MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2025 AT 2:00PM

STENOGRAPHER: Niamh Kelly-Leahy, RMR, MBIVR

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1	PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED ON MONDAY, 13TH JANUARY 2024, AS
2	FOLLOWS:
3	
4	CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon, members. I want to welcome you all back. I
5	hope you enjoyed the Christmas break, and happy new year to you. I know you are
6	all raring to go. So I will ask Helen to do a roll call.
7	MS PURCELL: I would like to welcome everybody to the chamber and to those
8	who are with us online, to remind the members of staff who are online to keep
9	muted, please - I have muted everybody at this stage - and to keep your cameras off,
10	and the Elected Members to keep their cameras on if they are online. If there are any
11	technical issues, if you could let me know. Thank you very much.
12	
13	Councillor Danny Alvey?
14	COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.
15	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Mark Barry?
16	COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.
17	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Joe Behan?
18	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Present.
19	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?
20	COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.
21	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?
22	COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.
23	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Avril Cronin?
24	COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Present.
25	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Erika Doyle sends her apologies. Councillor
26	Malachaí Duddy?
27	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Anseo.
28	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Gail Dunne sends his apologies oh no, hang
29	on. Councillor Dunne, are you present? I will come back in a second. Councillor
30	Louise Fenelon Gaskin?
31	COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Present.
32	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Orla Finn? Apologies from Councillor Pat
22	

33 Fitzgerald. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy will be with us, but she will be a little

1	late. Councillor Tom Fortune?
2	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Present.
3	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Patsy Glennon?
4	COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Present.
5	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
6	COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Present
7	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Shane Langrell?
8	COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Present.
9	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Peir Leonard?
10	COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Present.
11	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Pat Mahon?
12	COUNCILLOR MAHON: Present.
13	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
14	COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Present.
15	MS PURCELL: Councillor Miriam Murphy? Councillor Ian Neary?
16	COUNCILLOR NEARY: Present.
17	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Dermot O'Brien?
18	COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Anseo.
19	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
20	CATHAOIRLEACH: Present
21	MS PURCELL: Councillor Gerry O'Neill? Councillor Warren O'Toole?
22	COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Present.
23	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Graham Richmond? Councillor Lourda Scott?
24	COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Here.
25	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor John Snell?
26	COUNCILLOR SNELL: Present.
27	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Peter Stapleton?
28	COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Present.
29	MS PURCELL: Councillor Stephen Stokes? He was present. Councillor Caroline
30	Winstanley?
31	COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Present.
32	MS PURCELL: Councillor Gail Dunne?
33	COUNCILLOR DUNNE: Present.

1	MS PURCELL: Thank you. Councillor Orla Finn? No. Okay, thank you.
2	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. I will go to condolences there now.
3	Councillor Joe Behan.
4	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I want to propose a vote of
5	sympathy on behalf of the members of the Council to the family of the late Ger
6	Minogue, a man local to the Bray area. His brother-in-law is Councillor Tom
7	Fortune. And he died quite suddenly, sadly, last weekend or just before the
8	weekend. He was a man there was a huge attendance at his funeral because he was
9	a man who was very, very popular, quiet, unassuming, but a very popular member of
10	the community in Ballywaltrim and the Bray area generally. His family, his friends
11	and his colleagues in the Bray Bowling Club and in lots of other organisations will
12	genuinely miss him. I want to offer my sympathy on behalf of the people of Bray
13	and the general district.
14	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Melanie Corrigan.
15	COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to express a
16	vote of sympathy, please, for our former colleague Ann Ferris on the death of her
17	sister Margaret Kane. Margaret was a schoolteacher from Prosperous in County
18	Kildare, and I just want to pass on our condolences to Ann, John and all the family.
19	Thank you.
20	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. Councillor Patsy Glennon.
21	COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like a vote of
22	sympathy for Mick Davis. He was a publican there for the Old Toll House on the
23	N81, a famous landmark out our side of the world. He has been unwell for a number
24	of months. He was a larger-than-life character in his day. He ran a pub there for
25	many years and will be well-known throughout West Wicklow. Thank you.
26	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin.
27	COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to
28	add also to Councillor Behan, to be associated with that for Councillor Fortune.
29	Thank you.
30	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.
31	COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and apologies for
32	joining late. Cathaoirleach I just want to offer a vote of sympathy for the family of
33	Jim Smith. Jim was a very involved member of the Irish-German Society of County

1	Wicklow, a huge supporter of that, a huge supporter of charity work in his local area.
2	So I just to him and his family. Thank you.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, councillor. Councillor Malachaí Duddy.
4	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Cathaoirleach, if I could join in the remarks of Councillor
5	Behan in relation the late Ger Minogue. I know he was a solid credit union man. He
6	will be greatly missed in around Bray and the credit union in particular. I would like
7	to extend my sympathies to Councillor Tom Fortune, Ger's wife and his children,
8	Fiona and Caoimhe.
9	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I have two myself, and I will go to
10	the staff then. I want to offer my condolence to the family of Ever Kavanagh,
11	nephew of the late Liam Kavanagh, who died suddenly in the USA at the young age
12	of 57. And to the family of John McGally who will be sadly missed by his wife Rita,
13	his sons Tommy, Ian and John, and his daughters Myrtle, Helen, Nóirín, Rita and
14	Aileen. And I know he was also the uncle of our former colleague here Councillor
15	Tommy Aynsley, and he will be greatly missed around the town here. Another
16	character gone from the town.
17	MS PURCELL: We would also like to extend our sympathies to the family of Mary
18	Harvey, mother of our colleague Bernie Harvey.
19	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I will ask you to stand maybe for a moment.
20	
21	(Moment's silence.)
22	
23	CATHAOIRLEACH: I have a request for suspension of standing orders. It is
24	proposed by Councillor Silvester Bourke and seconded by Councillor Shane
25	Langrell.:
26	MS PURCELL: The suspension of standing orders: "To discuss the disgraceful and
27	dangerous state of public lighting throughout the county." That is proposed by
28	Councillor Silvester Bourke, seconded by Councillor Shane Langrell and supported
29	by all the Fine Gael councillors.
30	CATHAOIRLEACH: If we are all agreed we will take that at 4:30. Okay. Thank
31	you very much.
32	MR LANE: Chairperson, and with your permission, there is a app reporting system
33	that a few councillors are familiar with, you are not all familiar with, so if that is

1	okay I will also get that lined up so you can see a quicker reporting system when the
2	lights are out. If that is okay with everybody at the time.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah, because it is important that we are furnished with all
4	the information. Are we all agreed. (Agreed.) Okay. Perfect.
5	
6	Item number 1 on the agenda: To confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary
7	meeting of Wicklow County Council held on Monday, 2nd December 2024. And we
8	should have all received a copy. So if I can have a proposer and a seconder.
9	COUNCILLOR SNELL: Proposed.
10	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor John Snell. Councillor Shane Langrell.
11	
12	Item number 2: To confirm and sign the minutes of a special meeting of Wicklow
13	Council held on Wednesday, 18th December 2024. Again, a copy attached.
14	Proposer, please? Councillor Avril Cronin. Seconded by Councillor Louise Fenelon
15	Gaskin.
16	
17	Item number 3: To consider disposal of 0.0266 hectares or thereabouts in the
18	townland of Old Connaught being the property known as 1 James Everett Park, Bray
19	to Patrick and Barbara McLoughlin. (As per the notice previously circulated.)
20	Proposer, please? Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. Seconded, Councillor Joe
21	Behan. Do you want to speak? Go ahead, Joe.
22	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I am happy to second it, Cathaoirleach. And I am
23	delighted for the applicant - I don't know them personally - that they have got to this
24	stage in the process. Because I don't know whether other members have had the
25	same experience I have when it comes to dealing with these disposals and the
26	question of the ownership and transfer of ownership back to people who have been
27	living in these residences for a long time, former Council properties. I have
28	mentioned it before to the Chief Executive, I also said it at Council meetings, there
29	seems an inordinate delay in processing things like CPOs and land registration, and
30	title registration for former Council properties. I don't know is it is a lack of staff in
31	the section or what exactly is the problem, but I would appreciate if we get some
32	kind of an update from the Chief Executive today or at the next meeting as to how
33	long these delays are going to continue because for some people they are utterly
34	frustrated and waiting years, in one case that I'm aware of, for some kind of finality

13 January 2025

1	so they can get on with their own particular plans. I am quite happy to second that
2	proposal, Cathaoirleach.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Just before I invite the Chief
4	Executive, are we agreed on that before I move on? (Agreed.) Chief Executive.
5	MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and thank you, Councillor Behan.
6	Yeah, we have had a lot of difficulty around title deeds and the resourcing in our
7	legal department. The resourcing has increased over the last year. We had a
8	difficulty even in recruiting solicitors. In a property boom it's very difficult to get
9	good conveyancing solicitors. Part of our issue relates to, a lot of our land holding is
10	recorded in one single folio in the Land Registry, so we are in the process of working
11	through that folio. It has been subject to a number of audit reports from the local
12	government auditor again around the reconciliation of our land holdings to our
13	Property Interest Register, and again that work is being gone through. So I do think
14	we will see an improvement on it. I am happy to bring a periodic report to the
15	members through the Chief Executive's Report on our title issues as we work through
16	them, but I do absolutely note Councillor Behan's comments there. It is an
17	unfortunate statement of fact; the position we're in at the moment. Thank you.
18	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. I will move on to item number
19	4: To consider disposal of 0.0258 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of Carnew
20	being the property known as Coolattin Road to John and James Murphy as LPR of
21	Bernard Murphy. Looking for a proposer and seconder. Councillor Peter Stapleton
22	and seconded by Councillor Patsy Glennon. Are we agreed? (Agreed.) Thank you.
23	
24	Item number 5 on the agenda: To note the Local Government Statutory Audit
25	Report for the Elected Members for the year ended 31st December 2023.
26	
27	Do you want to say something, Brian?
28	MR GLEESON: Yes, thank you, Cathaoirleach. The 2023 Statutory Audit Report
29	was finalised on October 29th of last year and it should be read in conjunction with
30	the annual financial statement for the same year. The audit opinion on the accounts
31	is unqualified and there are no adjustments made to the draft AFS that was

- 32 previously presented to the members at the May 2024 Council meeting. This audit
- 33 report was presented by the Local Government Auditor to the Audit Committee on
- 34 the 16th December and is now for noting by the Elected Members here today. In the

1 report the auditor has acknowledged the great efforts made by Council to reduce its 2 revenue deficit which now stands at just under 600,000. He also reported that 3 Wicklow County Council has continued to maintain its strong financial position 4 during 2023 and welcomed the establishment of a new debt management unit. The 5 increase in commercial rates and the reduction of arrears in respect of both 6 commercial rates and housing loans was also highlighted, as was the progress made 7 on our risk management processes. The audit report contains a number of 8 recommendations for the Council to address, and the senior management and 9 Council staff will continue to work towards progressing the full implementation of 10 these recommendations. As I have said already, this report is just for noting but if 11 the members have any questions I am happy to take them. Thank you, 12 Cathaoirleach. 13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Brian. Councillor Peter Stapleton. 14 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you, Brian. Just 15 a quick question on the report, on number 4, "Fixed Asset Registers." Just to fully to 16 understand the point, it says, "failed to address the absence of a complete fixed asset 17 register" and something around reconciliation between Council houses we own and 18 that which is noted in annual financial statements. Just to get that in a plain 19 explanation would be helpful. 20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Just before I go back to Brian does 21 anybody else want to come in? I will do it in groups of threes, if necessary. No. 22 Okay, Brian, do you want to answer that one then? 23 MR GLEESON: Yeah, I suppose it is a difficulty. I suppose every local authority 24 has a Property Interest Register that is recording all of our houses that we own and 25 all our land acquisitions. We have a completed Fixed Assets Register but what the 26 auditor is asking us to do is complete a Property Interest Register and that we can 27 reconcile it to the Fixed Assets Register to ensure everything is recorded in the AFS. 28 In relation to that, we have made progress. This is a huge amount of work and will 29 take a number of years to complete. As I said, I think this is on the audit report of 30 every local authority across the country. We have engaged the recent graduate 31 programme of the LGMA. We have recruited a graduate who is working full-time 32 on this particular project, and we actually have two demos organised for next month 33 with two companies in relation to property management systems. So we are 34 progressing matters in relation to that. A similar issue I suppose in relation to the

housing reconciliation. It's just a case of matching the figures in housing up to the
 Fixed Assets Register. So that's a work in progress as well that, the housing staff are
 undertaking.

4 MS O'GORMAN: Just further on that, I suppose the difference between the Property 5 Interest Register and the Fixed Assets Register. Fixed assets are saleable 6 assets -- sorry, fixed assets is everything that the county owns. The Property Interest 7 Register is those properties that we can sell. So a public road isn't on our Property 8 Interest Register because we can't sell it, but it is part of our fixed assets because it is 9 an infrastructure and there's been an investment in it. So the reconciliation of the 10 two is quite complex. But the housing piece, as Brian rightly said, is on every local 11 authority agenda. I dealt with it in my previous local authority before I came here 12 and it's the same issue; it's making sure that all of our social housing stock is 13 recorded appropriately and reconciled back to the Fixed Assets Register. 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Just before I move onto the next item on the 15 agenda I want to welcome Councillor Pat Mahon. I should have done it at the 16 beginning. I was rushing into my agenda, and I forgot. So I just want to welcome 17 you. Not everybody could make it the day you were co-opted on. I want to welcome 18 you to your first meeting and wish you the best of luck.

19

20 The next item on the agenda is: To consider report of the strategic infrastructure 21 development application in respect of Ballinclare Quarry. And everybody should 22 have got a copy attached. What I would say is, we know this is a very sensitive issue 23 for a lot of councillors out there. I am not going to guillotine this. I want this to 24 have a full hearing, like what I did for the Murrough, but please work with me in 25 terms of the three minutes. I am not going to cut you off if I don't have to but just 26 bear in mind I want everybody to have their say on this. Is that fair enough? 27 Because I do want to get to the suspension of the standing orders, and I do want to 28 get to the motion as well. Okay, Chief Executive. 29 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. As the Cathaoirleach said, the report

was circulated to you all. We had a discussion about this briefly before Christmas
 about what the process was, and at that time I suppose, you know, there might have
 been a call for a special meeting or whatever, but we are obliged to bring the Chief
 Executive's Report on the application to yourselves, the members. That report, as I
 said, has been circulated to you. The report sets out the application against our

1 County Development Plan and the objectives of the Planning and Development Act 2 as it stands. Leonora will take you through what the next steps are and what the 3 members' options are and what you can do at the end of our meeting today. I will 4 hand you over to Leonora.

5 MS EARLS: Thank you. So, members, as the Chief Executive indicated, that in the 6 event an application was received for inner landfill facility in Ballinclare, was 7 received by An Bord Pleanála, the board determined that the proposal falls within the 8 definition of "environmental infrastructure", and they also determined it is of 9 strategic importance the proposal is brought before the members of the Council. So 10 such an application was lodged with the board on the 13th November. So there's two 11 provisions under the Planning and Development Act in relation to such a proposal. 12 Firstly, the Chief Executive has prepared a report having regard to environmental 13 and proper planning and sustainable development and, secondly, the Chief Executive 14 submits that report to the members seeking their views. Within the Act it provides that the members may by resolution attach recommendations to that report, and 15 16 where the members attach recommendations by resolution they are sent with the 17 report to An Bord Pleanála, and the minutes of this meeting would also be submitted 18 with that recommendation and with the reports. So, members, the Chief Executive's 19 report was submitted to you there with the agenda for your consideration and any 20 resolution that you want to pass in respect of same. Thank you. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Director, and thank you, Chief Executive. 22 Councillor Peir Leonard, I have you ready to go there. 23 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I suppose, look it, the history of this is that the Arklow 24 MD councillors and the Wicklow MD councillors at the time, the last time this went 25 in for planning objected to it and they sent in an appendix to the Chief Executive's

26 Report. I would like to propose some wording. I have been working with the

- 27 residents in the location of the proposed landfill.
- 28

29 This landfill is one of potentially the most negative things to come to the county and

30 I think it is really important that we give it some time, so I have prepared some

- wording just based on the submissions from the local residents, and community and
 some of the local councillors. If you bear with me I will read it out.
- 33

1	So: "The proposed wording on behalf of the members to be included as appendix to
2	the Chief Executive's Report on Ballinclare Quarry along the minutes and transcript
3	of the full Council discussion on the report for the An Bord Pleanála Case
4	PA27.321255 for the Ballinclare Quarry, the proposed material recovery and
5	recycling facility and inert landfill.
6	
7	This summary outlines the key objectives to the proposed development at Ballinclare
8	Quarry and highlights discrepancies in the Chief Executive's Report.
9	
10	Environmental section
11	
12	Groundwater
13	Claims of 'no change in well levels during the dewatering' are unsubstantiated.
14	Dewatering began in 2022, but groundwater monitoring only started in 2024, after
15	pressure had already reduced. Uisce Éireann warns the backfill could disrupt
16	groundwater flow, levels, and quality, impacting domestic and agricultural wells.
17	
18	Waste Acceptance Criteria
19	Kilsaran proposes extending waste intake beyond inert soil, aiming to increase
20	contaminant limits in line with EU Council Decision 2003/33/EC. In 2023, a similar
21	EPA application sought to triple limits for sulphates, chlorides, arsenic, and other
22	contaminants, raising risks of elevated pollution levels.
23	
24	Wastewater
25	Contradictions arise in Kilsaran's statements: they claim no hazard of leachate will
26	be generated due the inert nature of the waste yet plans include a leachate tank. No
27	provisions are made for leachate or landfill gas monitoring, leaving potential
28	contamination risks unaddressed.
29	
30	Untreated Surface Water
31	Runoff from the site will flow untreated into Kilmacurragh Stream and Potter's River
32	via a swale. This poses a long-term contamination risk, with no monitoring plan for
33	the potential leachate dispersing into local water networks.
34	

1	Quarry Lining
2	The proposed clay liner may include filter cake, a by-product of washing
3	contaminated materials. Using polluted filter cake risks lining the quarry with
4	harmful substances.
5	
6	Invasive Species
7	Despite assurance against accepting soils with invasive species, Kilsaran intends to
8	apply for EPA approval to dispose of soils containing species like Japanese
9	Knotweed and Giant Hogweed. A similar application was rejected by An Bord
10	Pleanála in 2023.
11	
12	Road safety
13	
14	Reduced Road Safety
15	Kilsaran's own consultants admit the proposed road widening (to 6m) may encourage
16	higher speeds, reducing safety on the $L1157$. The design is inadequate for two
17	HGVs (2.9-3m wide) to pass safely, leaving no margin for error, increasing accident
18	risks.
19	
20	M11/N11 Traffic Congestion
21	The addition of 650-750 heavy duty goods movements weekly will exacerbate the
22	existing congestion on the already overburdened N11/M11 corridor.
23	
24	Biodiversity
25	
26	Peregrine Falcons
27	Proposals fail to protect breeding peregrine falcons. Recommended buffer zones for
28	nesting raptors are 200-600m, but the application only allows 15m in cliff height.
29	Such proximity to human and mechanical activities jeopardises the falcons' survival,
30	critical for maintaining the species in the region.
31	
32	Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
33	The Natura Impact Statement (NIS) fails to conclusively address the potential
34	impacts on water-dependent habitats in the Buckroney Brittas Dunes and Fen SAC.

1	Hydrology and leachate studies contain uncertainties, and increased waste
2	acceptance criteria heightens risks. The NIS lacks the necessary assurances required
3	by law.
4	
5	Human health
6	
7	Asbestos
8	The site contains asbestos, yet mitigation plans are insufficient. Questions remain
9	about testing protocols, air and water safety measures, and whether the site is even
10	suitable for development.
11	
12	There has been scant mention of the asbestos discovered onsite in 2016, which was
13	distributed to over 20 building sites before being returned. Since the site closure, the
14	quarry has filled with water, minimising the airborne risk of asbestos particles.
15	
16	Dewatering the quarry and proposed activities could release asbestos particles into
17	the air, posing severe health risk to local families.
18	
19	Despite being a critical issue, asbestos is mentioned only briefly in the 2,000-page
20	proposal and relegated to the acronym NOA (Naturally Occurring Asbestos). A
21	comprehensive, independently reviewed plan to mitigate these risks must be
22	enforced before considering approval. The lack of transparency on this longstanding
23	issue has eroded trust with local residents.
24	
25	CONCLUSION
26	
27	This development poses severe environmental, safety, biodiversity, and health risks,
28	particularly concerning asbestos contamination and groundwater impacts, and
29	insufficient safeguards for wildlife. Furthermore, the lack of meaningful
30	consultation and public engagement throughout this process necessitates an oral
31	hearing to ensure transparency and address public concerns. In the light of the
32	genuine and legitimate concerns of local residents and the many issues specified
33	above, we, the Elected Members of Wicklow County Council, request An Bord
34	Pleanála to refuse permission for this SID application."

1 2 Thank you for listening 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Leonard. Just before I go on to the 4 next speaker, would you mind forwarding that onto Helen so we can circulate it, 5 because there was a lot to take in there to be quite honest with you. 6 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes. 7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Joe Behan. 8 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: First of all, Cathaoirleach, I want to formally second 9 Councillor Leonard's proposal and pay tribute to Councillor Leonard and former 10 Councillor Kavanagh, who were to the forefront of trying to ensure that the voice of 11 Elected Members were heard on the last occasion when this particular development 12 was applied for. On the last occasion, for the benefit of those members who weren't 13 here at the time, the Chief Executive at the time told us one day before the deadline 14 for submissions to go in with regard to the last, which is the very same proposal 15 really, one day's notice for members to have their say on this, the Elected Members. 16 And Councillor Leonard and Councillor Kavanagh did a marvellous job in a few 17 hours in getting a proposal together, subsequently endorsed by the members of the 18 Wicklow MD and the Arklow MD, which went into An Bord Pleanála. So what we 19 have now is we have a situation where we are an appendix as Elected Members to 20 this process. Because the Chief Executive and the management of the Council, they 21 put in a submission which we got last week. And that the Council's submission. We 22 are the Elected Members, our job is to represent the people who vote for us, who 23 don't have a voice at this table. We're reduced to putting in an appendix which the 24 board then have to read. So, you know, that's the system. I am not blaming the 25 Chief Executive for that. That's the way the thing is set up against us from the 26 beginning. It is also set up against the local community. Because there are very, 27 very genuine deep concerns in the local community about this proposal. Very deep 28 concerns. And a number of them have been expressed by Councillor Leonard, but 29 they, the residents, have had a number of meetings and they have had a lot of input 30 into putting in their own submissions into the board. 31

But for those who may not be familiar with it, and I am not as familiar as Councillor
Leonard would be, but my assessment of this is, we're talking about not a large
dump, not even a super dump, we're talking about a mega dump in one of the most

1 beautiful and scenic parts of our county. And the theory is we are filling in a quarry 2 that was full of water with construction and demolition materials. And the Chief 3 Executive, while it may not say at the bottom 'please An Bord Pleanála can you give 4 permission for this development' it is quite clear the wording of the conclusion of the 5 Chief Executive's Report is this is an appropriate development. So it's got the green 6 light from the Council officials. And we, the members, are the last chance for the 7 local people to actually say, hold on a minute, what Councillor Leonard has read out 8 we actually agree with that, we actually don't think it should be granted for all of the 9 reasons that she has given there.

10

11 It's very important, the residents are really keen on a number of things, and I want to 12 stress them before I continue, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for the time on this. First of 13 all, residents are very, very clear we need to have an oral hearing on this particular 14 proposal. There's a lot of unhappiness about the lack of genuine public consultation 15 with the local community when this application was first being mooted, and an oral hearing would give residents and us, if we wanted to, the opportunity to actually 16 17 contribute and speak face-to-face to An Bord Pleanála inspector. So that's a very 18 important part of Councillor Leonard's proposal. The second part is that apart from a 19 submission, if we hopefully agree with what Councillor Leonard has proposed here, 20 a second part is the minutes of this meeting have to also be sent as the appendix. But 21 not alone that, if you look, I mean Teresa does a fantastic job on the minutes, but the 22 transcript is also word-for-word, and whatever goes in in terms of our submission 23 and the minutes I also want to see that the transcript is also forwarded to that An Bord Pleanála will see exactly what councillors say. And the reason why I am 24 25 saying is that if any one of you around the chamber have any concerns or feel that 26 this project should be considered again or should not be granted this is your 27 opportunity to go on the record because if you say it here it will have to go into the 28 transcript and therefore An Bord Pleanála will have to understand then the depth of 29 feeling that elected politicians have about this issue. Now if you don't, if you think it 30 is a good development or you're happy enough to let it to go to An Bord Pleanála, 31 that's obviously your decision, but it is very, very important, and residents are 32 stressing this, that people voice their objections if they are concerned about it.

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1 The last points I would make is this, Cathaoirleach. Wicklow County Council 2 officials from the environment section and the roads section had meetings with 3 Kilsaran a number of months ago. We got the record of those meetings this morning 4 from Leonora. And thanks, Leonora, for that. It indicates, as I said at a previous 5 meeting, the environment section, and I am going to read it because I think this is 6 important, Robert Kelly and Michael Boland, who are our employees, expressed the 7 view that the waste management section of Wicklow County Council would be in 8 support of the project. Okay. That's number one. So six or eight months Kilsaran 9 were able to use that in their submission, which they have used. The second thing is 10 the roads section were able to say, discuss the modalities of how we might manage 11 with the transport, what would happen, two lanes, one lane, all of these trucks, these 12 HGVs, going up and down these narrow roads, the roads section were able to talk 13 about, maybe we could try this or that. The one thing the roads section never seemed 14 to mention was the fact that for many years there have been so many fatalities on that 15 section of the road, the bends, where we fought so hard to have a new road put in to 16 bypass all this section, this doesn't seem to have been mentioned by the road section 17 at all. All these extra vehicles are going to be travelling on that road where so many 18 people lost their lives in the past. That to me was very strange.

19

20 And the last point I would make. For any poor individual around this county who 21 tries to make a planning application, you know, and they have to go -- they never get 22 a preplanning meeting. They never get an opportunity to talk to the roads section, 23 the environment section, about whether a septic tank would be acceptable. They 24 never get a chance. Just look at the correspondence: Email to Fergal Keogh, email 25 correspondence back from Fergal Keogh, email correspondence to senior officials in 26 this Council, and responses back, even if they're not saying we're going to help you, 27 but responses. The ordinary person, the little people in this county don't seem to 28 count when it comes to issues that of concern to them, but when a mega million 29 project that is going to have huge impact on the local people in that area, Kilsaran get 30 an audience, not once, not twice, and they probably also have had audiences with An 31 Bord Pleanála and staff in the past as well. So I think we need to stand up for the 32 local people on this one and voice our objections which I think that's what the people 33 would really appreciate if we could do that, Cathaoirleach. Thank you. 34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Tom Fortune.

1 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Firstly, can I say that I 2 fully endorse and support what Councillor Leonard has put forward and the great 3 detail she has put into it. And I also concur fully with what Councillor Behan has 4 said. In addition to that, can I just add, and I am speaking as chair of the Economic 5 Development SPC. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: We'll get that muted. Go ahead. 7 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I am speaking in my capacity as chair of the Economic 8 Development SPC, and, members, in all honesty this project should not proceed. 9 We're talking about putting a mega dump slap bang in the middle of the county. This 10 project is just not in the interests of Wicklow as a business area. We as a county 11 have a fantastic county, fantastic potential. We have just put together various 12 supports in the last 12 to 15 months to really, really develop the whole business 13 enterprise of the county. This, in my opinion, will destroy that. For example, have 14 we done real kind of cost benefit analysis of any shape? 15 16 If you look at it from an economy perspective, tourism. We pride ourselves and have 17 done for many years of being, you know, the garden of Ireland and we're proposing 18 to put a mega dump into the middle of the garden of Ireland. I mean come on, are 19 we for real? And this is about big, big profits and big, big money. You know, we 20 already are aware of the challenges we have over in West Wicklow with 21 Whitestown, you know. What happens if this project was to proceed? The Chief 22 Executive, like any chief executive, will move on, many of the directors and 23 members will move on. So passing this in the guise of the way it is at the moment I 24 think is ultra, ultra, ultra, ultra dangerous. 25 26 What lobbying has been done around all of this? You know, is there a clear picture 27 of any lobbying that's been done? And as a bare minimum we have to have an oral 28 hearing. This should not proceed out of this chamber unless there's an agreement 29 that there's an oral hearing. 30 31 Chair, I repeat what I said at the outset. I fully support Councillor Leonard and 32 Councillor Behan in everything they've said but really and truly if we are serious 33 about Wicklow as an enterprise centre, as a place to do business, as a place to 34 develop tourism, as a place to come and live, putting a mega dump slap bang in the

1 middle and then we say, and I don't fault any of the officials because obviously this 2 is coming from on high a lot of this I would imagine, but to say that it is of strategic 3 importance. Of strategic importance to who? It is certainly not in my opinion of 4 strategic importance to Wicklow or the residents of Wicklow, or the residents up in 5 that whole area. This is one of the most disgraceful projects. I'm 20 years now as a 6 public representative, and we have had main arm wrestles and battles and different 7 issues in this chamber but this to me is one of the most irresponsible proposals to 8 come before this Council in my time, and even before, because I'm interested in the 9 history of local politics and have I looked at it. This is absolutely off the wall. I 10 would urge members to really reject this and to send a clear message. 11 12 I am concerned, as Councillor Behan is, in the way this is going to end up with the 13 board. I personally, and I have said this publicly in this chamber before, I have no 14 confidence whatsoever in An Bord Pleanála. I don't know who they're answerable 15 to. I understand the officials have a role and they have to do certain things, but 16 honestly, folks, we need to be working together on this. This will destroy County 17 Wicklow. To put a mega dump in the middle of our county. Absolutely we should 18 reject it a hundred and ten percent. 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. There's a number of speakers. 20 Thanks for keep working with me. I try not to repetitious, but we will get through it, 21 okay. Councillor Stokes. 22 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach. I would like to go 23 on record with my own objection and as a bare minimum the need for an oral hearing 24 on this. 25 26 Could I firstly as well pay tribute to Councillor Leonard, you know, who has put in 27 some outstanding research there and it is greatly appreciated in bringing it to us 28 today, and I would echo everything Councillor Behan has said. I would have 29 serious, serious environmental concerns. You know, we are the Garden of Ireland 30 not the garbage county of Ireland. And I think that from that perspective alone there 31 is great concern within the community, and they have been reaching out to all of us 32 as public representatives, including myself in the Greystones district, so I would 33 have great concerns, but also as chair of the Transport SPC from a logistical point of 34 view. Let alone for me that this project should fall on the environmental grounds in

1 my opinion, that the impact at a transport and logistical level of adding all of these 2 trucks into this area, arguably you know where the road infrastructure is not up to 3 standard for this level of activity, when that money that would be needed for 4 investment in the road network, you know, it should be used wisely right across the 5 county for projects where you know we should be getting value for money 6 throughout the county. So I just wanted to echo my objection and again commend 7 Councillor Leonard and Councillor Behan for their sentiments. I just wanted to go 8 on record. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Councillor Silvester Bourke. 10 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to support 11 Councillor Behan's and Councillor Leonard's proposals there. It is a colossal 12 development that's proposed. We had raised concerns about the original application. 13 The concerns haven't really gone away. Many of the residents are very, very 14 concerned about it and I know some as well who are probably half resigned to it 15 happening, as Councillor Behan alluded to, that maybe it is a done deal already. 16 There's that feeling amongst many of the residents as well. So I think we have to 17 thread very carefully here. And if, as Councillor Behan said, this is a done deal, and 18 it does happen, and the board do grant it despite all of our objections my biggest 19 concern then would be who has the teeth to implement any mitigating measures that 20 are conditioned on it? Because I am not sure if I have full confidence in our own 21 Council to actually enforce on people who break the rules. Most of us try to live by 22 the rules. For example, in planning applications, when many other people break the 23 rules, they get away with it for a long time, for example Councillor O'Neill 24 mentioning that case over in Kippure and how far that went down the road before a 25 stop was put to it. There was a house, it is not technically a house, but it looks like a 26 house on the seafront, and despite requests from local people and councillors to have 27 it stopped it went to a very close point of completion. Now technically it is not a 28 house, but it is not far from it. So there's just two examples of how I am afraid that 29 we lack the teeth to stop something. So if something does go wrong with this 30 development, God forbid, but if something does go wrong, who is actually going to 31 police it and are we capable of policing it, do we have the will to police it before 32 things do go wrong? I hope they don't. That's all I say, Cathaoirleach, and I would 33 do Councillor Behan and Councillor Leonard's proposals. Thank you. 34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

1 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. There's a lot to 2 consume in terms of us as elected representatives and the saga of this proposal, but I 3 think for me there's something about what lenses we use to consider a proposal like 4 this. I think if we're thinking about context, to build a little bit on what Councillor 5 Fortune said, like, first and foremost this is a proposal with a business interest. And 6 if we even do the basic mathematics of 600,000 tonnes of waste being processed per 7 year and we think about the gate costs of delivering your waste, you're talking about 8 profits in the region of €30 to €60 million. So this is driven by -- and again, there's 9 nothing necessarily against any company looking make a profit, but I think it is 10 important for us to contextualise it in that regard. And I think that's what makes it 11 difficult then to look at a proposal which then has deficits in terms of looking at 12 environmental risks and compliance. And let's not forget compliance down the road 13 becomes court cases, noncompliance. When we look at public health concerns that 14 are not addressed, when we look at traffic and infrastructure, the strain, like the very, 15 very obvious impact, not addressed. And then when we -- and again, it is really 16 interesting when you look at, if this is considered an appropriate development, but 17 then if we bring into play the lenses that are ours, such as the LECP, the County 18 Development Plan, everything around SACs, the EU Habitat Directive, the Birds 19 Directive. There are all these other lenses which if we use them are saying this is not 20 good, this is not enough, this does not answer all the questions, this is risky, this is 21 detrimental. I can pick out all the words. But I think it is not even necessarily us 22 having appointed you, I think it is if we use the appropriate lenses then we have to 23 react to this in a way that honours the existence of all those documents, all those 24 directives. And they tell us that this isn't good enough as a proposal, and that this 25 can't be supported in its current form.

26

And I really think that when we think about our county, and again it's been mentioned by other colleagues, that we talk about Wicklow as a great place to live, a great place to visit and a great place to do business, but what this proposal does for me is it kind of challenges us to think about the hierarchy of that stuff. Is it a great place to make profit first, or is it a great place to live and how do we honour that, or a great place to visit and how do we honour that? And what is the hierarchy in terms of us as elected representatives and us as a local authority in terms of what gates we

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open to people who want to come in and do business which has such huge potential
 detrimental impact. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor John Snell.

4 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks to the previous 5 speakers for outlining the case on behalf of the constituents not just of East Wicklow, 6 South Wicklow, but this affects the whole county of Wicklow. As recently as back 7 in October when we were looking for EPA to go in and carry out an inspection and 8 to investigate the quarry and neighbouring lands, there's a lot of residential properties 9 out there, but also farmland, a lot of community people out there. Really what we're 10 saying here, at the October meeting I mentioned in regards to the amount of 11 movements of traffic every four minutes, and in fact having analysed the meeting 12 that took place in the Arklow Municipal District on the 4th September, and the data 13 that came from that, with Kilsaran and some of our employees, in that document it 14 has mentioned up to 333 movements per day of HGV trucks. That's less than a 15 movement every two minutes over a ten-hour day. So it is actually worse than I had 16 anticipated back in October.

17

This is a real live issue, and it has been mentioned in regards to an oral hearing, and that that has to be the least that the people could expect. And I would concur with that, with what Councillor Stephen Stokes has mentioned, at the very, very legal an oral hearing. And if people have nothing to be afraid of why would they be afraid of an oral hearing, to come and explain to not just public representatives, not just the employees of this Council, but to the wider public, to the constituents, the residents?

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25 And God knows, like, we have a landfill not too far away called Ballingran, this is 26 the same road network that we're talking about using. These vehicles will be using 27 the N11 and also using the L1157. And until such time as this oral hearing would be 28 held, because God forbid in years to come we don't want to realise that we were part 29 and parcel of something that I know it's not good for the county, I certainly know it's 30 not good for County Wicklow, but what is the consequences in regards to people's 31 health? We don't want to realise in 20 years' time that actually, you know, there was 32 a far greater consequence of what we've allowed happen. So I will not be supporting 33 this in any shape or form.

There's a stream out there called Potter's Stream. That little stream runs all the way into Brittas Bay. Brittas Bay, one of the most beautiful parts of the county, let alone in the garden county. It cannot be supported. People are sick and very sick in this country, in this county, and God forbid we would in any way make it worse on them, because I don't know the consequences of this.

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7 The EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency, they were to do works. We don't 8 know if they carried out those works. We don't know what they have done. But I 9 certainly know if I lived on that stretch of road out there, the Ballingran landfill is in 10 existence for maybe 15, 16 years, even more, and now we're proposing putting 11 something else on their doorstep in conjunction with what is already there and add to 12 that for perhaps another 20 or 40 years. This is not good for County Wicklow. It is 13 not good for the people who I represent, and you represent. And irrespective of our 14 party allegiance, I can guarantee of the 32 councillors in Wicklow County Council 15 not one person when you went around knocking on doors in June asked you to 16 support this and make sure this went through, that people suddenly woke up one day 17 and said we want a massive super dump in the middle of this county.

18

This is a couple of kilometres from where I was born and reared, and it is a couple of kilometres from Wicklow Town. It is unacceptable in any shape or form. And we're expecting people to go out and play Gaelic football not too far from this, a little pitch out there not a million miles from where this is, and I won't be supporting it. But I would call for the very minimum an oral hearing on this. This to me is a grab-all. This is big industry coming down on the little authorities and getting their way. And I am not supporting it.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Lourda Scott.

27 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. I want to echo some of the 28 comments from my colleagues here today, and I have been particularly listening very 29 closely to those who live in the immediate area and have the most direct contact I 30 suppose with the residents and are more familiar with the whole issue. It is a 31 complex issue. There's no doubt about that. I have been reading through the 32 documents in depth; the Chief Executive's Report as well as information that was 33 sent to us from some of the residents, and thanks to Councillor Leonard for reading 34 those into the record and I do fully support all that was said by her and others.

1 2 And maybe slightly different to some of my colleagues, I do accept the need for this 3 circular waste committee, and circular waste cycle, and I do understand where the 4 environmental section are supportive of that measure. However, these big 5 developments have to be put into the right place. And I am not convinced from all I 6 have read here that this is the correct place for such a development. Again I have 7 read through the Chief Executive's Report in detail. I have read through the 8 discrepancies I suppose that have been raised, that Councillor Leonard has read out, 9 and I would share those concerns. Even just reading the conditions, 3.0 of the Chief 10 Executive's Report, the conditions that may be considered by An Bord Pleanála in 11 the event of a grant. A large part of me goes that all sounds fine on paper, but in 12 reality, echoing what Councillor Bourke said, I don't feel that I have confidence that 13 those conditions -- if permission was granted and those conditions were included, 14 that the conditions will be policed by the Council or by anybody else. And that 15 leaves me with real, real concern about this whole project. 16 17 The reason I say this is, we have had a lot of large residential developments in 18 Greystones over the last couple of years, a couple of large HSGs in particular, and 19 there's been conditions placed on those developments, particularly around noise, 20 around traffic, around kind of construction traffic and traffic management, et cetera, 21 and really what's written down on paper and what happens in reality seem to be two 22 very different things. And again as Councillor Bourke referred to it, trying to get a 23 resolution on that, trying to get, you know, these issues dealt with by developers is 24 nigh to impossible in my experience. And not to mention the fact, I don't know if it 25 is a possibility in this case, we do see, you know, great planning conditions and great 26 plans being approved by either the Council and/or An Bord Pleanála only for six or 27 12 months later for developers to come back and put in another, not appeal, another 28 amendment to the original permission and remove in residential cases, you know, 29 valuable community facilities which were agreed at the start of the planning but then 30 they come back and decided to remove those. So I do wonder again would there be 31 amendments put into this over time to change some of the items that were agreed. 32 As I said, for me there's too much doubt, there's too many grey areas. 33

34 I particularly echo just the issues around the protection of the falcons, the asbestos

issue and the piece around the invasive species as well as the road traffic
management. I don't think that is clear at all how that would be dealt with, how the
potential speed traffic safety on those roads with that amount of HGVs. Again the
question is who is going to be monitoring that when there are no doubt going to be
issues. So I would echo the call for an oral hearing. I think that is absolutely
essential. I do want to state on the record that as it stands I will be objecting to this.
Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Danny Alvey. 9 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: I would like to support the motion calling for an oral 10 hearing and echo a lot of what Councillor Scott has said in that regard. On the face 11 of it, reading through a lot of the documents, I tried to read through as much as 12 possible ahead of time, and meet with local people. Taking a massive quarry and 13 filling it in with inert waste and then doing a nature restoration plan on top of it 14 might look like a positive thing but once you start digging deeper into it and realise 15 the amount of self-reporting and self-regulating that is part of the entire process that 16 is where I had a lot of concerns. They are shared by a lot of local people, especially 17 the regulation of 120 trucks a day: How is that going to be policed? Who is going to 18 police that? Who is going oversee the screening of what waste exactly is dumped in 19 here? Who is going to oversee the final restoration plan? So there is a lot of doubts 20 there especially in around untreated water as well leaving the site and leaching out 21 into the groundwater and the local streams. And also the concerns about them 22 immediately applying to change the licence to accept more dangerous and hazardous 23 waste.

24

In regards to the Peregrine Falcons, that is something I am particularly sad and emotional about because there's absolutely no doubt in my mind that that breeding site will be lost based on all the evidence presented and that I know about the sensitivities of the Peregrine Falcon, which would be very unfortunate because the Peregrine Falcon is actually the emblem of our Wicklow Mountains National Park, and they are so hard to get to breed and stay in the area. So having a site located for them at such a location would be such a shame to lose.

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Also it is right next to the National Botanic Gardens at Kilmacurragh. The HGV
 trucks will be sharing the same roads that locals and tourists will be using for going

1	to a scenic spot. No doubt there will be collateral coming off the trucks that will
2	need to be cleaned as they go along.
3	
4	So there's a whole lot of concerns there. I think at the very least an oral hearing is
5	definitely something we should support for the sake of the locals in the area.
6	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Malachaí Duddy.
7	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Cathaoirleach, go raibh maith agat. Again I would like to
8	join in everything that has been said so far. I think the idea of the Garden of Ireland
9	would be thrown out of the window if this development was allowed to proceed,
10	particularly when one considers its vicinity to Brittas Bay and the beaches there.
11	
12	Placing it adjacent to the national arboretum, part of the national gardens,
13	Kilmacurragh, just strikes me as insane, particularly when they propose to deal with
14	invasive species there. And the national arboretum, having recently suffered in the
15	storms to have to then try and compete with a huge dump in the proximity, never
16	mind tourists supposedly attracted to it. Any county in the country would love to
17	have the national arboretum in it. And I think if this proposal was allowed go ahead
18	the National Botanic Gardens would be absolutely right to throw their hat at it and
19	decide to move the gardens elsewhere.
20	
21	There's been mention of the Peregrine Falcons, which I absolutely agree with, but I
22	also know that the Red Kites are also in the vicinity of the valley there. They were
23	reintroduced to Wicklow in 2007 having been made extinct in the 18th Century. So
24	again, this sounds mad, placing this type of development in the foothills of the
25	Wicklow mountains, it's dumbfounding really. Go raibh maith agat.
26	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Orla Finn.
27	COUNCILLOR FINN: I just wanted to reiterate everything the councillors have
28	said. I want to thank Councillor Peir Leonard for all the work she has put into this
29	and for the wording today, which is great. I also just want to say that I support all of
30	my colleagues in relation to their concerns, the environmental and road concerns that
31	have been stated a number of times together, and that as it stands I will also be
32	objecting to this proposal. Thank you.
33	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

1 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just briefly, I am no expert 2 as to whether it is a good application or what, or the ins or outs, but I would like to 3 comment on the -- I take the word the other councillors here that it is a bad 4 application. But I want to point out that, you know, maybe the last line of Peir's 5 article in appeal to An Bord Pleanála puts it in a nutshell, and that is where you are 6 requesting An Bord Pleanála to refuse permission. That puts it all in a nutshell really 7 because this is out of our hands.

8

9 A few years ago here with the exception of a full honourable councillors I appealed 10 to withdraw the application on the crazy plan for The Greenway in West Wicklow, 11 and I got little or no support from every other councillor in the chamber. But really 12 the situation here is, you know, and with all due respect we hear calls for an oral 13 hearing, this is outside our control now. It is really up to An Bord Pleanála whether 14 they decide. You are at the mercy of An Bord Pleanála and we're at the mercy of An 15 Bord Pleanála in West Wicklow regards The Greenway. They did see the light of way lucky enough and they rejected it. But this application, right or wrong, as I say I 16 17 am not going to question the ins or outs of the application, but when that goes to An 18 Bord Pleanála it is up to An Bord Pleanála to decide on this. And we can do all the 19 shouting we like. That's where the flaw is in planning, in the country as a whole. To 20 put this application, direct application to An Bord Pleanála it doesn't mean anything. 21 You know, we're completely helpless, you know. So I can't see any point in looking 22 for oral hearings or anything else. You are completely at the mercy of An Bord 23 Pleanála once that's a direct application to An Bord Pleanála.

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25 One other thing I thought of there too, it is by Kilsaran in this application, I 26 understood that Roadstone owned Kilsaran. So I would like that maybe we were all 27 a little bit more honest that this application is out of our control. Go raibh maith 28 agat.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Jason Mulhall.

30 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to just go on 31 the record as well to support the motion from Councillor Leonard. There are many,

- 32 many environmental concerns to mention, road traffic issues. I don't think it is a
- 52 many environmental concerns to mention, foad traffic issues. I don't timk it is a
- 33 good idea, and I am concerned about precedence it might create as well. Thank you.

1	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Leonard, I know you
2	want to come back in, but I am going to see if there is anyone else who wants to
3	speak. You understand?
4	COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes. No, it is to clarify a change.
5	CATHAOIRLEACH: I want to speak in a second, but I want to put it out there, does
6	anyone else want to speak before I bring Councillor Leonard back in? Councillor
7	Warren O'Toole.
8	COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I just want to echo the
9	sentiment from all the rest of the councillors and to commend Councillor Leonard on
10	the presentation here today and for all the previous work she has done.
11	
12	I think it is simply a disgrace that we are even kind of getting to this stage. There's
13	so many environmental impacts and as Councillor O'Brien outlined from European
14	standards and everything else, I think this is just detrimental to what we are trying to
15	promote within tourism and everything else within the county, and for this to
16	proceed I think it is a sad day in the county.
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. So if no one else wants to come in,
18	before I invite Councillor Leonard back in I just want to say I held back from
19	speaking because when it was brought up here above I noted, and I am still in the
20	same situation, is that I am probably the councillor that lives closest to where this
21	proposed site is going to go in Redcross where I live. I am not going to repeat
22	everything, I am not going to go against my own request and start repeating myself,
23	but what I would be concerned about is that I was talking to residents about the
24	(inaudible) bends that don't even get gritted because it is not classed as a main road
25	anymore. So to see, I think Councillor Snell said 333 lorries now going onto a road
26	where one of the most horrific accidents in the accidents happened back in the
27	nineties when a mini went under a bus, unfortunate family members, the emergency
28	services.
29	
30	What also hasn't been mentioned here today is that there is a school less than
31	five-minutes drive, right on the corner of the N11 near where Lil Doyle's would have
32	been. So to bring that many vehicles there is madness, in my opinion.
33	
34	I want to commend you, Councillor Leonard, for bringing your observations here

today, for listening to the residents out there and to commend everyone here for
speaking so passionately and that is why I allowed everybody to go over time bar
one or two.

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5 Councillor Leonard, would you like to come back in there? I know you have 6 something to say. And then I will invite the Chief Executive, Leonora and then we 7 have to go to a vote. Thank you. Just bear with me. Go ahead. 8 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I just want to thank everybody first for their 9 submissions as well, and their objections. It is just the last sentence of the proposal, just to change the word "request" to "recommend/" I will read it out: "So in light of 10 11 the genuine and legitimate concerns of local issues on many issues specified above 12 we, the Elected Members of a Wicklow County Council, recommended An Bord 13 Pleanála to refuse permission for this SID application." Just to change the "request" 14 to "recommend" and if everybody is in agreement with that. 15 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to ask the Chief Executive to come in, if Leonora 16 wants to come in then, and then what we will do is we will go to a vote. 17 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you members for all of your 18 contributions on this. A point of clarification. This is not a proposal put forward by 19 Wicklow County Council. This is a third-party application that we are obliged to 20 make a report on and comment on. I think it is hugely, hugely important that we 21 have had this discussion here today and that the views of the members will be 22 recorded and will go to An Bord Pleanála with the resolution. Helen will take you 23 through the next steps. So it is open to the members to formally move a resolution 24 that will go with the report plus the detail of the report that Councillor Leonard has 25 prepared, the minutes of the meeting and the transcript. Just to confirm that Helen 26 will go through all of that with you now. Thank you members. 27 MS PURCELL: So you will all have received by email a copy of Councillor 28 Leonard's resolution, which has been seconded by Councillor Joe Behan. You have 29 also received a hard of it, so each of you has a hard copy and a soft copy of it. 30 31 Councillor Leonard, I believe you are proposing to change the word "conclusion" to 32 "resolution" at the end?

33 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes.

MS PURCELL: And also then add a line at the end: "Request that a transcript of the meeting accompany the report submitted to An Bord Pleanála." So I will read the actual resolution element at the very end and then I will ask everybody, I am going to call for a vote on it.

- 6 So the resolution proposed by Councillor Peir Leonard and seconded by Councillor 7 Joe Behan in relation to item number 6 on the agenda is that: "This development 8 poses severe environmental, safety, biodiversity and health risks, particularly 9 concerning asbestos contamination, groundwater impacts, and insufficient safeguards 10 for wildlife. Furthermore, the lack of meaningful consultation and public 11 engagement throughout this process necessitates an oral hearing to ensure 12 transparency and address public concerns. In the light of the genuine and legitimate 13 concerns of local residents and the many issues specified above we, the Elected 14 Members of Wicklow County Council, recommend An Bord Pleanála to refuse 15 permission for this SID development. We also request that the transcript of the 16 meeting accompany the report submitted to An Bord Pleanála."
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- 18 Is everybody clear on what they are voting on? (Agreed.) Yes. Thank you.
- 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry.
- 20 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Can I just clarify to the members who are not from South
- 21 Wicklow and East Wicklow that this quarry was closed in 2016. In 2016 the quarry
- 22 was closed down because of the asbestos that was found on the site. So I just want to
- 23 put that on record, and I want that to be part of the minutes that go to the board.
- 24 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Is everybody clear we're going to a 25 vote?
- MS PURCELL: If you are in favour of the resolution you are voting for and if you
 against the resolution you are voting against.
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- 29 Councillor Danny Alvey?
- 30 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: For.
- 31 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Mark Barry?
- 32 COUNCILLOR BARRY: For.
- 33 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Joe Behan?
- 34 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: For.

- 1 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Sylvester Bourke?
- 2 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: For.
- 3 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?
- 4 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: For.
- 5 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Avril Cronin?
- 6 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: For.
- 7 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Erika Doyle is not present.
- 8 Councillor Malachaí Duddy?
- 9 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: For.
- 10 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Gail Dunne? I will come back to Councillor
- 11 Dunne. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin?
- 12 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: For.
- 13 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Orla Finn?
- 14 COUNCILLOR FINN: For.
- 15 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald is not present. Councillor Aoife
- 16 Flynn Kennedy?
- 17 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: For.
- 18 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Tom Fortune?
- 19 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: For.
- 20 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Patsy Glennon?
- 21 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: For.
- 22 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
- 23 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: For.
- 24 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 25 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: For.
- 26 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Peir Leonard?
- 27 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: For.
- 28 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Pat Mahon?
- 29 COUNCILLOR MAHON: For.
- 30 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
- 31 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: For.
- 32 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Miriam Murphy? I will come back.
- 33 Councillor Ian Neary?
- 34 COUNCILLOR NEARY: For.

1 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Dermot O'Brien? 2 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: For. 3 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Paul O'Brien? 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: For. 5 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Gerry O'Neill? 6 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: For. 7 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Warren O'Toole? COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: For. 8 9 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Graham Richmond? COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: For. 10 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Lourda Scott? 11 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: For. 12 13 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor John Snell? 14 COUNCILLOR SNELL: For. 15 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Peter Stapleton? 16 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: For. 17 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Stephen Stokes? 18 COUNCILLOR STOKES: For. 19 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Caroline Winstanley? 20 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: For. 21 MS PURCELL: Our two online members, Councillor Gail Dunne and Councillor 22 Miriam Murphy? I can see you there, Councillor Murphy. 23 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: For. 24 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Gail Dunne is not present. Twenty-nine for and 25 three not present. So the resolution is passed. Thank you. 26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. Thank you members for your cooperation 27 and patience and your commitment there. So what we will do now is we will move 28 onto the next item on the agenda, which is item number 7: To consider the Chief 29 Executive's monthly management report. I take it as read. 30 MS O'GORMAN: Just one item I want to bring to the members' attention. On 31 Friday afternoon last the plaintiffs in the case of Cairn Homes Limited and 32 Glenveagh Homes Limited applied to the courts to vacate the hearing date which was 33 due to be this week and have it adjourned until June of this year. They cite reasons 34 around waiting for the programme for government, the new planning figures as the

1 reason for it, and they feel their case may be moot to go ahead. I just wanted to keep 2 the members informed because as you know you passed the section 153 earlier on in 3 the year to allow us defend the proceedings. I haven't heard whether the judge as 4 acceded to the request as yet. Our law team are in courts at the moment so when I do 5 hear I will keep you updated by email. Thank you, members. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Councillor Pat Mahon. 7 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Yeah, thank you. There's two issues I want to raise here 8 today. One is regarding the works in the town of Baltinglass under the RRDF 9 scheme. These works have ceased in the last couple of months. There's absolutely 10 nothing happening there at the moment. I would like an update as to when or what is 11 actually happening there and when it is likely to commence again. That is one issue. 12 The other issue is regarding just extending gritting services in the area of 13 Ballyknockan area. Ballyknockan is a small village, and it is accessed by very, very 14 hilly roads and they are very dangerous roads in the area, especially over the last few 15 weeks. It is an area that never seems to get the sun during the day so if the roads of 16 frozen at 7 in the morning they are still frozen at 1 in the day. So it is extremely, 17 extremely dangerous. I was wondering if we could extend the gritting service which 18 comes out to Ballymount and turns at the end of the Ballyknockan Road and then 19 goes back into Blessington, if we could extend it to go around the lake, but at the 20 very least as far as Ballyknockan, which is on the 65 bus route as well which we 21 can't commence, which won't go when the roads are in such bad condition. Okay. 22 Thank you. 23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Melanie Corrigan. 24 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I want to commend the 25 outdoor staff on the gritting and all the work they did last week with the cold weather 26 that we had. Not everything was great though. I have had certain people on to me 27 about flooding coming in off the main roads and they were ringing the emergency 28 helpline as their houses were being flooded and were being told that it was an Uisce 29 Eireann issue and not a Council issue. Subsequently I have been on to Uisce 30 Eireann, and they have come back to me saying no, it is water coming in off the

road. So, look, the queries that they logged, complaints they rang in, weren't even
logged, they were immediately just told no, it's nothing to do with us. I just want it
noted that they should have been logged, that the water was literally running in the
doors of their house, coming in off the road. So just whilst everything was really

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good, and the staff I have to say they were out at 2 o'clock in the morning, 5 o'clock
 in the morning gritting the roads, there were other issues that fell to the side. I
 wanted that noted. Thank you.

4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Stephen Stokes. 5 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat, Cathaoirleach, and a very happy 6 new year to everybody. Firstly can I also, you know, thank all of the outdoor staff 7 around the county. I want to start with something very positive. I believe we have 8 had storms and terrible weather lately and, you know, in December and January I am 9 hearing stories of the outdoor staff going out at 4 am to grit the roads. So I mean the 10 old saying not all superheroes wear capes, I think that is very true of a lot of our 11 outdoor teams and it should be acknowledged..

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13 Something I have raised twice at the district level is the responsibility for dog parks 14 in County Wicklow. There seems to be confusion, certainly in the Greystones 15 district, as to who is responsible for the dog park in Greystones, specifically the one 16 in Charlesland. And I have to pay tribute in particular to Michael Nicholson for his 17 vision and leadership in getting it in the first place. But the Greystones dog park or 18 the Charlesland dog park has just fallen into disrepair. There seems to be confusion 19 as to whether it is the district office through the district engineer or one of the 20 departments in Wicklow County Council who is responsible for maintaining it. 21 Now, when it comes to the dog park in Wicklow it's superb and doesn't need much 22 maintenance because it has a hard gravel surface, but the one in Greystones is on the 23 side of a hill and it is extremely boggy in the winter. Now in fairness to Wicklow 24 County Council they put down a whole load of bark about a year ago and it was a 25 superb job but over time that's turned into pulp. It is extremely boggy. It's very 26 untidy at the gate. I would like to try to get clarification as to who is responsible for 27 this and then that could be shared with the district engineer. Because he said he has 28 been chasing up on it. It is very frustrating because I have raised this twice and it is 29 a superb facility to have. And I actually think that we should be looking to roll out 30 more dog parks across the county. We have had the Sheep Owners Association in 31 here talking about attacks on sheep around the county and I really think that you 32 need to have the carrot and the stick. The stick is that there's more enforcement, you 33 know, that dogs need to be on leads, but you also have to have the carrot which is 34 give people options to let their dogs off on leads. And I actually think every town

and village over say a thousand people should really have a dog park, but that's another day's discussion.

4 The second thing that I want to raise is in relation to the outdoor staffing in the 5 Greystones district. Now again, I know that this is, you know it is something that 6 comes up regularly at district level, I know that the Chief Executive has you know 7 looked into this in the past, and I am genuinely aware that you know there's been some discussion of perhaps Irish Water staff or Uisce Eireann staff will come over in 8 9 the future. Now we had quite a comprehensive debate at the November meeting of 10 the municipal district, I brought forward a motion to do with grass cutting and I am 11 sure we will be revisiting that in the future, but large parts of the Greystones district 12 have not even been cut twice last year. Like some parts of the district barely got one 13 cut. And the reason that the district engineer has highlighted is the lack of outdoor 14 staff. Now, at the last, at the November district meeting I think it was indicated that 15 we're now down to 13 outdoor staff in the Greystones district whereas my 16 understanding is the next lowest district has 28 outdoor staff. Now I'm not looking, 17 you know, to take away from other districts but I do think that we need to have some 18 sort of short-term plan to get more staff into the outdoor team in Greystones, even if 19 they're on temporary contracts, until such time as Irish Water -- we may or may not 20 get permanent staff from Irish Water. And so, that is what I am raising here today: is 21 a request to see if we can get some more outdoor staff because the situation is totally 22 unsustainable for trying to get work done in the Greystones district. Go raibh maith 23 agat, Cathaoirleach

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I am going to remind everybody; we
are going to revert back to three questions at the time. So Chief Executive.
MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you, members. Councillor
Mahon I will ask you Leonora to talk to you about the RRDF and then Joe might

speak to the gritting services in the area.

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I want to thank you all I suppose for your comments around the outdoor staff and the gritting programme. Yes, they do work at ungodly hours in the middle of the night because that's when they need to be out. And we operate in fairness to the staff with a lot of goodwill. Obviously they get paid but there's an awful lot of goodwill, people don't want to be out in the middle of the night all over the winter period. In relation to the road flooding incident, Councillor Corrigan, we will look into that, and we will come back to you. That's not good enough, they didn't get an answer from either service. Somebody should have taken ownership of it. So I will take ownership of it, and I will come back directly to you with whatever the situation is there. It seems like a surface drainage issue but obviously the responsibility seems to fall between two stools on that one.

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9 On dog parks in general, Councillor Stokes, yes, they're a fantastic idea. They're a 10 really great place for people to walk their dog safely and not interfere with other path 11 users. Michael might just come in on the situation in Charlesland specifically.

13 And then just on the outdoor staff in general in Greystones, we do have a resource 14 issue. It is next to nigh on impossible to recruit at that GO grade, general operative 15 grade. We have competitions ongoing the whole time. We are working through, as 16 you mentioned yourself, the Uisce Eireann redeployment where staff have been 17 offered or have the option to re-deploy within the local authority system. We are 18 finding it extremely difficult to recruit across a number of graded areas, in outdoor 19 staff, in clerical staff, in professional services staff. It is I suppose the downside of 20 being at full employment. That the local authority, whether it is a temporary 21 contract, a permanent contract, is not as an attractive place to work as private 22 industry is at the moment. But we will continue our efforts. We will look at it more 23 closely I suppose the Greystones area. And maybe, we are working through our 24 workforce plan at the moment as well, which is something we are required to do. It 25 is a five-plan based on our corporate plan objectives to reflect the future direction of 26 the local authority. As you know we have been working to kind of consolidate the 27 housing maintenance service to allow district staff to focus on district work, which 28 would be grass cutting and those types of measures. So we are working on it. I have 29 a very keen eye, and I am very interested, and I really want our districts to look the 30 best they can, and the first place when you look when you walk into any town or 31 district is the grass verge, the roadside, you know it is all of that work, so that is 32 where I want our district team focusing. But we will come back with a more detailed 33 proposal and plan for you. Over to Leonora, please.

1 MS EARLS: Councillor Mahon, yes, I suppose the Baltinglass RRDF has been a bit 2 of a complex one. Our own crews went in initially to derisk all the services and to 3 say the underground services were a mish-mash and different levels and crossing 4 over each other and interfering with each other is putting it mildly. So that job was 5 undertaken and then we found that there was further issues with levels. So we have, 6 like, bottomed all those issues now at this point between our own team and the 7 consultants on board, so our plan is to move forward now and bring in a tender for a 8 full contractor, a main contractor to complete all the entire works in the public realm 9 because we believe that's the most expedient way of doing it now at this point. 10

Just to say that while those complexities were being done and looked at in relation to the public realm there was very significant work done on the playground which is now a new all-inclusive playground with a significant refurbishment complete in the playground. So, as I said, it is hoped to move it a long further in terms of tender and main contractor. Once we have that done we will be able to give you a definitive timeline for the start and finish of the works. Thank you.

17 MR NICHOLSON: Just to remind the members our plan for dog parks. Our plan 18 initially was to have one dog park per MD and depending on the success of those 19 look at a second or third one. So we currently have dog parks in Arklow, Wicklow 20 and Greystones and we are awaiting on sites still in Baltinglass and Bray. The 21 Greystones one does get wet in the winter. It is quite a slopey site. The 22 responsibility for dog parks is entirely with the MD. So I will pass on your concerns 23 to the Greystones MD. They are fully responsible for it. I note what you said, it 24 does need barking, no pun intended but it does need bark as opposed to soil or sand, 25 but it needs a proper surface on it. That is the plan. I will pass on your concerns. 26 MR LANE: The Ballyknockan gritting routes are done as per an agreed winter 27 maintenance service plan. Priorities 1 and 2 are done, are undertaken in response to 28 the daily focused requirement. Additional routes, when resources are required, are 29 undertaken. I will take a look at Ballyknockan in the context of what you have said, 30 but there is a resource issue in that one.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Pat, did you want to come back in there, sorry? Bear with me
one second, because I have Pat Kennedy, I am going to let you come in, but, Pat, if
you can switch on your light again. Pat, can you switch yours off? Go ahead.

COUNCILLOR MAHON: Sorry, I was wondering would we be able to get a

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2 commencement of when those tenders are going in, when they are going to be 3 finalised. 4 MS EARLS: Yeah. Can you leave that with me, they're working on it at the 5 moment, and I'll come back to you with a date. 6 COUNCILLOR MAHON: Okay, thank you. 7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, thank you. So what I am going to do, you can switch 8 off your microphone again. There's too many looking to speak, but I did promise Pat 9 Kennedy. I have it all written down, so I can bring you in in the order you came in. 10 Pat Kennedy. 11 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Cathaoirleach, last 12 Wednesday, the 8th of January, we received an update from Irish Water in relation to 13 the wastewater, planned wastewater treatment upgrade works in Aughrim. And I 14 think I speak for all the councillors present when I say we weren't very happy with 15 the response. I suppose what I am asking here today is to ask our CEO if they would 16 write to the CEO of Irish Water directly. Because I have been contacted, there's 17 huge frustration among the residents in Aughrim and the business community in 18 Aughrim. And as we can see from the Chief Executive's Report here today there are 19 37 families, and Aughrim is their area of choice for a house. There's been no houses 20 built in Aughrim for the last 14 or 15 years with the exception of probably one at the 21 moment that has been built. But there's been no number of houses built in Aughrim. 22 It is a village that won the Tidy Towns, it is a village that has stagnated over the last 23 number of years. And to be fair, our own staff in Arklow have done their best to get 24 a response and to try and move it forward but it is just not happening, Chief 25 Executive. And what the people of Aughrim are asking me is to ask you personally 26 if you would act on their behalf and write to Niall Gleeson, the CEO of Uisce 27 Eireann, to see if you can move forward the wastewater treatment plant in Aughrim 28 that was promised about four or five years ago and there's still nothing happening. 29 So, Chief Executive, that's the first thing I want to ask if you would do that. 30 31 The second thing I want to ask you is in relation to the community land in Rathdrum. 32 And I brought this up before and it is dragging its heels a little bit and it is going on 33 quite a while, and there are huge demands in Rathdrum for community land. And we 34 do have the land, and we were to move it forward, but it doesn't seem to be

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1 happening, so maybe I could have an update on that with a view to bringing it 2 forward. Thanks, Chief Executive. Thanks, Cathaoirleach. 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Lourda Scott. 4 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I just want to raise an issue that 5 happened over the Christmas break which is an instance of sewage flowing into the 6 sea water in Greystones. For those who are unfamiliar with North Wicklow, on 7 December 29th we had a bathing water restriction put in place following serious 8 malfunction in the Rathdown treatment station. This malfunction resulted in raw 9 sewage flowing into the sea just south of Greystones harbour. It was something 10 noted locally by swimmers a couple of days before the official bathing restriction 11 notice was given. This of itself is of serious concern both from a public health and a 12 marine environment point of view, and I suppose there's questions that need to be 13 asked about sewage treatment facilities and their ability to cope with the growing 14 population that we have, however I want to discuss here something slightly different. 15 16 On January 7th, just nine days after the sewage pump failed, the bathing water 17 restrictions were lifted, and people were told it was safe to go back into the sea and. 18 And that was very welcomed; we have a have active sea-swimming population. But 19 I am very concerned that this was done without a water sample being taken and 20 tested to make sure that the water is clean. That would be a routine practice over the 21 bathing season over the summer. And given the amount of people swimming in 22 Greystones in the sea all year round I do find it extraordinary that this step wasn't 23 taken. I contacted the environmental section, and I want to thank them for their very 24 prompt and efficient responses to me, and apparently the decision to lift the bathing 25 water restriction was taken solely on a risk assessment. And I just don't understand 26 why the assessment wasn't backed up with a scientific certainty that a water test 27 would have given. A very quick and easy test at that. 28 29 In Greystones we have a very active sea-swimming community, we are very proud 30 of our coastline, it is a huge asset to our community, and it is an absolute priority to 31 us that the waters are kept safe and clean for everyone to swim in and to enjoy. So I 32 have two specific questions to ask of the Chief Executive today. One, I am 33 requesting that a water sample is taken this week and sent for testing and that the 34 results are published to give reassurance to all of our sea swimmers that it is okay to

go back into the water, that all the raw sewage is gone. And secondly, I would ask
that the Council changes its policy and routinely will take a water sample following
an incident such as this. Now hopefully this sort of incident won't happen very often
so that this wouldn't be a particularly onerous job for the Council to have to do, but I
would ask that this done all year round, including outside of the bathing season.
Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. The last speaker in this session.8 Councillor Joe Behan.

9 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Okay, Cathaoirleach, just a couple of items. First, I'm interested in what the Chief Executive said about the judicial review by the two 10 11 developers, and the fact that they have looked to vacate it for six months. Just to 12 remind members, the judicial review being taken by developers who are saying we 13 don't have enough provision for housing for our people and the planners and the planners centrally kind of more or less said no, we do, even though we all know we 14 15 don't. However, the Chief Executive got the support of the majority of members here on the last occasion to defend our view which is not exactly the same as her 16 17 view. However, I had heard recently that the former Chief Executive, Frank Curran, 18 who is now the Chief Executive of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, has appealed on 19 behalf of the four Dublin authorities to the Supreme Court for some kind of a 20 statement from the Supreme Court as to whether it is us who have that power or the 21 Chief Executives. And could that be one of the reasons why that particular case has 22 been put off for six months? If the Chief Executive knows I would certainly 23 welcome her clarification on that.

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25 Secondly, I am very interested in the discussion about Greystones. I am not a 26 representative of Greystones but when I was canvassing in Greystones I was 27 certainly hit up by a number of people who said that the entire Charlesland Road, if 28 you like, with all the Charlesland roundabouts, the fact that those grass verges were 29 not cut practically at all during the entire growing season, I thought it was a 30 deliberate policy by somebody somewhere in environment or among the members to 31 just let the stuff grow, you know. I would just like clarification, is that the reason 32 why the grass was never cut or is it because, as has been said here today, there's a 33 resource problem? Because the approach to Greystones is absolutely appalling, all

this overgrowth all along the main road in and out of Greystones and on the roundabouts. So I would certainly be interested on that.

- On that point also, seating was placed on the Main Street in Greystones, wooden seating during Covid. It is in quite a decrepit state now and residents who live in Greystones have said to me is that ever going to be removed or is it just there as a permanent feature or who is actually looking after that. So that is just on that point.
- 9 By the way, it is something we should be concerned about: If we can't attract staff 10 because our pay grades are not good enough and we're losing staff to the private 11 sector that's a matter that Government should be taking up. Because we, our people 12 are suffering if we can't get the staff employed to do all of the important work, 13 whether it is technical, non-technical, general or operative or whatever. I think it is 14 something that we should look at sending in a motion to whatever new government 15 is formed that that be addressed.
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17 I want to thank Michael Nicholson, the director for the social aspect of housing, for 18 his quick response for a particular client who is very vulnerable, constituent who is 19 very vulnerable, a tenant of ours, whose heating failed just around Christmastime. 20 Okay. Just to flag this for members. He's in a new council estate and they have the 21 new air to water heating systems. The system broke down. I think the system broke 22 down because some of these systems don't work if the temperature drops below 10 or 23 11 degrees. And then it was almost impossible to get somebody out to fix it. Now, 24 what the Council have done in the meantime, and again thanks to Michael 25 Nicholson, they have provided the tenant with heaters and so on and hopefully it has 26 been fixed by now. But I just want to flag that with all this talk about air to water 27 heaters there is a problem I think when you drop below a certain level of heat, the 28 system doesn't work, and we're putting them in all over the place because somebody 29 told us we have to. I think it's something we should watch.

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Could I just ask finally on the M11, N11 and the bus corridor, the report hasn't changed from the last meeting. It seems that the officials here in Wicklow County Council, despite the fact that the Greens are gone out of Government, it appears that the officials are still proceeding to plan to close the main, all of the roads in the Bray, Kilmacanogue area. There's been no change of policy in that, which means it won't
be the Greens we'll be blaming anymore, it'll be the new Government or our staff.
Could I ask for comment from the Chief Executive: Has the changeover or the
arrival of a new Government going to change the position of the Council with regard
to those that crazy idea to put bus corridors on hard shoulders along the N11?
Because that's what's causing the problem.

8 And the last point, we got a blizzard of emails from the planning section in the last 9 week about variations to the County Development Plan and about the Rathnew 10 Wicklow plan and about the Bray Municipal District plan and so on. And fair 11 enough, I think we have a role when we're amending the county plan, but I want to 12 propose here that the decisions in relation to the adoption of the local area plans 13 should be made by the local area councillors. So the Greystones MD would make 14 the decisions on the Greystones plan, et cetera, et cetera. This is something that 15 came up with the Bray MD plan was being discussed back in 2017, and I was told I 16 was too late making that proposal, that the Bray councillors should decide the Bray 17 one. So now I'm making it here today. We all know our own areas intimately. We 18 are familiar with what are the issues. We are familiar with what we need in our 19 areas. And from my point of view before this process gets too far down the line I 20 want to propose that the policy of this Council should be that the MDs, the municipal 21 districts, decide on the local area plans, and I certainly welcome support for that 22 proposal. Thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Chief Executive, that's three there now.

MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Councillor Kennedy, I certainly have no issue writing to Niall Gleeson in Uisce Eireann about the issue in Aughrim. If you want to send me a couple of lines in an email I will do that. I will ask Theresa to talk to you about the Rathdrum community land there in a moment.

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Councillor Scott, yes, very concerning the overflow from the wastewater treatment
plant into Greystones. My understanding is the bathing ban was lifted on foot of
HSE advice. As you know, we sample water in the bathing season. I will ask maybe
Theresa to comment on that just in the general policy area. We can certainly look at
it, it has resource implications in terms of sampling. When you take a sample it
takes a day or two for the results to come back, it is not instantaneous, as you know,

1 unfortunately. I share your concern about it. I really do. There's an awful lot more 2 people swimming in the sea post Covid and there is certainly a very active group in 3 Greystones. I have bumped into many of them early morning time there. So we can 4 look at that and come back to you on it. 5 6 Councillor Behan, the Supreme Court and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown case, my 7 understanding on the matter is that they are appealing the decision that was made in 8 their own case, where the other Dublin authorities are joined in it. I can't say 9 whether that has influenced the plaintiffs in our own particular judicial review. 10 Certainly I know the hearing of the JRs up to now, they were stalled previously 11 because of a Supreme Court case in Meath. So it may follow that they decided for a 12 number of reasons to seek to vacate the date until the summertime. 13 14 I will ask Marc to come in on the seating in Greystones on that. 15 16 Leonora might come in on clarifying on the LAPs and the position on that. 17 18 The N11/M11 bus corridor. I am hoping with the new Government when it is 19 formed that it will have a far more positive outcome for Wicklow in terms of how we 20 deal with the N11 and how we provide a bus corridor and ancillary routes for the 21 people of Wicklow that have to navigate that road. But as things stand, what we 22 have prepared to date stands but I do expect there to be a renewed emphasis with the 23 new Government on national infrastructure, including the road network. So I might 24 go to Theresa first both on Rathdrum and then on the bathing water piece, please 25 MS O'BRIEN: First on Rathdrum, the preliminary design was completed. There 26 was a lot of interaction -- there's a lot of big sporting organisations in the Rathdrum 27 area, so there was a lot of interaction with those. It's done. And we're hoping to 28 present it at the next Arklow MD meeting which I think is scheduled for the 12th 29 February. So that's that. 30 31 With regard to the bathing water, the sampling only takes place during the normal 32 bathing season which is mid-May until September. The prohibition was issued there 33 a few weeks ago based on the pumping station being out of action rather than a 34 failure of the water test sample results. The HSE does the water sample test results,

1 or the testing for us, so we certainly can contact them about seeing doing one for the 2 moment. Obviously testing in the winter brings its own complications. We will 3 contact them to see if they will do a test now just to see. It takes two to five days for 4 the test results to come back depending on the different things they're testing for. 5 MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Councillor Behan, because the Wicklow 6 and Rathnew plan is being done also as a variation of the County Development Plan 7 it has to come to the full Council. So that's why it's not going to the individual 8 municipal districts. 9 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: But are all the new plans -- are the new LAPs just going 10 to go to the municipal districts for decision is what I am asking? 11 MS EARLS: No. Because they're linked to the variation of the County 12 Development Plan. What we are doing is, in tandem with the LAP is that we are 13 putting the LAP into the County Development Plan, the maps, the text, so that's why 14 they're linked that way. I will send a note to all the members just setting out the 15 relevant piece of legislation for you, so you are clear on it. 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. There's a number of speakers so I will let you 17 come back in, Joe, later on. I want to get through. Marc, do you want to come in 18 there? 19 MR DEVEREUX: On the two issues in Greystones. The Charlesland Dual 20 Carriageway, we're looking at a sponsorship-type arrangement. Yes, there is a 21 resource issue but when there's a resource issue we prioritise safety works. So 22 sometimes we do works along the junctions rather than the long stretches, and we try 23 and balance biodiversity. I am looking at a programme for the Charlesland Dual 24 Carriage to wrap it up into one public realm-type project. It is not the end of the 25 world, and we do take on board your concerns. 26 27 In relation to Greystones Main Street, there's a project that has been suggested by the 28 town team which I will be bringing to the district in the coming months to look at the 29 Main Street. The intervention that's there at the moment on those seats were we 30 thought a temporary intervention but when we go looking for funding the response 31 is, but you have got a good intervention already. We are a victim of our own success 32 in having brought in that intervention, where we brought in the seats and the 33 planters, in that the likes of the NTA all view that as a good intervention and they're 34 happy with it, they're not willing to give us any more money to make it permanent.

1	So we're looking at public realm-type project, and the town team have suggest a type
2	of project based on heritage rather than on other issues, where you would have traffic
3	calming, et cetera, but we're going to go at it from a heritage point of. View and I
4	will bring that to the district for discussion in the next couple of weeks.
5	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Marc. I know a number of you were good
6	enough to switch off your lights a few moments ago but I have a list of the order that
7	you were originally in, if you think your light is flashing and I'm ignoring you, I am
8	not. Councillor Bourke you had your light on there.
9	COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Very briefly, Cathaoirleach. I just noticed that there's
10	37 people on the waiting list for housing in Avoca and we are making progress with
11	Irish Water. They have commenced construction of the Avoca wastewater treatment
12	plant, and I was going to ask the manager to consider the feasibility of designing a
13	scheme for those people in Avoca, for the 37 people that are on the waiting list.
14	Could that be considered in the short-term, in the near future?
15	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Peter Stapleton.
16	COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. At the budget meeting
17	of the Council in November I put forward a motion that the Council present to the
18	members a list of agreed footpaths that require replacement around the county, so
19	just putting an ask to the directors of where that list sits, who took responsibility for
20	that and could we get an update please.
21	
22	Then I also recently attended a meeting in Shillelagh with a community group who
23	felt quite in the dark as to the progress of the Arklow-Shillelagh Greenway and the
24	only feedback I could give them is that which is in the Chief Executive report, that a
25	phase 2 options is being assessed by TII. So I am just wondering does the Council
26	have any indication from TII of when that review will be completed, and what
27	timelines kind of look like thereafter, that would be really helpful.
28	
29	And then it's on public lighting, which I know we're discussing later, but just asking
30	could it be put into the Chief Executive's Report the number of lights that are fixed in
31	each MD during that period, because it's all well and good having the very detailed
32	information of the lights that are broken which we know all too well but if we could
33	see actually those are being fixed it would also be helpful.
34	

1	And then just on Councillor Scott's discussion around the bathing water sampling, I
2	am not sure if I missed it but if it was her suggestion that we sample year-round it is
3	just something I would absolutely support. It's clear that the bathing season for our
4	local populations now is year-round, so if we could extend it to that, that would be
5	definitely very welcome. Thank you.
6	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Shane Langrell.
7	COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to commend
8	the Council for their work there throughout the week. Obviously as it snows it gets
9	hit the worst, Moneystown, Laragh and down towards Ashford. And the staff have
10	been amazing and put in an awful amount of hours. I suppose our district engineer
11	who has only really took up his role in October, William Halligan, I was on the
12	phone to him fairly constantly and yeah, really now kept the roads safe. Some
13	people, you know, they can't get around to everyone, but Roundwood National
14	School was closed Monday and Tuesday, and the Council staff got out on the
15	Tuesday and got the paths cleared and the playground and Moneystown School as
16	well. So I would like to commend the Council. Thank you, Councillor.
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. That is three sets, so I will hand it
18	over to you. We are getting through them.
19	MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Councillor Bourke, just to clarify, were
20	you asking for group water scheme for the 37?
21	COUNCILLOR BOURKE: No, housing.
22	MS O'GORMAN: Housing. Okay, Michael might come in on that in a moment.
23	
24	Councillor Stapleton, on the footpath replacement programme I will pass you over to
25	Brian in a moment just in terms of a proposal we have for consideration for the
26	members. On the Shillelagh Greenway and phase 2 options Joe might come in with
27	an update on that. Yeah, certainly we can include the number of lights fixed in the
28	CE report by district. We certainly can do that. I note your comments in relation to
29	bathing water sampling. I think we can take that away, the sampling, and maybe
30	have a look at it, in the environment, maybe bring it through SPC, and see what we
31	can do to improve our standard procedures there.
32	
33	And Councillor Langrell, thank you for your commentary on the really, really hard
34	work of the district staff during the bad weather period. I also want to thank

members of the community. Without our community, our rural community, I think a
lot of people would be really, really stuck. It is a great credit to the communities
how well they work together at helping each other out, and I think it is absolutely
fantastic. So just thanks on that.

6 Brian, you might just come in on footpath replacement.

7 MR GLEESON: Thanks, Chief Executive. Yeah, I have spoken to the Chief 8 Executive on this proposal, and I know the wording that you put forward, councillor, 9 was that we are looking for a full listing of footpaths throughout the whole of the county that require full reinstatement. Obviously that would require a detailed audit 10 11 done in each municipal district which would take a substantial amount of time, and, 12 as you know, the staff are already stretched so what we are proposing is that similar 13 to what we did last year when we allocated out half a million across the MDs, a 14 hundred thousand to each municipal district, we're proposing this week to allocate 15 200,000 to each of the MDs and then it is the responsibility of each municipal district 16 to look after their own area and identify the needs in that particular area. It makes 17 sense rather than taking months to prepare a report to do the same thing we said we 18 will shortcut that. I assume you're agreeable to that, Councillor? Yeah.

- 19 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Brilliant. Agreed.
- 20 MR GLEESON: Thank you.
- 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay.

22 MR LANE: I might answer the Avoca question. On the Avoca housing, we 23 currently have a housing delivery plan based on the Housing Plan 2022-26. We are 24 expecting with the new Government a new social housing programme and we will 25 look at Avoca in the context of that. However, it is a difficult site in particular, and 26 the resources at the moment are based in another priority. So in the very short-term, 27 no, I won't be in a position to do that in the very short-term however depending on 28 what is coming out there we will take a look at that and there will be a new plan next 29 year.

30

- Public lights, you might leave me that at 4:30 and then if I have an answer I will
 come back to you.
- 33

1 On the TII, if I got the question correctly, the Arklow-Shillelagh Agreement, the 2 proposals are progressing in accordance with the TII Project Management 3 Guidelines, and that's a detailed consultation and preparation plan which works out 4 greenways and roads in general. The purpose of phase 2, which is being done now, 5 is to identify a suitable LAP for options. This is almost complete, and we will be 6 furnishing it in the next couple of weeks. That was the question. 7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you, Joe. Councillor John Snell. 8 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I want to discuss in regards to the 9 weather that we had there, and we all read the headlines, we would have got the 10 phone calls, and you know our emergency services were put to the pin of their collar 11 in regards this, motorists and people not taking on board practical advice that was 12 given to them. And a number of years ago in this chambers I had suggested that in 13 the highlands of Scotland they actually a gated system which is a barrier similar to 14 what they have in Coillte land, and I honestly believe we should have a conversation 15 here within the various directions and senior management to seek to trial it first and 16 foremost on the Sally Gap Road. Sally Gap Road gets closed quite a lot, not just 17 when it's extreme snow but also other weathers. And it's worked in Scotland, and I 18 don't see why it can't work in the uplands area of Wicklow. And I would be 19 suggesting to trial it on the Sally Gap Road.

20

21 We know that there is residents who would be beyond the barriers, but the residents 22 within the area of the Sally Gap, the Wicklow Gap, the uplands area are all 23 intelligent people and all prepared for the weather, and indeed most of them are the 24 people who are going out and putting their own lives in jeopardy to get out at all 25 hours of the morning to take families from urban areas off the uplands area, and I 26 think it's getting to the stage now where we should be proactive and not be reacting 27 to stuff like this. So let's be proactive on this and have the conversation within the 28 local authority with the Civil Defence, An Garda Síochána, and the emergency 29 services to trial it on the Sally Gap. The Sally Gap Road. And I know the Irishman 30 Roy Keane who is somebody who a lot of us would look up in regards to his playing 31 career, what he has done for the country at a club level, and he would always say 32 why would you be thanking the postman for delivering letters and it is a bit like that. 33 Why do we come in here and thank you for doing your job or thank the Civil 34 Defence or emergency services? But I think on this occasion I think it's appropriate

to thank people for doing their job. It's nice to be nice. And in regards to people
putting their own lives in jeopardy. In regards gritting roads and that, in fact that
happens all the time once we drop below a certain temperature. So it is not just at
the most harshest of weather. Our staff are out all the time, weather-determined. So
I honestly think that, you know, it's right and proper that we commend the people
who are doing the works, but I would love if we could trial that.

7

8 One other thing just in regards to, we can put man on the moon, and I think it's 9 important that, you know, this lighting system that we have here, it is very unfair on 10 the Cathaoirleach or whoever is in the chair at the time to try and manage whose 11 light is on, whose light is off. If there's a number of lights on you have to turn off 12 lights to get proactive again. Can we not have a system on screen there where it 13 comes up on it? And then we're not putting the Cathaoirleach under pressure and 14 everyone within the chamber can see, well, Cathaoirleach brought in that councillor 15 because he was first on the list and he didn't bring in this councillor because he's 15th 16 on the list, rather than people nodding across to say am I ignored again or why is it. 17 So we should have a system there where we can see whose light is on and whose 18 light is off. In Dáil Eireann we have a system where it is a clock system, and you 19 can see how long the people are speaking for and again it cuts down the workload on 20 the Cathaoirleach. And I think that's just something that should be taken on board 21 here particularly when we're looking for openness and transparency. Thank you. 22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you for your concern.

23 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Very concerned.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I do have my own system where I do write them down
because when I started this job I did knock a few people off by accident. I am not
ignoring you; I am actually writing your name down so I can bring you in. I do
appreciate your concern. Councillor Miriam Murphy. I didn't forget you either,
Miriam.

COUNCILLOR MURPHY: I knew you wouldn't, Cathaoirleach. Thanks and
thanks for the report as well. I am just asking if it is going to be put in place in
Wicklow, it is about the National IPB Community Insurance Initiative, insurance for
Tidy Towns throughout the partnership, the Irish Public Bodies insurance and local
authorities. And you know we always paid our Tidy Towns in each of the districts
and country, and I know Arklow came up again in a report last year as well. I am

1 just wondering are we taking on this initiative and if so, will we send out letters to 2 our Tidy Towns in all our districts. I think it would be a brilliant initiative that 3 money that they are paying out for insurance can be put back into I suppose the 4 community work that they do and that is put into our community. That is one thing. 5 6 The second thing is on the footpath upgrade, to know it is greatly received, but I 7 would be conscious of that it is important that disability access and inclusion would 8 be included in them works because some of them are outdated and I suppose we need 9 to have consultation with Laura and our engineers on those improvements in each 10 district which is so important to people. 11 12 Also I just want to ask the CEO because of the increase of our (inaudible) traffic 13 report for Arklow, but have we ever contacted The Department of Transport for a 14 feasibility study for a second (inaudible) in Arklow. Arklow is going to be 15 (inaudible) in the next two or three years with increased housing and also we will 16 have new schools here at the Dublin side of Arklow which is going to increase 17 traffic, and it is a bottleneck, as it is already, and I am just wondering has the 18 Department (inaudible) from the County Council. Thank you. 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Patsy Glennon. 20 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. The first item I had down 21 was the Baltinglass RRDF but my colleague, Pat Mahon, has mentioned that already. 22 Thank you, Leonora, for your response in respect of it and congratulations on the 23 work done in the playground. 24 25 The second and third item was the Blessington gateway. That is very slow in 26 moving on. It's been promised since we were up in Dublin as part of the delegation 27 with it TII and it hasn't happened. It is scandalously slow. Likewise, the bus stop at 28 Hollywood and the traffic calming, while Part 8 has been passed nothing has 29 happened of any substance as of yet anyway. So I would ask the Chief Executive to 30 see if she can pursue those items with TII and get them moving. It must be three 31 years ago since we talked about buses not stopping at Hollywood Cross, if not 32 longer. 33

1 The next item I want to mention, and I am glad to see it, Leonora was over there for 2 the opening of it, we opened a new park in Blessington. I am wondering has the 3 Council given any consideration in respect to our staff in respect of same, be it a 4 warden of some description or whatever that could have a joint function in the town. 5 I think it needs to be looked at.

6

7 I finally say that there's great disappointment about the greenway being shot down by 8 An Bord Pleanála, and we appreciate planning procedures and all the rest of it, and 9 certainly there was some things in it that no one agreed with it, be it taking over the 10 three bridges or whatever, and we have all made various submissions on it, but 11 overall there is considerable disappointment about the refusal of it outright. And I do 12 know it wasn't based on any of the issues that were articulated as it was all based on 13 fauna, wildlife, et cetera, et cetera. So I do think it needs to be looked at and I am 14 wondering what the next step is in respect of same.

15

16 Finally, staffing in the Blessington municipal area. Again I join with my colleagues 17 in congratulating our senior engineer Pat Byrne and Dermot and all the outdoor staff 18 for the tremendous work they did do over the snowy difficult period on the road. 19 They did tremendous work. I wonder would the Chief Executive consider additional 20 staff for the office in Blessington. It is by far the biggest municipal district. It is 76 21 kilometres long, and in geographical terms I won't say it is half the county, but it is 22 about 40% of the county when you look at it on the map. And we could do with an 23 extra engineer. And I mentioned to Brian today, on the budget, they have got an 24 extra engineer in Wicklow which is considerably smaller in size, in geographical 25 terms, I accept population might be otherwise. But I wonder would the Chief 26 Executive look at those items for me.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Chief Executive.

MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Councillor Snell, very interesting the proposal around the Scottish model. I think we should put that through the roads SPC and see if they can look at it and learn from our neighbours in Scotland and best practice what they have done there. Because you're right, I mean I was absolutely flabbergasted by the texts that were going through with people, you know, visiting the mountains when it is snowy. As you said, the local people are well able and very sensible and don't do anything, you know, to put themselves at risk or anybody else

- at risk, but that can't be said for the general population unfortunately. Happy to do that.
- With regard to the system in here, we can look at it. I don't know if there is an option with the current system we have to put something on screen for you, but we can certainly look at it and see. I do know the Cathaoirleach is very diligent in how he notes down everybody that presses their button and loses nobody. But it is an imposition, it is difficult for people certainly.
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- 10 Councillor Murphy, in relation to the IPB insurance for our Tidy Towns. I suppose 11 the communication that went out is a little bit misleading in that it is a pilot scheme 12 that they are running in a number of local authorities areas. There wasn't an open 13 call for counties to apply to include their Tidy Towns in it. It's a very welcome pilot. 14 I do think if they can make it work, and they will, because Irish Public Bodies, as 15 you know, are our insurers and they're very keen to contribute to the community, and 16 those people which we serve. So we will come back to you when we get more detail, 17 if the pilot has been successful. But at the moment it is a pilot in a small number of 18 local authorities on that.
 - 19
 - 20 Certainly in terms of any footpath works, replacements, improvements, access for 21 people that have additional needs, disabilities are certainly considered and will be 22 considered in every district. It is not just a matter of individual districts. That's 23 something that we have to look at across the county.
 - 24

In relation to the link road, additional road for Arklow, it's yeah, very, very high on my own agenda because I do know the one bridge is not sustainable as Arklow starts to develop out. We're starting to look I suppose at land. We haven't made any direct approaches to Government as yesterday or to Government departments as yet for funding because we have to have a solid plan of what we want to do before any department will entertain an application. But it is certainly something that is to the forefront of our consideration for Arklow as it begins to grow.

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Councillor Glennon, in relation to the two issues with TII, I am certainly happy to
 raise them. I will write to the Chief Executive of TII on those. The park in

1 Blessington is a very welcome addition. I hear your commentary around staffing 2 and, you know, the need for additional staff. I would love to have additional staff in 3 all of our districts. We are very, very constrained as you know after going through 4 the budget process on what we can afford. We are going through, as I mentioned 5 earlier, workforce planning process which is looking at what our future needs, and I 6 to expect in that, as we work through that process with all the districts and the 7 different departments, that there will be a demand for more staff in each of our 8 districts and in a lot of service areas as the county continues to grow. I really want to 9 get a stage where, as I said, we housing maintenance being done centrally and 10 consistently across the county, where we have a parks overview, where our large 11 open spaces that we get through development are maintained and managed 12 appropriately by the county. At the moment it is all done kind of on an ad hoc basis 13 I suppose by districts, and they do great work, but it is not enough. It is taking 14 district staff away from what they should be doing. So as part of our workforce 15 planning exercise that will come to it. But then it is a matter of funding posts. We 16 only get a certain amount funded through central government as you know, through 17 different schemes, everything else is funded from our own resources, and that's Local 18 Property Tax and commercial rates. That's the only way we have to raise money. I 19 don't really want to revisit that right now with you.

20

21 The greenway application. Absolutely a very, very disappointing outcome from An 22 Bord Pleanála. I was quite surprised I have to say. I thought we had -- when the 23 additional information went in I thought we put in enough to get it across the line. 24 We were due to meet last week but in light of the weather warning we cancelled it. 25 So there is a meeting scheduled with the kind of steering group which includes the 26 town team, ESB, other stakeholders to see what do we do now and how do we move 27 forward. So I will keep the members updated on that. Thank you 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Councillor Caroline 29 Winstanley. 30 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just while we were 31 talking about the water testing, I just wanted to flag Bray in that. We have had some 32 issues recently on the North Beach with a lot of raw sewage on the beach,

particularly now that the new path is in it is really encouraging people to go and

34 swim there, which they didn't really swim there much before. I want to make sure

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1 that when people are thinking of no-swim notices that that is considered too because 2 we don't necessarily get no-swim notices there. Thank you. 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Peir Leonard. 4 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you. I just wanted to raise a motion that I put 5 through last September about the school buses, just to get an update on that. Because 6 we unfortunately are in a situation again where it is starting to re-occur that buses are 7 being cancelled and without any notice to parents. I know we had severe weather 8 there recently but there seems to be a difference in policies from different private 9 companies and Bus Eireann whether they run or not in certain circumstances, you know whether it is an orange warning or whatever. So we really need to figure that 10 11 out. And we need to really strengthen the communications around how parents are 12 informed. The presumption is that every -- when a bus is cancelled that every parent, 13 and the schools are open, that they have access to transport, which is not the case. 14 There's a lot of families that don't have -- and there's a lot of kids that have special 15 and additional needs that are on the buses as well and they are being stranded on the 16 side of the road waiting for a bus when their parents think they're get on the bus. It is 17 very stressful on the parents. I know we spoke about maybe getting the Department 18 of Education in here and I think that really needs to go back high on the agenda. 19 Like, even today the bus from Arklow to Wicklow was cancelled without any notice to parents or the school. The school had to go and approach the inspector to find out 20 21 was the bus running this afternoon and there is no weather warnings in place. 22 23 And then just in relation to what Councillor Miriam Murphy said about the 24 additional roads and bridge and access into Arklow. Just any future funding or any 25 road decisions obviously it would be important to discuss that with the members, that 26 they be part of any future plans for additional roads and where they are going to go. 27 28 Lastly I want to thank our manager Leonora Earls and our district staff, Alvena, 29 Avril and Damian, who did a fantastic job on the Abbey Lane project in Arklow. I 30 think it is a real success story where the funding, they put a business plan together 31 and got the funding to do the mediaeval site down there. It's going to be fantastic 32 amenity for the town regeneration in the summer. I encourage anybody to go down 33 and look at it. It is going to be great for the Arts and great for the local economy as 34 well. Thank you for that.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Dermot O'Brien. 2 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I was going to 3 second Councillor Behan's motion around the LAP. My head is here trying to 4 process, and I know one of the emails said the LAP and the variation processes are 5 separate processes but again I don't know what that means in the literal sense. But 6 what it sounds like then is that if Bray creates it's Local Area Plan then there are 24 7 members in this chamber who have the equal power to make decisions, to say yay or 8 nay to a plan even though they haven't been given a mandate to do that, they haven't 9 been involved in inputting, they haven't been co-architects. To me, Cathaoirleach, 10 we're in the world of democratic deficit if that's how we're going to proceed with 11 this. So I would be really fascinated to deep dive into that and have a conversation 12 about it. Because are we then telling our communities or our stakeholders that they 13 have to engage with 32 Elected Members in order to influence and express their democratic right to be involved in the construction of the Local Area Plan? I would 14 15 be really interested in a follow up on that.

16

In terms of the Chief Executive's Report, Cathaoirleach, just a couple of things. I am
interested in the Differential Rent Scheme, and I see that there is a change that new
people now who are coming in to the -- new tenants in Bray are going move onto the
Wicklow scheme, and I'd be interested to hear the rationale around that decision.
Again was that a CP, or was there pros and cons done about that and is that the plan
now, that ultimately eventually the preferred scheme for the county will be the
Wicklow scheme?

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25 And one more, Cathaoirleach, just in terms of when we look at the cost for relets and 26 that the Council can only recoup 11,000 per house even though the average cost is in 27 the mid-30,000s. I wonder is that something, again maybe this is notions, but with 28 new Government coming into play is that something we can keep our eye on in terms 29 of lobbying for the fact that if we can only recoup a third, again it ties our hands 30 behind our back in terms of the pace of getting relets done and really responding to 31 the need in a pace and at speed, and maybe it is something we can talk or write to the 32 Department of Housing when the time is right on that. Thank you very much. 33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Chief Executive.

MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Thank you, Caroline -- Deputy
 Winstanley, around water testing on the North Beach. We will certainly look at that.
 It may not be a designated beach for swimming as of yet, but we can certainly look
 at that as we look at bathing waters.

6 Councillor Leonard, in relation to school buses, as you know, it's outside of our 7 remit. We can certainly make representations and ask for the Department of 8 Education and Bus Éireann to come to the Council, but we have no role 9 unfortunately in scheduling, organising or informing the parents around the school 10 bus timetable but we can certainly make a representation on behalf of the members 11 to the Department and the ancillary partners on that. Absolutely any new road that 12 would be designed has to go through public and statutory consultation so that 13 certainly will happen as we progress with Arklow. And thank you for your 14 comments around the Abbey Lane project. It is absolutely fabulous. I didn't make 15 the opening of it directly, but I have been there. It is fabulous and it will be widely 16 used facility during the summer and throughout the year I would imagine.

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I might, Councillor O'Brien, get Leonora to come back in on the LAPs and just clarify on that. I suppose the underlying probably arrangement or agreement has been, in most things that have a local remit but are adopted at a Council level is that when a disposal is being done normally if the local members are in favour of said disposal the full body of the Council then approves, and I would expect that to follow with any of the local area plans. But Leonora might come back on that.

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25 In relation to the differential rent schemes, the two schemes that are in operation 26 have been the subject of commentary from the local government auditor for a 27 number of years and it is my understanding that for a number of years any new 28 allocations have all gone onto the county scheme regardless of where they were in 29 the county. Michael's team have been undertaking an exercise on foot of the 30 recommendation of the auditor to examine and look at both schemes and bring it 31 through the SPC and develop a new Differential Rent Scheme for the entire county 32 that will take account of the various differences that are between the two schemes 33 and try and make sure there's equity amongst all there.

1	So, Leonora, you might come in on the LAP.
2	MS EARLS: Yeah, thank you. So there's an associated variation to the LAP. So the
3	two of them are running concurrently, so that's why we were bringing the two of
4	them to the full Council because one impacts on the other as regards the LAP is
5	going to sit then into the County Development Plan through the variation in the event
6	that the members adopt both. So that's the reason why we have done it. As the Chief
7	Executive has mentioned, generally it is the local councillors for that district who
8	would take the lead on these things, and the other Elected Members would have
9	regard to the thoughts and wishes of the local district.
10	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Jason Mulhall.
11	COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just the first thing. The
12	Baltinglass RRDF that was brought up by Councillors Glennon and Mahon. Yeah, I
13	think there's a lot of complexities there, but I would urge that we push ahead and try
14	and complete that project as soon as possible. And in the same manner I'd kind of
15	request some urgency with respect to the Blessington RRDF as well. I am kind of
16	concerned that it stalled and will go the same way as Baltinglass.
17	
18	On the gritting, yeah, it's a thankless job with crazy hours, but to be fair to everybody
19	involved they do a fantastic job. But I would like to highlight a slight anomaly,
20	similar to Ballymount, in the village of Manor Kilbride where the gritting stops
21	within 500 metres of the village and results in the local school, church and the
22	community hall being pretty much inaccessible. So maybe there's an opportunity to
23	look at that plan. I am aware that the plan isn't strictly adhered to because there are
24	areas not on the plan that are being addressed but that's a different thing.
25	
26	On the footpath audit, as Councillor Stapleton brought up, I think the 200k is very
27	welcome for footpath repairs, but it would probably seem inefficient to address the
28	issues that are out there, particularly in the Baltinglass municipal district, and I am
29	just wondering is that going to be a recurring funding, next year as well, or is it again
30	just a once-off and we get a little bit done?
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32	I also welcome the suspension of standing orders for the public lighting scheme in
33	the county, and maybe just highlight that the Main Street in Blessington half of it has

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1 been without lights since early December. The main route through West Wicklow 2 down the N81. 3 4 And on the Newtown Park in Blessington developed in partnership with Cairn 5 Homes it is very welcome, but it is critically important that it is staffed and 6 maintained otherwise it will fall into disrepair in a short time. I think whilst there are 7 staffing needs it is something that needs to be looked at with a matter of urgency as 8 well. 9 On dog parks, I suppose just to remind Michael that we did suggest a site in the 10 11 Blessington at one stage, so maybe it could be considered. And there are also some 12 anomalies that have come to the fore as regards maintenance where maybe within the 13 Baltinglass MD in South Wicklow it meets with the Arklow MD, there's a bit of a 14 crossover there and responsibility of maintenance seems to be an issue. 15 16 The last piece then, yeah, one of the last things then is that over the last few years, 17 you know, communities across the country, including Blessington, have welcomed 18 Ukrainian citizens into our communities and locally in Blessington many of the 19 Ukrainian families have integrated fully into our community, volunteering with 20 groups like Tidy Towns and other community groups, working locally and attending 21 local schools, however a number of families, probably greater than 30, have last 22 week been issued with a notice of they will be leaving their current accommodation 23 at between now and some time on February 7th with 48-hours' notice and they don't 24 seem to have any input at all into where they will be moved to. Huge concerns 25 locally for these members of the community. Many of them are in school in 26 Blessington and the surrounding area and as recently as September have spent 27 hundreds of euros on school uniforms and tablets for secondary school. I don't think 28 Wicklow County Council has much, if any, input into this issue, it's for the 29 Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, but I wanted to 30 highlight the issue that's facing these people. And I haven't had one person locally in 31 Blessington who has welcomed this new situation. Everybody is very concerned 32 about it, and what will happen to people who fully integrated into our local 33 community. 34

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1 Councillor Glennon's suggestion for extra staff on the Baltinglass MD, I fully 2 support that. 3 4 I also welcome the IPB insurance scheme. I had a look at it, and I would have some 5 slight concerns about it in whether or not it will fully address the insurance needs of 6 Tidy Towns groups. There seems to be some pieces that were missing in there. 7 Thank you. 8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. 9 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Three quick 10 things. In relation to differential rent, for members who know I work in the area of 11 housing, Wicklow is operating two schemes. There's another 32 across the country 12 that makes it really -- the lack of equality on how they're being approached is a huge 13 issue. And Councillor O'Brien knows this all too well, but we're dealing with people 14 in the Shankill area who are on a different residential scheme there. It is crazy. I 15 would welcome any uniformity across the way on that. 16 17 Also in relation to the local area plans, and it is kind of similar to some of the issues 18 we faced in Bray. I absolutely supported the discussions of the local area plans at a 19 local level, I think that's where they should be done, but in terms of approving them I 20 do believe it should come to Wicklow County Council. There are border areas 21 between municipal districts where decision made by one municipal district may have 22 an impact on an adjoining municipal district. So I think they should still come here. 23 24 Finally the main point I want to raise, Cathaoirleach, is in relation to the out of hours 25 for homeless people. And this has come up in Bray Municipal District -- I cannot 26 actually name the amount of times it has come up. We have sent letters down as the 27 eight councillors to the housing department in Wicklow looking for a response on it. 28 The housing department do absolutely trojan work and I would never question that 29 and we're particularly lucky in Bray to have an amazing team there. Amazing work 30 was done over the cold weather initiative on it, but this remains outstanding. Outside 31 of hours we have no instruction. We have asked for a one-pager on numerous 32 occasions. We have stopped asking locally in our own district because obviously it 33 is managed from Wicklow County Council, and it is unfair on our own staff to keep 34 raising it with them. It came in an email over the cold-water initiative, which

1 was -- can I just commend Caroline for sending that correspondence around, because 2 out of hours, it was 9 o'clock at night, she was working obviously still on issues 3 locally, so she really needs to be commended for it. But we still have no response to 4 it. So I am getting calls from people who have nowhere to sleep at night outside of 5 hours as are other colleagues in this room, and we are still awaiting some guidance 6 on what to do with the individuals. Thank you, Cathaoirleach. 7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I have two more speakers. I am 8 going to propose a time extension to half 5 because I would like to complete the full 9 agenda today. So can I have a proposer? Councillor Caroline Winstanley. And a 10 seconder? Councillor Shane Langrell. Councillor Gerry O'Neill. 11 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, there's just three issues I 12 wanted to raise if I could. I want to compliment our staff there over the last couple 13 of weeks, Pat Byrne, the engineer and I think we only have seven full-time staff for the area. It was lucky enough that the weather out our way wasn't quite as bad as 14 15 you got this side, but they did a great job overall. Considering that we have 40% of 16 the roads in West Wicklow they did a great job. But again, maybe it is worth 17 considering sometime, I see this in Nebraska, in O'Neill City, where we're twinned, 18 Blessington is twinned with that city in Nebraska, and it is a great area where they 19 have groups within the area with the equipment that when they really get bad 20 weather that locally, with local crews, that would only be used at a time of need to 21 get out and do the works. And you know we're just hoping all the time we don't 22 really get the weather of 2018 again because it is a huge workload for seven people. 23 But well done to the staff at the moment. 24

25 The second issue there I wanted to mention was the greenway. Since An Bord 26 Pleanála came up with the rejection of the greenway I have noticed there has been 27 very little said about it. I disagree here with my colleague, Patsy Glennon there, 28 where he says there's a lot of regret and disappointment. I don't know where that's 29 coming from because the people of the immediate area, the 14 businesses in 30 Blessington, they would have been wiped out if the greenway plan as it was had 31 went ahead. This was to stop, get rid of parking and have a pedestrianised area right 32 along the Main Street and around the Kilbride Road both sides. So I don't think any 33 of those people are disappointed. I think in actual fact they're delighted that it didn't 34 go ahead in this process. I also think the people of Ballymount are delighted it didn't

1 go ahead in its present form. And I believe that as a councillor that got over 80% of 2 the vote in the Ballymount area in the last couple of elections I think I can very well 3 speak on behalf of the people there. So I don't really know where the disappointment 4 is. Also the issue of the lights on the bridges, you know there's no one in the area 5 that wants any of this. The people in the area do want a greenway, they do want a 6 greenway, and I would be a big supporter of that, and I have been a big supporter of 7 Part 8 which we moved there some years ago. But when it went from the Part 8 into 8 the direct application into An Bord Pleanála I certainly didn't agree with it, and I 9 won't agree with it again. If there's full consultation with the people -- I wasn't 10 consulted as elected rep, no one was in the area. This application went straight to An 11 Bord Pleanála, a crazy application. It would have wiped out, as I say, a lot of 12 businesses in Blessington. You know a removal of 9,000 trees in a little area. It was 13 all crazy. There wasn't a public toilet. A 42-kilometre route and not one public toilet 14 included in it. So you know we will go back to the drawing board, and I hope that 15 this wouldn't be appealed in this process. It is only going to cost the people more 16 money because I don't think it is a runner anyway.

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18 And the third one I wanted to raise was the evictions in West Wicklow. And I have 19 raised this before here. We have a huge housing problem there, but according to 20 your report we have 234 in the immediate area of Blessington who are awaiting on 21 homes. And to be straight about it, you know, we have an issue there in Kippure 22 Lodge which I raised 101 times here, where there's 65 houses being built by a 23 company, Quanta Capital, or maybe there's companies associated with them, there 24 are different names every day of the week, the same people who owned Avonree. 25 And I had four calls today alone on people in Avonree who are being evicted. And 26 these are mainly non-national. They are people being evicted from their houses to 27 make room for refugees, and that's what's happening in front of our eyes. Now we 28 can say our hands are tied and we can do nothing, but you know there's a fair few 29 councillors in here and they're connected to the powers that be, but we can't just put 30 up with this, where they brought up 35 houses and 30 now this week, that's 30 31 evictions in the last couple of weeks. I was talking to a lovely girl there, a nurse 32 there, a Filipino nurse, she had been paying 1,800 per month and she was told by the 33 landlord, you know, why would we leave you there when we can make between 34 9,000 and 11,000 a month with the refugee situation. And that's disgusting. It is

1 horrible. And it is mean. And it is being let happen. You know, I don't know what's 2 going to happen to this girl and her family you know. And I don't know what's going 3 to happen to the many people who are out, and it is causing huge pressure on us here 4 in Wicklow Council, the housing section here will tell you that I am ringing 5 them every day of the week here, with new people on the list, people being evicted. 6 And it is just not good enough for us to stand back and say and do nothing. It is just 7 not good enough. I know we don't have the power to stop this, but I believe this is 8 happening everywhere, where really people are throwing people who are paying the 9 rent out the door and just because they can get €73 per head per person per day of 10 refugees, you know, they can make more money, that's totally unacceptable. And 11 would like maybe that the Council or the Chief Executive maybe write to the 12 Minister, while we have a Minister in place, which will be very soon you know, to 13 see if we can do something about that? It's a crazy, horrible situation. It's only greed 14 of the highest degree. And thanks very much, Cathaoirleach. 15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I am going to keep going because we have only 16 one speaker. So, Councillor Cronin. 17 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thanks very much, Cathaoirleach. I won't delay any 18 longer, I know we are on a time constraint now. I just wanted to bring up an issue 19 that I raised with the NTA when they were in here a number of months ago in 20 relation to the expansion of the local link services. We have had huge improvements 21 over the past number of years with local link services, particularly in the West 22 Wicklow area who I represent but unfortunately there are still many villages that are 23 left out. I raised it with the NTA when they were here and I know a number of our 24 colleagues did too but unfortunately we haven't received any update, villages such as 25 Grange, Stratford and Hollywood, and Donard, are still left out on a number of 26 services. And as we said at the meeting when the NTA were here it would just be a 27 short alteration to services but unfortunately we haven't heard anything back. 28 29 Also on that topic, I also raised the expansion of the services on the 132. I was told 30 that day that we would have a new timetable in November. It's now into January; we 31 still have no timetable or update on the expansion of services. I know somebody 32 mentioned it back in July, a national representative had a statement out that we were 33 going to have an expansion of services in August. That never happened. Again I

34 was told in November that we'd have our expansion, and we still haven't received

any update on what's happened. It's our only bus service to Dublin south of
 Blessington and it services all the town and villages throughout the N81, so I would
 be grateful if you could look into that for us.

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5 The other issues have already been mentioned, but I would like to offer my support 6 in particular in relation to the additional staff in our district. Over the past week we 7 have seen the dedication and commitment from our outdoor staff in relation to the 8 cold weather. They have been out night and day trying to ensure our roads and 9 footpaths are staff. Obviously they can't get everywhere. They certainly had their 10 work cut out last week, and they done trojan work, that should be acknowledged, 11 under the guidance of our district engineer, Pat Byrne. But as Councillor Glennon 12 and Councillor Mulhall have said, we can certainly do with additional staff. Our 13 district is quite a long district, I suppose. It is 72 kilometres long, it is a huge area to 14 cover, it is mostly rural, and we really could do with the additional staff. Pat and his 15 team, and Dermot and his team in Tinahely, really are working as hard as they can 16 and trying to deliver as much as they can, but they certainly are under pressure with 17 staffing.

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19 And finally in relation to the greenway, just I heard your response there that you 20 would have a meeting next week, I was just wondering where do we go next or what 21 is the next step, or is there a next step or is that it shelved completely? And you 22 might update all the members. And just on that note, I appreciate that you are 23 meeting with a team next week, but us councillors didn't realise that that was 24 happening, we didn't realise there was anything going on in relation to the greenway 25 and I would be grateful if you could let the six councillors of the district know of any 26 developments or of any meetings going on just so when people contact us we know 27 what is happening. Thank you.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Chief Executive. Thank you, Councillor.

MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Very quickly. Councillor O'Brien, I didn't comment on the housing maintenance issue and the relets. It is a massive issue. It is a massive issue nationally. I last year wrote to the Minister directly on it and got additional funding. We weren't successful this year in getting additional funding. I have written again. But we are raising it at national level because 11 grand is

1	nothing. Each house, generally a deep retrofit is required and that is the position
2	mirrored across the country. We are trying to move on that together.
3	
4	Councillor Mulhall, on the Blessington RRDF, I appreciate your concerns around the
5	timing of it as well given the experience of Baltinglass, but I am absolutely
6	committed to getting both of them off the ground and going as soon as possible. In
7	relation to the gritting stopping short 500 metres, Joe might take a look at that and
8	come back to you directly. Your comments are noted with the footpath repairs and
9	the lights being out.
10	
11	A good comment I suppose around the housing maintenance responses especially
12	where it borders district areas and that's again why I want to centralise it, so we have
13	a consistency of approach to housing maintenance across the county.
14	
15	Yeah, the issue with the Ukrainian community in Blessington, that is very
16	disappointing to hear that, that they have been given notice to move. We don't have
17	any input into that at all unfortunately, but I will ask the integration team to liaise
18	with the contact group there and just see in terms of smoothing away what they can
19	do to help the people out there.
20	
21	Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy, in relation to the Differential Rent Scheme, yeah,
22	it is an absolutely bonkers scheme we operate, but I do think if we can work on our
23	own locally and then have regard to the other ones so that there is a level of
24	consistency. It is being looked at on a national level as well. The out of hours
25	service we will come back through the SPC directly as well on that because there's a
26	lot I suppose to be considered on that, and the scenario to date has not been
27	satisfactory at all. We need to look at that.
28	
29	Councillor O'Neill, I note your comments on the greenway, and you have been very
30	outspoken on it, and you know you are representing the views of your community.
31	In relation to Kippure, we did write to DESITY around the planning situation and the
32	fact that, you know, they really shouldn't be accommodating anybody in properties
33	that don't have planning. So that has been done but we will do it again when the new
34	Minister is in place.

Councillor Cronin, the local link, the NTA, we haven't received an update but there is a meeting of the Age Friendly Alliance in the coming weeks, so we be able to raise it locally to see if we can get update from the provider directly to you. On the greenway, that was the steering group that was overseeing the project, the meeting is 6 to see what do we do next, next steps, and we certainly will communicate with all members around that. Thank you.

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8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. We are now going to -- thank you, Chief Executive. 9 We're now going to the suspension of standing orders. Before I open it up, I am 10 going to sound rude here, I don't mean to. We don't need to hear every single light 11 that is not working because if we do, by the time we get out of here it probably won't 12 be working. I am just conscious that I have three more items on the agenda that I 13 want to get through. I do fully support this suspension of standing orders, but I am 14 mindful that we do have only an hour. I want to get through it as quickly as I can 15 while also giving it the service it deserves as well. Work with me. Councillor 16 Silvester Bourke.

17 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: I will be as brief as I can. I am very sorry that I have to 18 bring this motion forward here because it has come up many times before, but it has 19 come to a crisis point. I am getting a lot of complaints from the public, as are my 20 colleagues, and I am even getting it outside of the municipal district, from other 21 areas. So we are letting people down. We're failing our duty. We're collecting 22 property tax to do core functions. We need to do a lot better. I was actually in 23 Dublin over Christmas, I didn't see any lights out over Dublin, in the city centre, I 24 walked from Portobello to Vicar Street and back. I was wondering how come 25 Dublin can do it and we can't. It has gone dangerous now. Elderly people at night, 26 trying to get out at certain places. It is also a safety issue for people going about 27 their business. That's all I will say. I'm sure other members will have plenty to add 28 to that.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Shane Langrell.

30 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to second 31 the motion. I am here as the voice of the community of Ashford. I brought an issue 32 up with the lighting situation in Ashford Village where half the village was out of 33 lighting back in September, maybe October. And I suppose I put my concern 34 through to the Council and I received emails, the problem is now Ashford Village

1 has got worse. The entire village, so it was from Centra to the roundabout, now you 2 can get nearly out to Rathnew where we don't have a light working. There's one 3 there opposite Chester Beatty's I noticed last week, the one that is currently working 4 is flashing at the moment. It is going to go. When you're coming from Rathnew into 5 Ashford, the little concrete bollards is that what you want to call them to divert the 6 traffic, like it's dangerous. It's really dangerous. And I suppose it's the sheer volume 7 of lights that's not working in a community. And I am being inundated with emails 8 and calls, I received a couple of emails last week, and I actually didn't know what 9 way I was going to respond to them because I hadn't an answer. Like the community 10 of Ashford, if they didn't vote for me, they voted for my other five colleagues here, 11 and you're one of them, Cathaoirleach, they want answers. And I am not able to give 12 them an answer. As I say I am putting my concerns through. I am getting the email, 13 yeah, we'll get to it. It is not good enough. It is not good enough. So I suppose, 14 Chief Executive, I am asking you to intervene here. I want -- like these residents of 15 Ashford know about this meeting here today, and they've asked me to bring this up. 16 And if it is not tonight it is tomorrow. They want answers. I drove into Ashford 17 GAA ground for a meeting last week with Councillor Alvey, and when you're 18 coming into the village, you might say I'm going blind or something, like it was 19 trying to suss out where the damn entrance is into the GAA ground. This is serious. 20 There's going to be a child killed. We have children coming out of Ashford GAA 21 ground, training and what have you, you can't see a foot ahead of you. There was 22 elderly people wanted to go for a walk around Christmas they couldn't. So I am 23 asking the Chief Executive if you could please intervene on this and come back to 24 me where I can come back to the people of Ashford, of Ashford community, with an 25 answer, with a date, when these lights are going to be back working. Thank you very 26 much, Cathaoirleach.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. 28 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and I won't repeat 29 the points my colleagues have made. Really one of the reasons for supporting this 30 suspension of standing order, and this is my first time ever supporting the suspension 31 of a standing order and I didn't think it would be about public lighting to be honest 32 with you, there's no follow-through, there's no come back, there's no 33 communications. That's really the issue. I think people are reasonable and they 34 expect a certain amount of time to report something. But you can't tell people to log

1 on to Fix My Street or any of the other options now because it is actually just 2 embarrassing. They're sending you emails and they're sending back emails from 3 previously. And we are experiencing it in our own community and there's no 4 councillor here in the room who isn't those calls. So really what this is is an ask, 5 we're using a private contractor, there had to have been some sort of tender 6 procedure, there had to be terms and conditions within that. We're asking for them to 7 be enforced. The service is well below adequate. I think we raised it enough times 8 here in the chamber to allowing for a bedding in and settling in process. That period 9 has well passed now and there needs to be a level of action. Thank you, 10 Cathaoirleach.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Avril Cronin.

12 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thank you very much and thanks for taking this serious 13 issue today. In January 2024, 25th January 2024 there was a headline in the 14 Wicklow people: "Wicklow councillor calls for urgent action as villages are left in 15 darkness." And here we are today on the 13th January, a year later, we're still raising 16 the same issue over and over again. I brought this issue up in every MD meeting I'd 17 say for the past year. I have raised it at a number of full Council meetings. We're 18 getting absolutely nowhere. It really is at crisis point as Silvester Bourke has said. 19 Over the past number of weeks, thankfully due to the Christmas lights being lit up in 20 our towns our villages have actually been safe because people were able to walk 21 around thanks to the Christmas lights. They're after being taken down now and we're 22 left in darkness. If I didn't deliver and do my job in my day job I certainly wouldn't 23 still be there. And I can't understand how we have contractors contracted to do a job 24 and they're not delivering. And I know we have been told that they are working 25 through a backlog but we're not actually seeing any results so far. And I don't know 26 how long we're meant to wait but it certainly isn't good enough and I'm not prepared 27 to wait any longer and I think this is why we put this motion in today. It really is 28 gone beyond a joke, and it is actually embarrassing when people contact you and 29 you're telling them the same thing: I've reported it to the Council. We have that 30 Dead Sure app and to be honest I think when you log issues into it they seem to just 31 die itself because nothing seems to happen. So I really think it is time we take urgent 32 action on this. It is beyond a joke. It is a public safety matter.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

1 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thank you Cathaoirleach, just a couple of 2 additions. It is one of those scenarios where you're genuinely mortified. What is 3 interesting about public lighting as well is it is an area where we should feel that we 4 can empower the public to make their own reports, that there are systems in place for 5 them to be empowered to log issues. But now again we're there, if you say that you 6 will definitely find yourself mortified because it's meaningless. And I don't think 7 anyone wants to hear about how well we're doing in terms of national averages and 8 percentages. If my road has been dark for a period of time and it feels like nothing 9 has been done about it I am not really caring much about other people's roads. And 10 the last thing I would say, Cathaoirleach, and I really wonder is there a legal liability 11 scenario in the mix here whereby if an elderly person on a street where the fault has 12 been logged, nothing has been done for a period of time, they fall over on one of our 13 paths and injure themselves, is there a legal liability there for us? Or if my house 14 gets burgled and there happens to be no streetlights and therefore compromises the 15 passive safety of my gaff and someone sees an opportunity and takes it, is there a 16 legal liability somewhere in the mix? Because there's certainly judgment and we 17 want neither of those. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Peter Stapleton.

19 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: I absolutely echo the frustration and disappointment 20 of my colleagues throughout the chamber that it has gotten to this point that we have 21 to require suspension of standing orders. Just to add along with the anecdotal 22 frustration and the problem getting worse just to highlight the numbers speak to that 23 as well. In July just before a new contractor was appointed we had 369 lights out 24 throughout the county, now we have 617. And what has also been said by the 25 Council is it's not an issue in other counties. I know Councillor Cronin has talked 26 about going across the border into Kildare and there's lights being fixed within a day 27 or two. So I just ask what actually is the capacity to work through that backlog of 28 617 lights that are out in the county? How many do we plan on fixing each month? 29 And then actually just ask the straight-out question of has a single light been fixed in 30 the last three months in the Baltinglass MD?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin.

32 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. This is a serious

issue, especially in the Greystones areas and at our whole MD area as well. I have

had one issue that I raised at MD level a couple of times and it is a serious health and

1 safety issue in the area where it is and if we don't do something about it at this stage 2 with the constituent I feel like going and getting someone to fix it myself. Because it 3 is embarrassing making excuses that the Council will get to it, get to it, get to it. And 4 why are we here if we can't represent them properly? Thank you. 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Pat Kennedy. 6 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I won't go over what everyone 7 else has said. I am just wondering; how is this being measured and how are the jobs 8 being given to contractors? Because there's lights out in Aughrim for last three or 9 four months. They are out in Rathdrum where the people signed the petition seeking 10 to get them fixed. I am just wondering, who is responsible for the contractors and 11 how is the job assigned to the contractor? 12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor John Snell. 13 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. Like the previous speakers, 14 yes, we all have a list of lights that are not working or faulty. And look it, I am no 15 different than anyone else, I get the queries, get people requesting that the 16 Council -- there a misunderstanding that the Chief Executive of Wicklow County 17 Council is some way responsible for this, which she isn't, or the staff here. And this 18 is a company that is subcontracted in, and I accept that we're looking for a report 19 from them, but I would have preferred if instead of this suspension of standing orders 20 we had that company here to answer the questions. Because the questions I want 21 answered is not -- I know where the lights are that's not working in my area and I 22 know the ones that are not working for over 12 months, over a year, and so does 23 every other councillor. But I want to know, because we were given an update a 24 couple of months ago in regards to the previous contract that was gone, there was a 25 time delay in regards to three to four months in getting new contractors in, then they 26 suddenly discovered that it was under resourced in regards to the work, that the ESB 27 wouldn't allow certain qualified electricians tamper with the lights, so they needed 28 certain qualifications. So I want to know in that period of time that we were given 29 that information what has this company got in regard to recruitment of people who 30 are qualified to work on the lights? And unfortunately we won't get that answer 31 today. I doubt it very much. Because the people -- with all due respect the people at 32 that top table are not working for this company. Yes, they got a contract. And it is 33 the same all over the country, but I suspect because we were already in a default 34 mode because the previous company had us in a three- to four-month backlog

already before this company come in. So we're a half a year behind, yet we all have
samples of 12 months and more. I want the nitty-gritty, the details. Councillor
Stapleton has some details in regards to the amount of lights, but it is not the lights
that's not working, it's the people who can get the lights working. How many is
there? How is the recruitment going? Will they meet the objectives of what they
tendered for and what they achieved?

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8 And I think it as little bit unfair to come in here and ask this at this moment in time. 9 We should have been asking this question -- no disrespect, and I am not having a pop 10 at people having suspension of standing orders, but could that conversation not have 11 happened last week with the Chief Executive and her staff to get these people to have 12 the answers that you're looking for now and have them here in this chambers to give 13 the answers? Because we're sending out the relevant information to people which 14 we're saying all along it is not the Council, and yet we're in here harassing the top 15 table here to get answers of which they don't have.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, councillor --

17 COUNCILLOR SNELL: So it is more or less implying, Cathaoirleach, that the 18 people at the top table have the answers, it's your fault. It's not Wicklow County 19 Council's fault. I'm blue in the face telling people that. Yes, we are the frontline, 20 and we are the ones who will get asked the questions, but we have to be honest here. 21 So instead of this, can we have this company in here next month and give us the 22 relevant information, and the questions have been logged here by every councillor 23 who has spoken to date and give us the answers to that next month. And not put 24 people at the top table under pressure to answer stuff they don't have the knowledge 25 of. They don't work for that company.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just before I go to the next speak, no one is harassing anyone
27 up here.

28 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: We raised it a year ago. We haven't got answers. We're
 29 entitled to ask these questions.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, Avril. I am speaking. So no one is harassing anyone

- 31 up here. I don't think anyone on this table up here feels like they are being harassed.
- 32 But it has gone on. What I will say is I have spoken to Joe earlier and Joe a has
- 33 presentation for us. I would like to get to that. If you have any questions by all

1 means come in. But at least gets through the debate and get some answers and then 2 come back, okay? 3 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Would it not be better to have the presentation first? 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Let's get through the speakers first. 5 COUNCILLOR SNELL: That would be more sensible. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Jason Mulhall. 7 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. It is a little bit embarrassing 8 when people ask about it. You keep giving them the same answer month after 9 month. We just don't see any progress, or just a complete lack of progress. I 10 suppose, you know, are we even sure that the number of faults recorded is accurate? 11 Is there a hell of a lot more out there? And then maybe with the contractor that has 12 the contract, they have contracts in other counties, are other counties where that 13 contractor is in place facing similar issues to ourselves? Maybe we need to focus on 14 a solution now. How do we address this issue and move forward as soon as 15 possible? And maybe just in the monthly update, if we could just get some stats on 16 how many have been addressed. Just so that we can see some level of improvement 17 because at the moment it is just a black hole. Thank you. 18 CATHAOIRLEACH: I think that's already been asked as well. So the Chief 19 Executive will speak to that in a few moments. Councillor Murphy. There you go 20 now. 21 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Thank you. It's okay, Cathaoirleach, Councillor 22 Kennedy asked my question there. I was going to exactly ask what Councillor 23 Kennedy had said. Like I mean, who is responsible? What does the contract 24 between Wicklow County Council and the company involve? And as well, I mean 25 we're always trying to encourage people to go out walking for wellbeing and 26 everything else, people have actually stopped me to say that they wouldn't go out on 27 their own or even with two people anymore because of the light situation. Thank 28 you. 29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan, did you have your light on? 30 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I will wait for the presentation. 31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor Stapleton. Be brief because I want to get 32 to the presentation. 33 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Very briefly to say that I totally disagree with 34 Councillor John Snell, that even if public lighting is contracted out to a private

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1 company it is ultimately the responsibility of Wicklow County Council. And I don't 2 feel that any of the questions that have been put to the top table are disrespectful or 3 questions that they shouldn't expect. I am sure they have been asking the same 4 questions themselves over the last number of months. It is just a matter of us getting 5 information of what the plan is going forward to fix it. I know the top table aren't 6 putting out the lights themselves but as we know it does need to be addressed. 7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I am going to ask the Chief 8 Executive to come in here now.

9 MS O'GORMAN: Very briefly before I hand over to Joe and his team. It is not a 10 good situation we're in. Let me be very honest and straightforward in that. We had a 11 contractor withdraw from the market at no notice to us. The contractor we had in 12 place. So there was a period in time where there were no works being done at all. I 13 am not forgiving the work that wasn't done previously, but we had a period of time 14 where we had no contractor. And we then took on a contractor and there some issues 15 around skill set and whatever else. In the meantime the contractor has brought on 16 additional resources for Wicklow. I have been told that. And they are going to work 17 with us. There are a number of other counties that have similar issues, but Wicklow 18 have got additional resources where other counties may not have done. There are 19 also issues with where it's a lamp standard issue or a connection to the ESB. There's 20 two issues at play. Where it is a lamp standard issue where we can change out the 21 bulb to an LED that is okay. Where it is an issue where there is a problem with the 22 connection on the line it is a matter for ESB. Notwithstanding the recent weather 23 events and the storms the last couple of months the ESB are under significant 24 pressure themselves to address wide scale outages. So any routine maintenance 25 works has gone to the bottom of their list. Joe will go through it now with the team. 26 We have been working very, very closely with the contractor and with the ESB to 27 address those issues to make sure we have all the information that we need to 28 progress matters but there has been I suppose an unprecedented situation where we 29 had somebody walk away from a contract at no notice, and that put us in very 30 difficult position. Joe will go through it with the team.

MR LANE: Just on that, to start with, Ashford is an ESB issue. Before anything
comes regarding a negative ESB, we are working with them but at the moment their
priority is -- since Storm Darragh, which is now ten weeks ago, their priority has
been somewhere else.

1 2 Just two numbers. Since the people are saying, from the 12th December to the 10th 3 January there was 227 faults logged, and 210 faults repaired. So there's a lot of work 4 done. And then on a shorter level from the 1st January there were 90 faults logged 5 and 81 repaired. And that was why we were going to bring -- the presentation was 6 not a presentation as such, it was to go down through the --7 MS O'GORMAN: Dead Sure. 8 MR LANE: -- to go through Dead Sure and show how these are logged. But we are 9 very dependent -- that's our primary source of information. Kevin can give you a 10 quick overview of that. That can be provided at the local level. As we get that 11 information in its informing the contractor. We meet -- and this thing about 12 noncompliance. We meet with the contractor now on a two-weekly basis. We have 13 no trouble with the contractor. At the start they may not have been resourced. 14 They're now fully resourced to their contract and are working through it and working 15 through it on an easy win solution. They also appointed a project manager to 16 oversee public lights with us and have two electricians that work full-time. 17 18 The system of logging those information, monitoring it, is what we work off. And 19 again, if you wanted we will go through the Dead Sure app. I don't know if you want 20 to go through it? Some people are familiar with it. Kevin, you're on. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. 22 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Sorry, Cathaoirleach. I don't want to delay 23 the meeting by us going through it because we know the application. The problem is 24 what we can't find out is, and that's amazing that they have done those amount of 25 lights, but is that new ones or old ones? What we do with the ones that are sitting 26 there for ages? 27 MR LANE: Some of the age ones are not a simple to fix because we would have fixed them other than that. And particularly the Ashford one because it is one that 28 29 was mentioned. That's a network issue. So at the moment we are liaising with the 30 ESB, but it is a network issue. 31 MS O'GORMAN: I think maybe, members, what we will try and do for you is 32 separate out the ones that are ESB long-term network issues as opposed to a lamp 33 standard failure. Because, you know, one is going to take longer to fix and if there's 34 an understanding around what that is compared to the lamppost outside my house is

1 gone and the rest of the street is working fine, that is a different issue altogether, as 2 Joe said. So I don't know how readily available that is. 3 MR LANE: It is available, but even within that there are issues, there's cable fault 4 issues, there's other issues that will lead into (inaudible), actually down to traffic 5 management, to be required to fix it later on. So they're longer ones, there's a reason 6 why they are longer. 7 MS O'GORMAN: Even to break out that information for members. 8 MR LANE: Yeah. But we are working with the contractor on an easy win solution 9 to try to get those numbers down for everybody. Because even if we can get a 10 situation where most of them are getting done then we can deal with the most 11 difficult ones. But at the moment with the number we're at, we're at 4%, your 12 standard for public lights out is about 1.5 to 2% at any given time. So we will get 13 down to that 2%. That's why we're working with the contractor. But you will 14 always have a percentage, as we always had, out, and you will have those longer 15 ones which will be more difficult. 16 MS O'GORMAN: I think, members, if we can get you a break-down of those ones 17 that we know for sure are network issues and longer-term ones at least you can give 18 your constituents that information. And I accept where Joe is coming from in terms 19 of it's interlinked and intersections in terms of all these pieces, but we should be able 20 to pull from the data that we have those that we know could be six months before 21 they are fixed and tell you that. 22 MR LANE: And that's why we were going to show you Dead Sure, but if ye log into 23 it yourselves and come back next month, I can do it next month. But if we don't 24 have that information in one or two of the more higher profile -- we didn't have as 25 many lights out as people thought there was, and it was just, look, when the KLS 26 contractor was down there he fixed more. But there weren't as many logged in as we 27 thought there were. Dead Sure, if people just log in, you can do it yourself. That's 28 where they should be logged in. And that's what we're all depending, including the 29 contractor. We're all working off the same information. But if we don't know 30 they're out we can't work off that. 31 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am conscious of time, and I want to bring everyone in again, 32 but I am looking at my -- I wish the screen was up here by the way because you all 33 seem to want to come in. Five speakers want to come in. We have a proposal now

1 that we can have a quick presentation before the next meeting maybe, then that gives 2 Joe a bit of time to work on a bit more information. 3 MR LANE: Well, the presentation was only Dead Sure, and if people know it, are 4 familiar with it, I didn't want to delay. That's why I asked permission for the -- I 5 wasn't going to hijack the meeting on it. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. 7 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Chairman, maybe not to delay, I don't know anything about Dead Sure, it's the first I heard of it, can something be sent to us by email? 8 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: I was coming to that. 10 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: No, no, you're grand, Joe. I am going to be 11 really quick, because I think what the issue is for us, and I think the Chief Executive 12 hit on it, Joe, we're trying to get into a position where we can support you and your 13 team to do the work, but if we don't have the information then we're just banging on 14 about the same light, the same light, the same light. And if there is a fundamental 15 problem then we will start lobbying the ESB or someone else, do you know what I 16 mean, and put it to the right place. So I think we're at the stage now where -- or even 17 for a period of time, Cathaoirleach, while there's so many out that whatever 18 information we can get about the specific issues in our own areas then we can try and 19 get that information to the individuals involved or lobby the necessary person. 20 Sorry, Councillor Behan. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. We're going to send out the link to 22 Dead Sure so every councillor in the chamber has it. We're going to give the 23 Executive here a bit of breathing space to come to the next meeting with that 24 presentation, maybe before, half 1, I don't know how long it will take. But I think it 25 was important today that we voiced our concerns and voiced our frustration because 26 that's what has led us to this point now. Any other speakers? 27 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah. 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to go on the order of the screen. I would ask you 29 to be brief. I want to get through the agenda. Councillor Stapleton. 30 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you. Is there a date on when you think we will be back to the normalised level of around 2%, and just how you're planning to 31 32 do that? I appreciate you have 200 fixed but if there were 227 faults in the same 33 period that's not really cutting away at the deficit. And just on the Chief Executive's

Report, does the line where it just says "Submitted" are they faults that have been
 logged but haven't been got it?

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Scott.

4 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: I wasn't going to speak because I have raised this issue 5 here before and I am going to repeat it. There's a specific issue, I suspect it is the 6 same one Councillor Fenelon Gaskin referred to, where I am literally embarrassed 7 every time I get an email from this constituent. I met him canvassing last April, 8 April last year, and it is an issue with the ESB, it is a complex problem. We all 9 appreciate that. My question is, to the Executive: It's all very well having a 10 presentation about Dead Sure and that's fine, but for these complex issues which 11 aren't being addressed in a timely fashion, and this is April, long before Storm 12 Darragh, where is the path of communication to the ESB either from ourselves or 13 from the Executive to get instances like these resolved? Because I am not hearing 14 any solutions here today. And we will all be having the same conversation this time 15 next year and there will be another headline in the Wicklow Times and People. I say 16 this respectfully, I know this isn't directly the Director's issue, but we need to have a 17 path forward because we have been talking in circles around this I joined the 18 Council.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Tom Fortune.

20 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Just very quickly, Chair. Like at this stage we're 21 getting the same people on to us continually, and we are coming across as being, not 22 having a clue. So I think there needs to be a public communication about this out to 23 the public. Because we're going to keep getting the same calls, same calls. The fact 24 that the contractor takes on a contract and then can't deliver it, I mean that's a real, 25 real, real issue. Now the public doesn't understand that. It's the same people I see in 26 my area, they're on social media, they're making comments, and you can't even 27 answer them. So is really like you're going around with your hands in your pocket 28 saying I haven't a clue, I don't know what is going on. There needs to be a public 29 communication about this, inform the public exactly what is happening and if there 30 is a crisis, disaster right now tell the public.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor John Snell.

32 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach. Part of the presentation next 33 month still needs to have the people responsible here. So the company who won the 34 contract who are responsible for doing the works, somebody from that company

1 should be here to give the information that we didn't get today, which is their 2 employment status and how they are going in regards their recruitment. And 3 certainly the figures that we're given now would paint a different picture than what 4 we are all experiencing on the ground, such as 220 faults, 210 done, then in recent 5 times 90 reported, 81 repairs. Storm Darragh we know caused havoc in the first 6 week of December, we're into the second week of February (sic) where we did have 7 snow. But we're talking about lights that have been out for over a year, that's what 8 we're talking about. If they're in the 4%, which I hope they get down to 2%, there's 9 still no advantage to me, to the people in my community who are reporting lights 10 where elderly people are living and they're afraid, they're afraid. So I tell them, well, 11 you know, you have to allow for 2% because that's the national average, 2% of lights 12 will be out at all times, but it just happens to your light is going to be out for well 13 over a year. Like get the people who can answer the questions relevant to their 14 company in here next month because we're getting misinformation. Councillor 15 Stapleton mentioned over 600 cases, well, yeah, the Director has given different 16 figures. I just want someone who can answer the questions from the company. And 17 nobody here is employed by the company. Yes, they are responsible for the contract, 18 and I am sure that is operational from central government of which Fine Gael are still 19 holding the powers and nearly every Fine Gael representatives spoke on it. Let's get 20 representatives from the company, the relevant company.

CATHAOIRLEACH: I am not going to get personal. Let's keep going. Councillor
 Avril Cronin.

23 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thanks very much. It is quite amusing some of the 24 comments that are coming from councillors that are meant to be experienced in here. 25 They clearly don't know the process. That if we as a council hire contractors to carry 26 out a job it really is the Council's duty to ensure that they are carrying out the work 27 that they are getting paid to do. And I find it surprising that councillors that are here 28 so long in the chamber don't seem to understand that concept. I know they may have 29 different ways of carrying out their duties, they might rather hold a protest or 30 something, but our way of carrying out work and our duty is to raise it here in the 31 chamber.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Cronin, can I just say, I apologise for interrupting 33 you, we don't want to descend into infighting when we are trying to fix a problem. 34 COUNCILLOB CRONIN: Wall, that's why we reised the issue today.

34 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Well, that's why we raised the issue today.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: I	know	that
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COUNCILLOR CRONIN: And unfortunately the comments I think are pretty pathetic that come from other councillors when it is a serious issue.

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5 In relation to Dead Sure, one of the problems that we do have is you have an option 6 on the Dead Sure app that you can escalate the problem. You know, it gives 7 you -- time and time again you can keep escalating, but it doesn't revert back to when 8 it was actually first reported. I don't know is that something that the Council have 9 that information or do the company have that information? Like you can escalate a 10 problem there now, but it's already been escalated a week ago. But it doesn't say 11 when the original fault was logged. So is that something that you could maybe see 12 when the original fault was logged? Many of these issues are like complete roads, 13 for example, in Dunlavin, Milltown is completely out, one particular road, and 14 Kilcullen Street is completely out as well. So it is not exactly that we are all 15 complaining about individual lights outside particular houses or premises, a lot of 16 them are actually roads that are completely out. Thanks very much 17 CATHAOIRLEACH: My last speaker that I am going to take a Councillor Pat 18 Kennedy.

19 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just to point out, like, we do 20 have over 15 and a half thousand lights. We have 616 out. And we all want the light 21 fixed outside our gate, but we do have over 15,000 lights that are working. I will 22 come back to the question I asked earlier on. How does the contractor pick where he 23 goes to fix a light? Because there's some places where there's full estates out and 24 there are some places where there is a single light out. That was the question I asked 25 earlier on. Who liaises with the contractor, how do we know where he goes to fix 26 the light? Does he spend a month in Arklow and a week in Arklow, or does he spend 27 a month in Blessington and week in Rathdrum? How do we know where the 28 contractor goes? That's the question I asked.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you all for that input. What I am going to do now is
ask the Chief Executive to come in to finish off the debate and then I am going back
to the agenda and hopefully get through that is well. Chief Executive.

MS O'GORMAN: Okay. Thank you, members. Look, what I am committed to doing and what we will endeavour to do between now and the next meeting is get a break-down of those long-term issues for you by MD area. So where we know there

1 to be a particular problem with ESB that's going to take six months plus to fix let's 2 try and highlight those, those that we know and get that out to all the members. 3 Secondly, we will get a link out to Dead Sure to everybody so they know, so they 4 have it, and before the next Council meeting we will run a session with those 5 members if they want a session how to use Dead Sure. The query that Councillor 6 Cronin had about escalation, we can certainly take that and get an answer to you if 7 we can link it back to a particular date. Councillor Kennedy's question, how do they 8 decide. As Joe said, at the moment they're trying to work off quick wins, they're 9 trying to deal with the most simple problems first. There is constant liaison between 10 the roads section and the public lighting section in here and the contractor. As Joe 11 said, they're meeting formally every two weeks. They are resourced. They have 12 brought on staff. And the figures that Joe has given for the month of December and 13 January to date, they are performing based on what they have been given now. That 14 is accepting that there is a massive backlog and there are issues. That is accepted. 15 Serious, serious issues with long-term problems. So if you bear with me I will get 16 the information by MD to you on those more complex problems. We will talk to the 17 ESB in the meantime and see how we can address those more complex and see if we 18 can get some timelines on those. Some we may be able to get sometime lines on 19 quicker, others are going to be more complex, but I want to make sure we get 20 communication to all the members on where we stand by MD, what the day-to-day 21 issues are, as Joe says the contractor is doing their job. There has been a very slow 22 lead-in time, and we are where we are with that. It is the historical long-term issues 23 that we really need to get to the bottom of and get them sorted. So if you bear with 24 me in the next week or two I will come back to all the members by MD and 25 generally on what the situation is with each of you.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Quickly.

COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I want to thank the Chief Executive for taking on board
our concerns. Can I ask her to consider putting a large ad in the local papers, the
Wicklow People, the Bray People, the Wicklow Times, stating what is happening
about this issue so that everybody in the county knows, and obviously on our social
media pages, et cetera? I think it would be a great help to all of us if the Council
would actually indicate what the Chief Executive said, and I want to thank the Chief
Executive for what she has said.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: The Chief Executive just agreed to issue a press statement. 2 Okay. I am going to go on to item number 8 on the agenda: To note the circular 3 F.10/25 deadline for reporting of political donations by Elected Members. Copy 4 attached. Helen. 5 MS PURCELL: This is just to note that you have received this. The information has 6 been circulated to you by email and there's hard copies of some of the forms there for 7 you today. It's the annual disclosure of donations of expenditure; it's the disclosure 8 of donations and expenditure letter. The Circular F10/13 Political Donations, 9 Circular F1/2025, Reporting of Political Donations and the Elected Member 10 Guidelines, Circular F10/13. And those returns need to be made by January the 31st 11 and they need to be signed off by a peace commissioner or practising solicitor. 12 There's a number of different people who can sign those. All that information has 13 been circulated if you have any queries contact the ethics officer in relation to them. 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will take number 9: To note the Ethical Framework for 15 Local Government Service annual declaration form in accordance with Part 15 of the 16 Local Government Act, as amended. 17 MS PURCELL: Again an email has issued to all the Elected Members. There's a 18 cover letter in relation to the annual ethics declaration circular LG02/2024 in relation 19 to annual declarations as issued to you, and the 2025 circular will issue once 20 received. The Code of Conduct for Councillors Local Government Act 2001 Ethical 21 Framework for the Local Government Service and the actual form in English and 22 Irish, they have all issued by email and hard copies of the form are available to you 23 all there today. The closing date for that particular form is the 28th February and just 24 to say to all of the members and to remind you, it's a very important form; we require 25 it to be sent for transparency and governance purposes. It is published on the 26 website, Wicklow.i.e. and our auditor takes a keen interest in them as well. They 27 have to be back by 28th February and again if you have any queries please don't 28 hesitate to contact our ethics officer, Gavin O'Connor. 29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. And just to note that there are few 30 councillors here that are peace commissioners, I am sure they will be happy to assist 31 you with filling out the forms as well. 32 33 So, item number 10: Correspondence. Helen.

1 MS PURCELL: Just two items under correspondence. I want to note the circulation 2 of CPG minutes for the meeting of the 1st July, 2nd September, 7th October, 4th 3 October, and 11th November 2024. They have all been circulated by email. And 4 also then to remind the members that the Seanad General Election Papers are issuing 5 on the 15th January, and they must be returned by 11 am on the 30th January. I am 6 the authorised officer for Wicklow County Council. If you wish to complete your 7 paper with me just come up and make an appointment and we will fit everybody in. 8 Thanks very much. 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. We will go to Notice of Motions. Notice 10 of motion in the name of Councillor Winstanley, seconded by Councillor Mark 11 Barry. I notice Councillor Mark Barry is not here, so, Councillor Alvey, you are 12 going to second this. 13 MS PURCELL: And the notice of motion is: "That the Chief Executive write a 14 letter on behalf of the Elected Members firstly congratulating the new government 15 and then asking them as a matter of priority to enact the Occupied Territories Bill. 16 We want to ask for a commitment to justice and international law through the 17 enacting of this critical legislation by the new government." And that is a matter for 18 the members themselves. 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to speak? 20 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: I won't say much on this. We all watch the news. 21 We don't live in a bubble. I just want to say at this point, 15 councils have already 22 written and accepted a very similar motion, so there's definitely precedence there. 23 Both Mícheál Martin and Simon Harris both spoke positively about the bill during 24 the election, and I want to ensure that it is not forgotten. So I ask for your support. 25 Thank you. 26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dermot O'Brien. 27 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: I am not sure if I want to congratulate the 28 new government, Cathaoirleach, but beyond that in the motion I do want to support 29 the essence of the motion. And again for people to understand that the Occupied 30 Territories Bill is about prohibiting trade with settlements that are deemed illegal under international law. So if we as a country are going to honour and follow 31 32 international law then this is a no-brainer. If we believe in human rights then this is 33 woven into that. If we believe in the Geneva Convention then this bill should really

just fly through. But for some reason it hasn't. And I think that's why it's important

1 to bring a motion like this. I think it is very, very important that our country show 2 the world where we stand on issues like this. And it is, I mean it is fascinating that 3 we now find ourselves in a world where some of this stuff is off the table. And I 4 think that's very worrying, especially for future generations. So I think there's a 5 responsibility on our government to pass the Occupied Territories Bill and to stand 6 on the right side of history, Cathaoirleach, in this regard because the people who are 7 standing on the other side are not people that I want to be associated with. So I 8 respect the bringing of the motion and I very much support it. Thank you. 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Lourda Scott. 10 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yeah, thanks for bringing the motion. Like Councillor 11 O'Brien, I was going to make the same comment, we might wait to see who is in the 12 government before we congratulate them. It should have been passed before the last 13 government fell and unfortunately for some reason it wasn't. I support this. 14 Anything we can do as a council to push this through and support the Government in 15 putting through I would endorse. We had in our last council term a presentation 16 outside of the council chambers by North Wicklow Against Genocide, and I 17 remember very strongly that they presented all the members of the Council with little 18 stones with the names of the children that had been killed in the conflict that is going 19 on in Palestine at the moment. And I was just thinking as I read this motion, I dread 20 to think how many extra names and how many extra children have been killed since 21 then. The very least we can do as a nation is pass this bill. So I thank you for 22 bringing it, Councillor Winstanley. 23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we all agreed? 24 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: No, Cathaoirleach. Sorry, I want to call a vote on it. 25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to call a vote? Okay. 26 MS PURCELL: So the motion proposed by Councillor Winstanley, seconded by 27 Councillor Alvey: "That the Chief Executive write a letter on behalf of the Elected 28 Members firstly congratulating the new government and then asking them as a 29 matter of priority to enact the Occupied Territories Bill. We want to ask for a 30 commitment to justice and international law through the enacting of this critical 31 legislation by the new government."

32

33 If you are in favour of the motion please vote for and if you are opposed to the please34 vote against.

1	
2	Councillor Danny Alvey?
3	COUNCILLOR ALVEY: For.
4	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Mark Barry is not present. Councillor Joe Behan?
5	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Against.
6	MS PURCELL: Against. Councillor Sylvester Bourke is not present. Councillor
7	Melanie Corrigan is not present. Councillor Avril Cronin?
8	COUNCILLOR CRONIN: For.
9	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Erika Doyle is not present. Councillor Malachaí
10	Duddy?
11	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: For.
12	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Gail Dunne is not present. Councillor Louise
13	Fenelon Gaskin?
14	COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: For.
15	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Orla Finn is not present. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald
16	is not present. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy?
17	COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: For.
18	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Tom Fortune?
19	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: For.
20	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Patsy Glennon?
21	COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Abstain. Bad for government.
22	MS PURCELL: Abstain. Councillor Pat Kennedy?
23	COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: For.
24	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Shane Langrell?
25	COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: For.
26	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Peir Leonard?
27	COUNCILLOR LEONARD: For.
28	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Pat Mahon?
29	COUNCILLOR MAHON: For.
30	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Jason Mulhall?
31	COUNCILLOR MULHALL: For.
32	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Miriam Murphy?
33	COUNCILLOR MURPHY: For.
34	MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Ian Neary?

- 1 COUNCILLOR NEARY: For.
- 2 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Dermot O'Brien?
- 3 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: For.
- 4 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Paul O'Brien?
- 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: For.
- 6 MS PURCELL: Gerry O'Neill is not present. Councillor Warren O'Toole?
- 7 Councillor O'Toole: For.
- 8 MS PURCELL: For Councillor Graham Richmond?
- 9 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: For.
- 10 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Lourda Scott?
- 11 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: For.
- 12 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor John Snell?
- 13 COUNCILLOR SNELL: For.
- 14 MS PURCELL: For. Councillor Peter Stapleton
- 15 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Abstain.
- 16 MS PURCELL: Councillor Stephen Stokes is not present. Councillor Caroline
- 17 Winstanley?
- 18 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: For.
- 19 MS PURCELL: For. There are 20 for, one against, nine not present and two
- 20 abstaining, so the motion is carried.
- 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. Thank you all today for your cooperation
- 22 and we will see you all next month. Thank you.
- 23
- 24 (Meeting concluded at 5:18 pm.)

Α ability 37:13 able 15:9,10,12 35:15 36:1 49:33 63:3 64:11 65:20 72:19 77:18 about 8:30,31 12:9 13:27,33,34 14:14,29,32 15:13,23 16:9.19.33 18:12.14 19:3,4,7,27,28,30 20:26 21:31 22:15 23:21,26,27 25:33 26:23 31:27 32:24,31 33:27 36:28 37:13 38.10 25 39.9 26 40:9.10.25.27 41:1 42:1 47:31 48:31 49:7,11,22 51:31 52:5,17,23 53:12,21 above 12:33 26:19 27:11 28:13 absence 7:16 absolute 37:30 absolutely 6:16 17:9,17 23:5,26 24:18,21 31:9 38:33 44:3 45:3 49:31 51:21 54:11.14 57:18.28 62:5,22 65:18 66:19 abstaining 82:20 acceded 31:4 accept 22:2 23:22 49:25 67:18 72:18 acceptable 15:23 acceptance 10:18 12:2 accepted 77:14 79:22 accepting 11:7 77:14 access 48:7 50:20 52:13,24 accessed 31:13 accident 11:17 47:25 accidents 26.26 accommodating 62:32 accommodation 56:22 accompany 28:2,16 accordance 46:2 78.15 according 59:19 account 54:32 accounts 6:30 accurate 69:10 achieved 68:6 acknowledged 7:1 32:11 61:10 acquisitions 7:25 acronym 12:20 across 7:30 18:4 32:30 34:18 45:13 47:16 50:23 51:10,23 56:17 57:11,15 62:2,13 66:26 74:21 action 41.33 65:9.14.32 active 37:18,29 41:2 activities 11:29 12:16 activity 18:3 actual 28:3 58:33 78.21 actually 7:32 14:7.8.16 18:21,30 20:15,31 23:29 31:11 32:29.34 39:7 43:33 46:13 47:26 57:26 63:22 64:8

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