used up to ten years, can be de-listed where there is no intention of making it commercially viable in the future. But a vacant premises, say, in the Main Street, it is payable of 60%, that is voted in by the 60%, voted in. And we have a new business incentive scheme whereby the new business enters into a premises that has been vacant more than 12 months and they get a discount for the next 3 years on the commercial rates. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Brian.

>> In relation to Cllr Melanie Corrigan and the projects for NTA funding we will keep them on the radar, Cllr Melanie Corrigan and this year or in 2024, we will re-apply for funding for schemes that dropped off the list. Cllr Sylvester Bourke, to say that there has been tree and vegetation clearance along the N11 to do a created clear zone. Where you have 120 or 120K speed zone you must create an 8-10 metre clear zone along the carriage way to clear it of hazards in the event of a driver losing control of the car, that they have a clear zone area where they can hopefully regain control of the car or come to a safe stop. There is a requirement depending on the girth of the tree, that has to be removed along that type of road. So that is why there is a clearance of the trees to ensure there is a clear zone to safely allow drivers to stop their vehicles. I should say that vegetation does not generally is used as deterrent for noise but more screening along the road, so it is not the best means of reducing noise. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. I am conscious, everybody, it is 17: 23. We still have Cllr Lourda Scott, Cllr Patsy Glennon, Cllr Grace McManus, Cllr Miriam Murphy and Cllr Peir Leonard looking to speak, so I may take Edward and Kay O'Connor and ask the other members if we don't get to you to email into the officials to get a response on that. We are out of time. So, Councillor O'Conner?

CLL O'CONNER: In the report, it mentioned a town team meeting was to start at the beginning of 2023, has it happened yet? In Bray we want to get moving on that. And also, I received a representation from an individual saying that our current way of putting forward planning and enforcement complaints is a bit ... kind of ... full of red tape and that the Dublin way of doing it is more digitalised and if we can look at the Dublin system that will be great and what was raised by Cllr Joe Behan, if that response can be sent as all Bray councillors received representation about that, it is good to get it in writing so we are getting a few emails so good to have a solid response like that. That is great.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Lourda Scott?

CLLR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I will be quick. I have questions but I don't think I have time to ask them so to refer back to the question I asked at the last full council meeting to ask the question to confirm whether or not Wicklow as a Local Authority adopted part three of the gaming and the lotteries act of 1996 and at meeting we were told it has been rescinded in 1989, the information contradicted what I was previously told. So for clarity, given that I asked the question in

front of all here, to ask the executive, if they can write out just what they answered to that question to all members of the council, so that we are all on the same page. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Cllr Patsy Glennon?

CLLR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. To welcome the Chief Executive, Emer O'Gorman, to thank Brian for his work in the last year in steering us. I fully agree with Cllr Joe Behan in respect to the N11 to see what can be done but not to think it is the only road problem in the county. The N81 is far more pressing in my view. And Minister Ryan was surprised that he came down here and it dominated the meeting. The M81 is a disaster. As 40% of the county is covered by our Municipal District land mass, we will never get anything out there until there is a proper road infrastructure. We have no rail services, or anything like that, so I would not like you to go away thinking that the N81 is not an issue, it is serious. It is above politics and it has lots of support from colleagues from various different persuasions, Sinn Féin colleagues, the Government colleagues, the Green Party, and Cllr Joe Behan in respect of the N81, it is a serious issue to be addressed and left undone for too long. I know that time is precious, in respect of the RDF I appreciate the answer from Nicholson and I think there is a post note hidden there somewhere, so I look forward to a positive response. Thank you very much.

CLLR MCMANUS: In terms of the golf club lands in Bray I emailed to the Bray Municipal District about the Curly Wonderland [sic] to get a written response, great. If I can email the Director about the issue, there was curly wintering there [sic] and another question, I don't mind a written reply, if the notice ban is lifted I wonder what communication we have had from the department in terms of preparing for what may land at our door in terms of people being at risk of homelessness as I don't think it is fair for a national decision to be made with implications for the local team who are working extremely hard. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I need one minute. You have one.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I will rattle through. In terms of town meetings they have been rescheduled. In terms of the planning and enforcement complaints of modernisation, Dublin is not all it is cracked up to be but we will look at the methods. In terms of the Lotteries Act, we will write to all members to confirm that which was thought rescinded. The N81, well aware, I'm a native of south-west Dublin, I know the area, I know the issue, similarly with the N11 and I know the priorities interest there in terms of the national roads through this beautiful county. Cllr Grace McManus on the golf course land, I am not as sure of that but will come back to you on that. Notice to quit ban, no correspondence on that yet. I was at a housing summit and there they are eager to put in measures but as yet no formal notification.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. One piece of correspondence to cover.

RACHEL: To note the minutes of the 7th of November, and 5th of December and 9th of January. So, a proposer and a seconder.

CATHAOIRLEACH: So, we have an agreement on that. So, thank you to everybody. Those on the Protocol Committee, if you can hold on, please, thank you.

RACHEL: For the purpose of the transcript, the council meeting is now over. Thank you.