

Minutes of The Housing Strategic Policy Committee of Wicklow County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Wicklow Town, A67 FW96 on Wednesday 21st January 2026.

In Attendance: Cathaoirleach Graham Richmond, Cllr. Caroline Winstanley, Mr. John Douglas, Ms. Kathleen Kelleher, Mr. T. J. Foley, Ms. Cici Zheny (via zoom), Mr. Michael Nicholson, Ms. Jackie Carroll, Ms. Helena Fallon, Ms. Caroline Fox, Ms. Linda Healy, Mr. David Reel, Mr. David Porter, Mr. Mark Byrne, Ms Marie Ashe, Ms Audrey Bowen and Ms Róisín Carroll

Apologies: Cllr. Mark Barry, Cllr. Peter Stapleton, Cllr. Paul O’Brien, Cllr. Gail Dunne, Ms. Emma McMillen, Mr. Paddy Mordaunt and Mr. Seán O’Callaghan

Cathaoirleach Richmond opened the September meeting of The Housing Strategic Policy Committee and welcomed all present.

1. To confirm and sign minutes of The Housing Strategic Policy Committee of Wicklow County Council dated 5th November 2025.

It was proposed by Cllr. Caroline Winstanley and seconded by Mr. T.J Foley and unanimously agreed to confirm and sign the minutes of The Housing Strategic Policy Committee of Wicklow County Council dated 5th November 2025.

2. Matters Arising - None

3. Housing – Capital Delivery

The Committee received a presentation from Mark Byrne, Senior Staff Officer, Housing Capital, giving an update on affordable housing delivery in County Wicklow.

Members were advised that 91 affordable homes have been delivered to date. These include:

- Greenhill Road, Wicklow Town - 36 houses (24 three-bed and 12 two-bed), with prices ranging from €222,716 to €294,000.
- St. Ernan’s, Rathnew - 44 homes, made up of one-, two-, three- and four-bed properties, with prices ranging from €165,000 to €345,000.
- Aldborough Manor, Baltinglass - 11 three-bed houses, with prices ranging from €260,000 to €281,667.

The Committee was also advised of the Mariners Point affordable housing scheme (Part V), launched in January 2026. This scheme includes four two-bed houses, with prices ranging from €328,180 to €389,500. A minimum deposit of approximately €32,818 is required, and eligibility details are available on the Council’s website.

Members were further informed of planned affordable housing schemes for 2026, including:

- Market Close, Dunlavin – 4 two-bed houses (prices to be confirmed).
- Lott Lane, Kilcoole – 24 three-bed houses and 2 two-bed houses (prices to be confirmed).

The Committee received a presentation from Ms. Helena Fallon, Senior Engineer, Housing Capital, on Capital Housing Delivery in Wicklow County Council.

Ms. Fallon outlined how housing is delivered through social housing, affordable housing, Approved Housing Bodies and Part V.

Members were advised that 205 units were delivered in 2025, including:

- 161 social housing units
- 44 affordable housing units.

Projected delivery for 2026 includes:

- 112 social housing units
- 26 affordable housing units

Schemes identified for 2026 include Lott Lane, Kilcoole, Carrigoona Bray, Ballinahinch, Wicklow and Merrymeeting, Wicklow.

Ms Fallon also outlined future housing delivery from 2027 onwards and longer-term projects. 333 units with 55 of these affordable. Longer term projects at Burnaby and Rehills, were referenced.

Burnaby scheme was originally a PPC scheme and was handed back to Wicklow County Council and is due to go out to tender shortly.

Ms Fallon highlighted critical issue impacting delivery is resources, noting 20 jobs with 8 technical staff progressing the jobs from greenfield sites through planning, design, tender documentation, construction and supervision.

In response to a query, Ms Fallon confirmed that Burnaby site is approx. 5 hectares.

A further query raised regarding bed sizes at Carrigonna, Bray. Ms Fallon confirmed there will be 11 social houses, four one beds and seven two beds, in line with department standards.

A query was raised regarding the provision of three-bed units given demand in Bray, Ms. Fallon advised that the Department is prioritising one- and two-bed units in Bray and Arklow. Ms. Caroline Fox noted that there is not many three-bed units coming available in Bray, however, the waiting list in Bray is significantly shorter than in other parts of the County, with an estimated 4 to 5 year wait in Bray compared to approximately 15 years in Arklow.

A query was raised welcoming the update on the Burnaby scheme going to tender and asking whether all 106 units would be tendered, and if four beds could be provided. Ms Fallon advised that the full scheme is due to go out to tender within the next month, however the additional four bed units cannot be included as the Part 8 process is complete, although this could be considered in future schemes.

4. Housing - Services –

Ms. Caroline Fox, senior executive officer, Social Development (Housing & Community), advised that a review of the Scheme of Letting Priorities is underway, noting the current scheme is from 2018. A new scheme is being developed and will be brought to the Committee for consideration and input, and subsequently to the Full Council for adoption once finalised. It was noted that this process will take several months and that a draft will be circulated to members in due course.

Mr. Michael Nicholson, Director of Services, Social Development (Housing & Community), advised that the review is being undertaken to reflect changes in housing need since 2018. He outlined that additional applicant cohorts now require consideration, including older persons experiencing homelessness, elderly returnees from the UK, victims of domestic violence, former residents of industrial homes, persons requiring adapted housing for disabilities, members of the Traveller and Roma communities, and the influx of refugees. He noted that local authorities have been requested to update their schemes accordingly and noted that the Scheme of Letting Priorities sets out how social housing is allocated.

5. Housing – Integration

Ms. Jackie Carroll, Director of Services, Integration and Emergency Response presented on Integration in the County. Approx 2000 people are accommodated including 1197 within IPAS and around 800 under the Ukrainian response, with 370 children under IPAS. One IPAS centre closed in the past year, reducing the total to 9 with the closure of Bray Manor, Bray.

The community Integration Forum was restructured and now comprises of 22 organisations with regional East and West groupings established, Research into outcomes for children and young people in IPAS centres is planned and findings will be reported back.

Local update: single residents have moved from the Grand Hotel, Wicklow Town with approx. 130 family residents remaining.

6. Correspondence:

None received.

7. Any other business:

Mr. Michael Nicholson, Director of Services, asked members to submit any proposed items or presentations for future Housing SPC meetings to Ms. Caroline Fox, noting that agendas are agreed with the Chair and that presentations are generally scheduled for each meeting.

A query was raised in relation to downsizing and homelessness and whether a more planned approach could be taken to downsizing and asked if there was any possibility of a homeless service presence in Bray, noting the difficulty for some individuals in travelling to Wicklow. Members were advised that downsizing can be challenging due to tenant attachment to homes, while encouraged where possible, particularly through new housing developments, and monitored through the transfer list, it remains a sensitive and complex policy area.

In relation to homelessness, members were advised that assessments are carried out in Wicklow Town by a dedicated countywide team, with support from a Dublin Simon worker. It was noted that while engagement in Bray is strong, resources do not allow for a permanent service presence in the Bray. Members were advised that the rough sleeper count recorded five individuals in November, compared with ten in April.

A query was raised regarding the use of modular housing. Ms. Helena Fallon advised that this option has been examined previously but is costly and does not provide significant savings when compared with permanent housing delivery. Helena also commented that they are quick to provide housing, from start of the planning only two years from start to finish.

A query was raised regarding the arrangements in place for emergency homelessness calls at weekends. Ms. Caroline Fox advised that while there is no formal out-of-hours homelessness service, the Housing Section monitors weather alerts, proactively reviews the homelessness list, and makes efforts to contact known rough sleepers. Limited emergency accommodation is available through private providers during winter months, and liaison takes place with An Garda Síochána. Additional accommodation is held over during high-risk periods, including Christmas and severe weather events. Mr. Michael Nicholson added that a small number of vacant houses are held in reserve over the Christmas period and that accommodation was available during Storm Éowyn in cases where a tenant's home was damaged or in similar emergency situations.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 15.17pm.

Signed: _____
CATHAOIRLEACH, Cllr. Graham Richmond

Dated: _____