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

ON

MONDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> JULY 2024 AT 2:00 PM

STENOGRAPHER: Niamh Kelly-Leahy, RMR, MBIVR

Transcript Provided By D. O'Malley Stenography Ltd.

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1	Proceedings commenced on Monday, 1st July 2024 at 2:00 pm, as follows:
2	
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: So we are going to start the County Council meeting. Just
4	bear with us one second while we make sure we admit everyone. So I want to
5	welcome you all here to this, our first County Council meeting of this term. I want
6	to welcome in particular the new members again. I got to meet some of you on the
7	induction course last week, so you are more than welcome here today.
8	
9	So, Helen, roll call there, please.
10	MS PURCELL: I just want to welcome everybody to the chamber, and to the
11	members online, and press and the public. If anybody has any issues with their
12	technology, can you please contact me, and we will try and get it sorted as much as
13	we can. Can I everybody who is remote to keep their microphones off unless they
14	are speaking. Thanks very much.
15	
16	Councillor Danny Alvey?
17	COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.
18	MS PURCELL: Councillor Mark Barry?
19	COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.
20	MS PURCELL: Councillor Joe Behan? Councillor Sylvester Bourke?
21	COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.
22	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?
23	COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.
24	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Avril Cronin? Councillor Erika Doyle?
25	COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Here.
26	MS PURCELL: Councillor Malachaí Duddy? Councillor Gail Dunne?
27	I know Councillor Dunne was trying to join us remotely. Councillor Louise Fenelon
28	Gaskin?
29	COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Present.
30	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Orla Finn?
31	COUNCILLOR FINN: Here.
32	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?
33	COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.
34	MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy?

1 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Present. 2 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Tom Fortune? 3 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Present. 4 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Patsy Glennon? 5 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Present. MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Pat Kennedy? 6 7 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Present. 8 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Shane Langrell? 9 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Present. MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Peir Leonard? 10 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Present. 11 12 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Jason Mulhall? 13 COUNCILLOR MULHALL: Present. 14 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Miriam Murphy? Councillor Ian Neary? 15 COUNCILLOR NEARY: Here. MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Dermot O'Brien? 16 17 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Anseo. 18 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Paul O'Brien? 19 COUNCILLOR PAUL O'BRIEN: Present. MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Paul O'Brien? 20 21 COUNCILLOR PAUL O'BRIEN: Present. 22 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Gerry O'Neill? 23 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Present. 24 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Warren O'Toole? 25 COUNCILLOR O'TOOLE: Present. 26 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Graham Richardson? 27 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Present. 28 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Lourda Scott? 29 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Present. MS PURCELL: Councillor John Snell? 30 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Present. 31 32 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Peter Stapleton? 33 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Present. 34 MS PURCELL: Councillor Stephen Stokes?

- 1 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Present.
- 2 MS PURCELL: Councillor Edward Timmins?
- 3 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Here.
- 4 MS PURCELL: Thank you. Councillor Caroline Winstanley?
- 5 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Present.
- 6 MS PURCELL: Councillor Joe Behan?
- 7 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Present.
- 8 MS PURCELL: Councillor Avril Cronin?
- 9 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Present.
- 10 MS PURCELL: Councillor Malachaí Duddy? Councillor Gail Dunne? And,
- 11 Councillor Miriam Murphy? No. Thank you.
- 12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Votes of sympathy, please. Councillor Stephen
- 13 Stokes.
- 14 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Go raibh maith agat. It is not actually a vote of
- 15 sympathy. Firstly, congratulations to you and the other Councillors that attended the
- 16 launch of the Fleadh Cheoil. The Leinster Fleadh is going to be very exciting in
- July. I wish all the organisers well. But what I am really looking to mention is to
  congratulate Newcastle GAA --
- 19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor, we will stick with votes of sympathy.
- 20 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Okay.
- 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Because there's other people who want to come in.
- 22 COUNCILLOR STOKES: It is very brief.
- 23 CATHAOIRLEACH: This time.
- 24 COUNCILLOR STOKES: Just congratulate Newcastle on their very fine Division 4
- 25 League Final victory. Thank you.
- 26 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will stick to the vote of sympathy first.
- 27 Councillor Shane Langrell?
- 28 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Cathaoirleach, myself and my Fine Gael comrades
- 29 here would like to pass on our sympathy to Geoff Seymour. Geoff passed away
- 30 suddenly last week after a short illness, and he done trojan work for me, Andrew
- 31 Coyle, Shay Cullen, and since March drove me around the roads, canvassing in all
- 32 the rural areas. So yes, I would like to pass on my sympathy, please.
- 33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Do we have anyone else? Can I offer
- 34 my sincere condolences to the family of Garrett Farrelly. I think most of us would

1	have known Garrett throughout the years working in the newsroom in East Coast
2	Radio. So my sincere sympathy to Garrett's partner, his family, and I am sure his
3	East Coast family as well.
4	MS PURCELL: We extend our sympathies to the families of our former colleague,
5	Michael Kinsella, brother of our colleague Siobhán Jameson; our former colleague
6	Kevin Carroll, brother of our former colleagues Jacqui and Ashlynn Carroll; Adeline
7	Brophy, mother of our colleague Paul Brophy; Ger Byrne, brother of our colleague
8	Miles Byrne; Philomena Eanna Nolan, mother of our colleagues Tom Nolan and
9	Betty Kavanagh; Mary Heffernan, mother of our colleague Clive Heffernan; Nora
10	Ruane, mother of our colleague Ciara Ruane; and Orla McGrath, sister of our
11	colleague Sharon Foristell.
12	(Moment's silence.)
13	CATHAOIRLEACH: Before I go to the agenda, we see that it is slightly marked
14	wrong, just bear with us. Number 2 is missing. So we will just bring it back one.
15	
16	Just before we go on, I want to congratulate the Councillors that have been elected in
17	the respective MDs for the Cathaoirleach. So in Baltinglass we have Patsy Glennon;
18	in Bray we have Dermot O'Brien; Greystones, Tom Fortune; Wicklow, Gail Dunne;
19	and Arklow, Pat Kennedy. So my sincere congratulations to you all and I wish you
20	best of luck in your new roles for the coming term.
21	
22	We now have Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.
23	COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. And thank you
24	for the opportunity to come in before we start the meeting. I just want to take the
25	chance to wish Wicklow Pride the very best. They're holding the second ever Pride
26	Parade this weekend. I had the pleasure of attending the Pride Parade last year, the
27	first ever in the county, a really historic moment. I am sure many in this chamber are
28	aware of the recent actions by a number people in the Newtownmountkennedy area
29	that has led to the cancelling of one of the events, and this is extremely
30	disappointing. I suppose from my own opinion it highlights the need for Pride and
31	for the public expression that everybody has the right to be treated equally.
32	
33	I would also like to highlight the fact that recent objections are not reflective of the
34	whole community of Newtownmountkennedy; a location that has suffered from

1 significant negative reporting. It has covered from negative reporting recently. A 2 recent report on Twitter feeds indicated that 80% of all comments related to the area 3 actually originated from the United States, which is extremely worrying. I want to 4 commend the work of Newtown Welcomes and the work that they undertake there. 5 So I look forward to the Pride Parade on Saturday and walking in solidarity with the 6 community and wish them the very best of luck. Thank you. 7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I share those sentiments. Councillor 8 Melanie Corrigan. 9 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thanks for the 10 opportunity to come in. I just want to acknowledge and wish the best of luck to two 11 young women in County Wicklow that are representing the district of Bray, Wicklow 12 and Ireland. Daina Marie Moorehouse from Bray who also boxes for Enniskerry 13 Boxing Club. She will be representing Ireland in the Olympics in the boxing. And 14 also to Lara Gillespie, a cyclist from Enniskerry who will also be representing 15 Ireland in the velodrome events. And I just I want to acknowledge that and wish 16 them both very well. It is an amazing achievement and wonderful for women's sport 17 as well. Thank you. 18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. And I am sure you will express all 19 our best wishes to them on behalf of the entire Council. Councillor John Snell. 20 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I would like to join with you in 21 commending and just saying well done to the public representatives who've been 22 inducted into the chairs of their own municipal district councils. It is a great honour 23 for those people but as I pointed out at our AGM at Wicklow, we seem to have 24 dispensed with tradition, we seam have dispensed with certainly standards in public 25 office. It can be slipping. And while we don't want to cast a dark cloud over the 26 people who are elected - some people would say that's democracy - I'm four terms in 27 Wicklow County Council and it's always been the tradition that people who would 28 top the poll would indeed be the Cathaoirleach for the incoming year. Unfortunately 29 it seems that that didn't happen in two of our districts. It's a sad day for democracy,

is what I would say. And I think that, you know, at the end of the day, people still
will have their principles, their values, irrespective of what the groups in those
municipal districts would gang up and feel they are doing a just for themselves, but
they are not doing it for what the electorate wanted.

1	I want to commend the people who have the chain of office, wish them well for the
2	year ahead. Not all change is good. That is why I pointed out there is a board in the
3	town hall in Wicklow with 120 years of people's names on it. I certainly don't need
4	my name on the board to respect the 1,218 people that gave me a first preference
5	vote. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.
6	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Graham Richmond.
7	COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to recognise
8	the achievement Vickie Kinlan who is a member of the Wicklow Rugby Club and
9	resides in Rathnew, who has been selected to represent Ireland in the Olympics in the
10	seven a side rugby this year.
11	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I am sure you will pass on our congratulations
12	and best wishes as well. Councillor Peter Stapleton
13	COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: I would like to pass on my best wishes to Lucy
14	Mulhall, a Tinahely native, who is leading out the Irish Women's Seven team at the
15	Olympics.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: It is a great day for the county in sport. Thanks for sure.
17	Councillor Gerry O'Neill.
18	COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I just want to concur with my
19	colleague, Councillor Snell, as regards the method of electing the chairs of the
20	municipal district. I thought I was treated unfairly and cornered and bullied to a
21	certain extent. None of the other councillors spoke to me before the meeting about
22	this, which we usually would have the courtesy. We have been there ten year and
23	we've rotated the position. And I was due to take that position as chair, having not
24	only topped the poll. That could maybe be beside the point. But to rotate it, it's
25	broken the spirit I think of the area. And it would have been nice to get my chance
26	of chairing there for the 12 months.
27	
28	Not alone that, but there was a both the chair and the vice chair have been in the
29	past couple of years, and it looks as if I have been completely cornered, you know.
30	The chair was proposed by Avril, which is Patsy, and I wish him the best of look,
31	and then the vice chair was proposed by Edward Timmins, which would be Avril.
32	And Patsy's one was seconded by the independent candidate. So I just think it is
33	maybe something we could look at, that there should be more harmony in areas, and

1	maybe the CEO might have an input in to that, in ensuring that it is run smoothly,
2	and that people shouldn't be cornered like that, you know.
3	
4	We're all in it where we should be working together. That's the way I have looked at
5	it for the last ten year; that we should be able to work together, and by picking out
6	someone and skipping a position and pushing him or her back, it's not the right way
7	to do it. It's not a nice way to do it. Go raibh míle maith agat.
8	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. For the record, I want to congratulate
9	everyone that got elected. From my own point of view, in terms of fairness, whether
10	you're a poll-topper or came in on the tenth vote, I will be treating everyone equal in
11	this chamber. Congratulations to them all.
12	
13	We have a couple online there. Councillor Lourda Scott.
14	COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I just wanted to lend my name and
15	support to Aoife Flynn Kennedy. It is really sad that Pride had to postpone their
16	events. I fully support them. I was at the parade last year. It was a fantastic
17	occasion. I really encourage all the elected members to go and show their support
18	and support the wider community this Saturday. I just wanted to put that on the
19	record. Thank you.
20	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Edward Timmins, I think
21	you had your hand up, did you?
22	COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Yes, thanks, chairman. I wasn't going to contribute
23	here, but when I see false statements made I have to step in to correct them,
24	especially for new members who may not be aware of historic precedent.
25	
26	In 2014 the first time we ever had a municipal district in the west and southwest of
27	the county, Councillor Tony Cullen topped the poll, and the first chairman of the
28	district was the late Councillor Pat Doran. Okay. So the poll-topper didn't. In the
29	last Local Elections, after last Local Elections 2019, I actually topped the poll, and I
30	wasn't made chairman of the district. So just to correct that. Thank you.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Erika Doyle.
32	COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Much like Councillor
33	Timmins I would like to correct the record. In Bray there's never been a history of
34	electing - and the operative word here is "electing" - the poll-topper as the chair. In

fact, often times the poll-topper doesn't want to be chair. It is a simple election, and
 a simple majority wins. Thank you, chair.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We are having a little technical issue. So it is 4 hard to see who is coming up online. There's no -- sorry, Councillor Patsy Glennon. 5 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: I suppose Councillor Timmins has really said what I 6 was going to say. Obviously we all respect Gerry's great mandate that he got from 7 the people, but Councillor Timmins topped the poll the last occasion and I had the 8 pleasure of nominating Gerry as Cathaoirleach on the last occasion and Councillor 9 Timmins, as far as I recall, was the one who seconded him. So just to correct the 10 record, it is not true that the poll-topper gets the first crack of the whip. There's five 11 years, and I'm sure we can all work together towards resolving these issues.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell.

13 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yes, thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just to clarify the point. In 14 regards to East Wicklow, it has been the way for four terms. Unfortunately it didn't 15 proceed this time for whatever decision that the elected members decided. Yes, there 16 is five terms and there's six councillors, and unfortunately we have seen people being 17 side lined in the past, such as Councillor Mary Kavanagh, who was in there for eight 18 years and never got a term in the chair. And then in other districts, we do know that 19 people like Councillor Edward Timmins and Pat Doran were chairs of the County 20 Council. So it was always deemed that if they were going to become a chair of the 21 County Council that they would forego the chair in their own municipal district and 22 allow the other five councillors to have a year each. It is just unfortunate, but I am 23 speaking in regards to my own district, and, as I say, this is my fourth term, so 24 hopefully I'll be here to see out the 20 years, it may not be enjoyable in regards to 25 sitting, if people want to change and tamper with tradition. I am a traditionalist, so I 26 will stick with what I believe.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor O'Neill.

COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I don't want to dwell on this, but could I clearly say, I don't know whether they can't hear me or if there is a problem understanding my West Wicklow accent or whatever it is. I want to make it clear again, that I am not talking about topping the poll and bringing you all in with me. I topped the poll; my surplus brought you in and my -- but I'm not talking about that anyway. I'm talking about the rotation of the chair. And I have asked the five councillors last week, last Monday, what was the issue that we couldn't continue that.

1 Forget about me topping the poll. No issue there at all. Leave that to one side. I did 2 find out that in some parts of the country poll-toppers do automatically get the chair, 3 but, look, leave that. Forget about that bit altogether. I am just asking again why I 4 wasn't proposed for the chair. It's nothing to do with poll topping. Forget about that 5 bit. I am making that very clear. Forgot that bit. All I'm saying is why I wasn't. I 6 haven't had an answer why I was skipped. And I don't presume I will get an answer 7 here. I will get the same answer as I did, Cathaoirleach, last Monday, and that was 8 they looked at their shoes again. 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Can I move on, because we have the people's work to 10 do, and I don't think squabbling over chairs is the right way to go about it. Councillor Timmins. 11 12 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Sorry, again, just to answer Councillor O'Neill. I can't 13 let that go either. Last Monday we had a vote for the chairperson in year one, and 14 the vice chairperson in year one. We only dealt with year one. There's still four 15 more years to go. 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you for clarifying that. Can we move on? If everyone 17 is happy to move on? (Yes.) 18 19 So we will go to the agenda proper now, and we will go to: "Confirm and assign the minutes -- " Beg your pardon. Again my apologies. Suspension of standing orders. 20 21 We have a request in from Councillor Behan. 22 MS PURCELL: The Cathaoirleach is being advised by two females up here as to the 23 order. I apologise for that. It is a suspension of standing orders. It has been 24 proposed by Councillor Behan, seconded by Councillor Peir Leonard and supported 25 Councillor Tom Fortune. 26 27 "We propose the suspension of standing orders at the Council meeting on Monday to 28 discuss the following motion: That this Council requests the chief executive to 29 contact Taoiseach, Simon Harris TD and the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly 30 TD to seek Government support for Wicklow County Council to purchase 400 acres 31 of land at Old Fassaroe, Bray. Land is currently for sale and zoned for mixed use 32 development, including residential, education, recreation and employment, and has 33 the capacity to provide thousands of affordable, social and private homes as well as 34 many other essential facilities. It is also the original location for an extension of the

1	Green LUAS line and has the capacity to provide a park and ride facility which
2	would relieve some of the traffic delays on the N11 currently being experienced by
3	thousands of commuters from Greystones, Wicklow and Arklow Municipal Districts.
4	This Council believes that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for a publicly-led
5	initiative to design and develop the newest town in County Wicklow which has the
6	capacity to make life better for countless thousands of residents from all over County
7	Wicklow."
8	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Well, the wording speaks for itself, Cathaoirleach. If
9	people are generally in agreement with it we don't even have to have a discussion but
10	if we want to have a discussion now, then we have to do it at half past four.
11	CATHAOIRLEACH: I was going to say that.
12	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I want to formally propose that, Cathaoirleach.
13	CATHAOIRLEACH: It has been seconded. If everybody is in agreement we
14	discuss that at half four.
15	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I second it.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Leonard has seconded it in writing.
17	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: That is fine.
18	CATHAOIRLEACH: Any dissent? We will discuss it at half four. Okay we will go
19	to half four. Thank you.
20	
21	So now I can move onto the agenda proper, so I can.
22	
23	"To confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wicklow County
24	Council held on Monday, 13th May 2024." Obviously the copies have been
25	attached. So anyone that was here. Proposer, please. Councillor Leonard. Thank
26	you. So item number 2 on the agenda.
27	COUNCILLOR SNELL: Have you a seconder for the stenographer to pick up on?
28	CATHAOIRLEACH: I said Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.
29	COUNCILLOR SNELL: You didn't say it out loud.
30	CATHAOIRLEACH: I beg your pardon. I must get the microphone tested again.
31	COUNCILLOR SNELL: I didn't hear it. That girl didn't hear it either.
32	CATHAOIRLEACH: We have now anyway. Thank you. Okay.
33	

1	"To consider the disposal of 0.43 acres of land or thereabouts in the townland of
2	Rathdrum, County Wicklow, by way of 18-month lease for the period of 9th July
3	2024 to the 8th January 2026, and the right to pass and repass thereto, to Mr Noel
4	Jacob and Ms Helen Jacob, Jacob's Well, Rathdrum, County Wicklow (as per notice
5	previously circulated)." Proposer, Councillor Kennedy. Councillor Fitzgerald.
6	
7	Item number 3
8	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Can I declare a conflict of interest on that matter and
9	withdraw interest? Is that all right?
10	MS PURCELL: Which issue?
11	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Number 3.
12	MS PURCELL: Yes. If you want to leave the room and we will call you back in
13	when we are finished. Thank you. Sorry, Councillor Duddy, I am getting the
14	numbers mixed up. That was the one in Rathdrum that you have the conflict with?
15	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: That's right, yes.
16	MS PURCELL: In future, you need to advise us in advance and leave the meeting
17	before we go ahead.
18	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Should I leave now?
19	MS PURCELL: No, no, it is done.
20	CATHAOIRLEACH: It is done.
21	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: I beg your pardon.
22	CATHAOIRLEACH: Item number 3, which is down as number 4: "To consider the
23	disposal of 0.0139 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of Knockanrahan Lower,
24	County Wicklow, comprised in the Folio WW383L, 4 St Kevin's Terrace, Arklow,
25	County Wicklow, by transfer order to Ms Alice Breen (as legal personal
26	representative of John Breen, deceased) of 4 St Kevin's Terrace, Arklow, County
27	Wicklow, the person entitled to the freehold interest in the property (as per
28	previously circulated)."
29	
30	Proposed by Councillor Fitzgerald and seconded by Councillor Kennedy. All
31	agreed? (Agreed.)
32	
33	Number 4, which counts as number 5 on your agenda: "To consider disposal of
34	0.0412 hectares or thereabouts in the townland of Ballinglen comprised within part

1	of Folio WW4484 being the property known as Ballinglen, Tinahely, County
2	Wicklow by Deed of Transfer and Rectification to Mr Edward Walker as LPR of
3	Charles Walker (deceased) (as per notice previously circulated)." Councillor Jason
4	Mulhall, and seconded by Councillor Peter Stapleton. All agreed? (Agreed.)
5	
6	Okay. Number 5 on the agenda: "To consider and adopt the following resolution
7	and copy explanation document has been attached." You all got that.
8	MS PURCELL: I will read out the resolution.
9	
10	"That the chief executive has the express authorisation of the elected council within
11	the meaning of section 153(2) of the Local Act Government 2001, as amended, to act
12	in any action and/or other proceeding now in existence and/or in the future relating
13	to the exercise or performance of a local authority of a reserve function, including
14	but not limited to the exercise of reserved functions in the context of a development
15	plan. Such authorisation is given to all such acts, matters and things as the chief
16	executive considers necessary and/or appropriate. The chief executive shall inform
17	the elected members of any future action or other proceedings within the scope of
18	this resolution at the first monthly meeting of the elected members after any such
19	action or proceedings are served on the Council where practicable or, if not
20	practicable, at the next appropriate meeting thereafter."
21	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. I will open it up there. Councillor
22	Fortune.
23	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I apologise, CE, I sound like a broken record at this
24	stage. Obviously this is our official meeting, so I have to repeat my sentiment to
25	you.
26	
27	I am not in favour of this resolution. Basically handing over to the CE for now and
28	forever the response to any legal action taken by a third party with regard to our
29	reserved functions, I don't think as members we should be doing that. I don't see the
30	big issue with it. I think it's more a reaction from, what I believe is the County
31	Manager's Association, because there's a number of counties obviously on top of this
32	now. I think this is an opportunity for public representatives to have proper input,
33	because I'd like to get some examples of decisions that's been made in the past where

1 we were priorly explained, and I would also like to know how is it protecting the 2 powers that we already have. 3 4 The key role of public representatives is to represent the public and have oversight 5 and accountability in what happens in local government, and I don't believe this 6 happens properly. My views, as I have said earlier, are very well-known, they're in 7 the public domain. I think councillors have been treated absolutely disrespectfully 8 for a good number of years now, and it's growing at a pace of knots. Our powers are 9 being eroded, they are going back centrally, in a by-product I believe of the local 10 authority turning into an administration hub rather than drive stuff the way it needs 11 to be driven. 12 13 I cited this earlier, it's also part of the Planning Act our position, and so, it's very 14 important that we don't hand that kind of power away. 15 16 I have been looking for a file from this local authority since last August on a matter 17 and I was being told that I couldn't have it because of a Garda investigation. We 18 were never told about the Garda investigation, what was going on there. But that's 19 also not factually correct, because there's no court case going on and the file is a 20 public file and I am a public representative, and I should see that file if that file 21 exists. And we're now into June of 2024, so I am nearly a year, and I have sent in 22 correspondence and some of my correspondence has not even been responded to. 23 24 So to say that this is kind of watching out for the members, I don't accept and in the 25 context that my views expressed previously I think it is disingenuous to say that to 26 us. 27 28 We will all recall at the local area -- the County Development Plan last year there 29 was a big issue about zoning and dezoning, and there was an issue over the numbers 30 in the plan. The numbers were out of date and certain areas already had exceeded 31 the numbers that were going into the plan, and it was obvious that the plan would 32 need to be reviewed in some fashion. The end result of it is that we know there is a 33 court case going on at the moment falling out of that. And the members would have 34 expressed loads of things at that County Development Plan which would be a matter

of public record, as the public record is here today. And really and truly, you know,
I don't think the members are -- and then we're told that this is our -- it was our report
and our this and our that. I mean, you'll recall the County Development Plan. There
was various threats from various sections of Government, telling us if we didn't do
X, Y and Z this and that would happen, and the plan would be ignored and have to
be done differently and all that kind of stuff. So it might be our plan, but it is only
our plan under certain conditions and under certain direction.

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So I feel really passionately and strongly about this, and I am going to continue to
make this an issue once the man above spares me over the next five years. Because
the powers of councillors are being absolutely eroded, and for us as councillors to
nod the head back to the CE on this, just my personal view, I think is a massive
mistake. I may not get the support on my approach to this today, but I think in time I
will be proved correct. As true as night follows day, issues will come up in this
chamber as a direct result of this.

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For example, if you read the proposed solution, I won't read it all, you've read it, but it says, like, for example, "including but not limited to the exercise of reserved functions in the context of a development plan. Such authorisation is given to do all such acts, matters and things as the chief executive considers necessary and/or appropriate."

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23 Now, I think, as a basic manner, or manners to us, this has obviously been discussed 24 legally from the executive's point of view as a local authority, we as public 25 representatives, democratically elected by the public, have been given no legal 26 opinion. We should get proper legal opinion on this before any decision is made on 27 it. I think to approve this here today in this chamber on the 1st of July 2024 is a 28 massive, massive mistake, and I will not be supporting it and I hope I will get 29 enough people around the table to see the rationale from where I am coming from. 30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Joe Behan. 31 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Just to follow on from what 32 Councillor Fortune has said, I want to make a few points if I could.

1 Point number 1: I waited outside the door until the behind-closed-doors-briefing was 2 given by the chief executive to those members who decided to attend it. We are 3 elected by the people of this county to do their business in public. It is 4 unprecedented, in my experience, for a chief executive, first of all, to come up with a 5 wording of a motion and, secondly, to invite the publicly -- the elected members into 6 a private briefing to talk about the ifs, buts, and s and maybes about this resolution, 7 answer questions they may have and then roll it on into the public section of the 8 meeting. I am not saying that was the chief executive's intention but that is how I am 9 regarding it. This was a behind-the-closed-doors-briefing of elected members where 10 you are being asked, and I am speaking to all of the members, including you, 11 Cathaoirleach, you are being asked to give away forever a power that a previous 12 legislature in 2001 gave you, which is that you have the right as an elected member 13 representing the people of this county to be consulted if somebody takes a legal 14 action in court regarding a decision you have made under your powers as public 15 representatives.

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17 The simplest sample would be a development plan. It's one of the few areas where 18 we, as councillors, have the right to decide how the county is going to be developed. 19 As has happened in this county and in others, certain parties have decided to contest 20 parts of that development plan. And what basically chief executives are looking for 21 is for us to say to the chief executive, listen, we don't really want to know what the 22 problem is, we want you to take care of it. We trust you to take care of it. And you 23 can come back and tell us afterwards what happened, or you can tell us you're going 24 into court next week, but basically we want hands off. That's not the way I operate. 25 And I am quite sure that's not the way any of the 32 members what to operate.

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27 It is quite significant that in the case of some of the challenges that have been 28 made -- and I am not going to refer specifically to Wicklow, it's in relation to 29 development plan and zoning for housing, and whether zonings are sufficient to 30 provide the housing that are needed in the counties in which these development plans 31 were made. Every single one of the 32 of us knows that housing is the number one 32 issue facing our people. And in the case of the development plan, we were 33 constrained by Council officials, chief executive leading them, by the planning 34 regulator, by the Minister for the Environment or the Minister for Local

Government. Basically we were told we could only zone a certain amount of land, we have to dezone a certain amount of land because it was too much, despite our knowledge as local public representatives we were told there were certain things we could do.

6 So now we move on. It goes into court. We made a decision based on what we felt 7 was important as public reps within the constraints we were given. So a developer - for example, this is a for instance - comes into court and says, look, we 8 9 don't think there's enough land zoned for housing, just as we said around this table 10 when we did the development plan, well, what is the chief executive going to do? 11 The chief executive is going to say to the judge the members have given me the 12 authority to say this, I am saying the development plan is fine. Well, maybe the 13 development plan wasn't fine, but we were basically hamstrung in how we developed 14 it.

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16 So in that case I would think it is far safer for us to be consulted by the chief 17 executive and asked our opinion about how she should fight a case like this, because 18 times change, things move on, people's circumstances change, and our views may 19 change as well. But this motion is effectively a trap. A huge, monumental elephant 20 trap has been set for every public representative in this country who has to face this 21 motion. Because, as Councillor Fortune, rightly has said, it is not just about the 22 development plan, it is about everything else. So if we strike a rate at the budget, or 23 if we strike a rate for the property tax, and somebody challenges, we're going to say 24 to the chief executive today at half two or three o'clock, ah, look it, you go ahead, 25 you handle it, even though we might have a different view when that time would 26 come.

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So I am appealing to members, three weeks after you were picked by the people of this county, whether you were the top of the poll, the bottom of the poll, whether you got in on the first, second, third, or last count, you have been given a responsibility by the people of this county to represent them, their needs. Not the chief executive's needs. Their needs. As far as I am concerned, handing this power over here would basically be handing over the last little bit of power we have and function that we

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1 have left over our decisions. And I appeal to members, please don't do it. Please 2 vote against this motion. Thank you 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor John Snell. 4 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, look it, I think it is 5 unfortunate that it is on the agenda at all here today. And I understand time 6 constraints and I understand the chief executive's urgency, because, as you said, the 7 courts work at a different rate in regards to local authorities, but the reality is that 8 we've a new Council chamber here with 32 elected members sitting nine days in their 9 new role and this appears on the agenda. And I certainly haven't seen the legal 10 opinion that was given to us, and I would be seeking, through the chair here today, 11 that we get second legal opinion, and second legal opinion and third legal opinion. 12 And while the second legal opinion that the officials are looking at is probably 13 within your remit to go looking for, but what I am looking for is, we are represented 14 by two organisations, LAMA and AILG, and both have representatives of this 15 Council chambers here on their boards of directors. And while I have to accept that 16 it would be very unfair to me to point out here that some of the people sitting in this 17 chamber represent us on those boards, because I'm sure they haven't had an 18 opportunity to meet, but certainly when Vincent Blake was representing us at 19 LAMA, through protocol, any issues that was raised he was able to go to LAMA, 20 find out what their opinion on it was and come back here and relay it to us as 32 21 elected members. Through the AILG, through people like Joe Behan who represent 22 us on the AILG, he was able to go and come back and relay to all 32 members. We 23 have three members sitting in AILG, and we are in a unique position where the 24 current president of the AILG is a member of this Council chambers. And that's the 25 idea of those organisations. They represent all 949 publicly elected representatives. 26 And while none of us have the knowledge here now or have the information 27 available, that's what those groups are there for. I would urge Councillor Shane 28 Langrell, a representative on LAMA, to go to the LAMA organisation and to seek 29 the legal opinion that we need through that group. Sorry, Shane, I was just talking 30 about you. I didn't realise you were out of the chambers. 31 32 Just in regards to Councillor Langrell, I am urging you to LAMA and seek legal 33 opinion for this Council of 32 members in regards to this issue that is in front of us, 34 section 153 resolution.

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2	I am also asking Councillor Joe Behan, Councillor Gail Dunne, I am not sure who
3	the other elected members
4	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Kennedy.
5	COUNCILLOR SNELL: Councillor Pat Kennedy, and Councillor Avril Cronin. It
6	is vitally important that we have legal opinion for people who are looking after our
7	best interests. Vitally important. And while I will accept a second opinion and
8	also I'm looking for a copy of the legal that you have to hand, whether that come
9	through the chief executive's organisation or whether it's just legal opinion to us as a
10	local authority, but if we could have a copy of that. And if you want to seek a
11	second legal opinion as you insinuated prior to the meeting starting that you would
12	do.
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14	I trust our current chief executive wholeheartedly, I can say that to you sitting there,
15	but this is not about me, and it is not about you. I can trust all 32 councillors sitting
16	here. But the truth is that if we give up these powers, willingly give up these powers
17	t affects the next group of councillors. It affects the next chief executive that sits in
18	that chair. And while you might sit there in good faith and I sit here in good faith,
19	and we can get on and work together, we don't know who is going to sit in that chair
20	in time. We don't know who is going to sit in this chambers in time. Phil Hogan
21	eradicated the powers to public representative pre-2014, and councils have not
22	recovered from the powers that were taken from us at that time.
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24	So I would say, I won't be supporting this today. I think it's premature. I think it
25	should be taken off the clar, and I think it should be brought back here for next
26	month's meeting.
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28	I also would say to every member of a political party that is in Government, go and
29	get your own advice, because we spent two and a half years going through a County
30	Development Plan of which the Minister came back and said that there was four to
31	five sites that he didn't agree with, and he wanted them taken out of our County
32	Development Plan. We're now seeking that protection from the Ministers, from the
33	planning regulator, to say stick up for what we have agreed and what went through
34	this chamber for two and a half years. And you, as a public representative, will have

to do the same in time. You will have to go through another two and a half years of a County Development Plan. But don't give up the little powers that you have, irrespective of who you think you're pleasing. Because it's not about us. It's not about this chambers. It's about the next generation who will sit here. And don't eradicate their powers, because it certainly won't be worth their while becoming an 6 elected member until such time as the power is forced on you. That is what I would say. 8 9 I seek that legal opinion. It is a proposal that we get a second opinion through our 10 chief executive, we get a copy of the first legal opinion that you have to hand, and I am proposing that both a representative of LAMA and AILG come back to this 12 chamber, all 32, with legal opinion. Thanks, Cathaoirleach. COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I second that Cathaoirleach. 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. 15 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, for the 16 opportunity to speak on this. Can I just say that in the last five-year term I have been 17 invited into many, many sessions to discuss things that weren't as part of the Council 18 meeting, that were an agenda item that was on the Council meeting and the chief 19 executive or other officials gave us the opportunity to come in and to learn a little bit 20 more about it. So I think the insinuation that there was a private meeting about this item that was totally out of the ordinary is unfair, and I think it is plain to the meeting 22 and I think it is unnecessary. 23

24 I also spent the last five years having members in this chamber telling me what I 25 should and shouldn't do, and I hope that is being done in good faith and not being 26 done in a way to try and scare those of us who may be less experienced into making 27 a decision that those individuals want.

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29 I attended the session before this meeting. I very much appreciate the opportunity to 30 have had that and the opportunity to learn more. There was also a CPG meeting 31 earlier on today where the matter was discussed at that as well. There was never an 32 insinuation that we couldn't discuss this here, which is exactly what we are doing. 33 And I think it's really unfair to suggest that.

1 I will be supporting this. The chief executive has been very, very clear. The 2 legislation states the chief executive shall represent us and shall represent the 3 decisions we've made. A High Court judge has made a decision that he wants a 4 resolution that makes that same statement. The chief executive, in my view, is 5 protecting us by getting that resolution put in place, so that should a court case 6 appear, and a decision is made on it, that we don't have to follow the decision of 7 some other local authority because something has been made as a standing or as 8 precedent. We had the opportunity of hearing from some of our colleagues here who 9 have a legal background on it, earlier on as well, so I be supporting it and I do propose it, Cathaoirleach. And again, I would ask those in the chamber, I know 10 11 there's an election coming up, I respect that, but we have a lot of work to do here for 12 people and I really would appreciate if people would focus on that. Thank you 13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I am going to go online here. Councillor Edward 14 Timmins.

15 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Thanks, chairman. Yes, I unfortunately wasn't able to 16 attend the briefing that was on earlier, I wasn't in the chamber, so I have to start with 17 that qualification. And my general feeling on it was that this was foisted too quickly 18 on the members. I am thinking especially of the new members who are suddenly 19 asked to make a decision in a very, very short space of time. I completely appreciate 20 and recognise the difficult position the chief executive has been put in, and I fully 21 respect the move she's made to move this process on given the various court cases in 22 I think, it is, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council. But, however, my general kind of 23 feeling on these things is that when decisions are made quickly and people haven't 24 maybe had time to reflect and get the full picture, I appreciate there's been various 25 opinions given on that, but I just feel it is premature without us getting maybe some 26 other angles that we're not aware of. I have read documentation, I have read the Irish 27 Times article, et cetera. As I say, I haven't been privy to the briefing. Although I 28 haven't heard anything here this afternoon that gives me extra information that would 29 make me wiser in the decision. I just feel when you make decisions quickly they're 30 not as good as decisions that are made with reflection and full knowledge, so I 31 respect everyone's position here and it is not an easy matter to make a judgment on. 32 But I would suggest that (inaudible). Thank you.

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

1 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks very much, Cathaoirleach. I don't 2 want to repeat a lot of the stuff that's been said by colleagues, and nor what I said 3 earlier on, but I think moving a little bit on what Councillor Timmins just said, that 4 when a decision has to be made there's things to consider, and we are the people who 5 must make the decision. So that's clear. And then, usually after that, it's: Do we 6 have enough to make the decision? Do we know enough to make the decision? Is 7 there any gaps? Is there anything missing? Would anything else inform us or help 8 us make the right decision, or at least be accountable for the decision, Cathaoirleach? 9 Because I think accountability is a big word here. The decision we make; 10 accountability is accepting the consequences from the choices that you make. So the 11 choice that we make today is fully wrapped up in accountability, as has been 12 mentioned, both for us and our term and future terms and future councillors. So 13 that's very important to consider I think.

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15 And as I said earlier, that for me, it's a red flag when the judge initiates something. 16 So the source of this issue is the whim of a High Court judge who is compelling us to 17 do something which is at face value above and beyond what we would consider 18 enough, which is the Act. And I will speak for myself, as far as I am concerned the 19 Act is enough for our chief executive to defend us as needs be and to defend us in all 20 the ways that we would expect a chief executive to defend the elected members. 21 And think when we're presented with a scenario like this then we must consider the 22 risk assessment. If we don't do this then what's the risk? If we don't do this, what's 23 the impact? And the flip side is also important for us to consider. If we refuse to do 24 this then another scenario plays out, and that will test the judge and that will test a 25 process that has been imposed on us, and that also may bring its own risks.

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So I think I would be very strong on the need for more legal opinion, as has been
expressed by colleagues, and for me, that would inform a good decision that we can
own to the degree that we are able to own it, whether that is through a vote or
through a consensus. But at this point I feel it is quite difficult to make a fully
informed decision that we can stand over. Thanks, Cathaoirleach
CATHAOIRI FACH: Thank you Councillor Councillor Deir Leonard

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Peir Leonard.

33 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you. Yes, no, look it, I would feel way more

34 comfortable in making a more informed decision if it was deferred also, and just to

give everybody a chance to maybe submit some of their concerns and questions so that we can kind of have more discussion around this. I think Dermot -- like, it is a risk assessment on both the legal end of things and the erosion of democracy, you know, so I think we need to weigh up the pros and cons and look at the overall picture of it.

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I know in the briefing before this meeting I had asked could it be done on a case-by-case basis and the chief executive said it could. I think we need to explore that and without committing to an indefinite hand over of power that we could speak about this case in particular coming up that is needed for and then revisit it and have a wider conversation around it.

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13 Looking at the development plan, as a first-time councillor last time round, what I 14 found in the development plan is that a lot of language can be used and interpreted 15 very differently. So what the chief executive might read or the people representing 16 us in a court case mightn't necessarily always be exactly what we want the outcome 17 to be, you know, sort of I am talking about environmentally and, you know, 18 developments and stuff like that. So I think, you know, the more -- knowledge is 19 power. And the more we're informed as public representatives about decisions that 20 are being made, rather than having to fight something at the end, if we erode this 21 power here now, like the energy that goes into fighting against developments that are 22 the wrong kind of developments, you know, environmentally or whatever at the end. 23 You know, we're getting rid of the power that we have to do it before the fact than 24 after the fact. We are competing with developers that have a hell of a lot of money. 25 Our development plan is supposed to reflect our people and communities want. By 26 eroding that power that we have we are just handing it away. 27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Miriam Murphy.

28 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Sorry, thank you. Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yes. I 29 mean, you know, you can listen to both sides, and I know previous councillors spoke 30 about the reps on the LAMA and the AILG and maybe it is not fair to ask this, but on 31 either of the previous years for people that sat on the committees, can they comment 32 on anything about this situation? Did it come up as a discussion or their views or 33 whatever? It might give us a bit more, I suppose, idea of where the organisations 34 who are supporting us as councillors are coming from. 1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Murphy. Councillor Malachaí Duddy. 2 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Go raibh míle maith agat, Cathaoirleach. I suppose the 3 first step, I can understand why the executive is attempting to amend the difficulty 4 they find themselves in, particularly with regard to existing cases. I would have 5 hoped rather than this motion that maybe a list of live cases could have been brought 6 before the Council for us to grant express authorisation to those proceedings rather 7 than the adoption of this global-style resolution.

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9 This is a power that Ms Justice Farrell has identified, a power that the court has 10 identified that councillors have. It's set out in legislation. That legislation has been 11 voted on by the Oireachtas, and it vests that responsibility in Council members. And 12 what I would hope to see is that, in addition to maybe seeking our express 13 authorisation as regards existing cases, and I presume with the agreement of fellow 14 councillors that could be done on a global basis, but that future cases would be 15 brought before the Council where our express authorisation would be sought on a 16 case-by-case basis, because that's the responsibility that the Oireachtas has placed on 17 us as councillors. This resolution seems to remove that power or that responsibility 18 from us as councillors, and I am not sure that that is a good place to be as 19 councillors. In fact, I'd rather not see a resolution of that nature pass.

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21 So I wonder if the executive could answer any of those questions. Would it be 22 possible to enumerate the number of cases that are live? How many would need 23 our -- that are ongoing and would need our express authorisation, and then I suppose 24 we could deal with future cases as they arise. Go raibh míle maith agat. 25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Silvester Bourke. 26 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I think that there is an 27 anomalous spin going out that this is a dissolution of our powers. I am not really 28 certain of that it is diluting our powers. It is meant to strengthen our powers 29 according to what we heard earlier from the chief executive.

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I was wondering could we propose an amendment to it there at the sentence there, before it says, "the chief executive shall inform the elected members," could we not insert "that such authorisation given to do acts, matters and things as the chief executive considers necessary and/or appropriate in consultation with the members",

1	so that we're kept informed at all stages and we would have a veto on any particular
2	direction that the chief executive would want to go? I would like to propose that as
3	an amendment.
4	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Do I need a seconder? Can I have a
5	seconder? Councillor, do you want to come in there?
6	COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: I second it.
7	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin. You are finished, are
8	you, Councillor Bourke?
9	COUNCILLOR BOURKE: I am finished.
10	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Tom Fortune.
11	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I would propose what Councillor Duddy has put
12	forward.
13	CATHAOIRLEACH: You second it?
14	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Second it, yes. I think that's a rational approach.
15	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Duddy, could you give us your wording again so
16	we can take a note?
17	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: In actual fact I wasn't aware I was proposing a motion.
18	The proposal that I think would be best in relation to the decision of Ms Justice
19	Farrell would be that the existing cases that are live, that the Council is involved
20	with, that they could be brought to the attention of councillors, and because they've
21	already they're already in being, maybe we could give a global express
22	authorisation to those, but that for future cases that they would have to be brought on
23	an individual basis. Because that is effectively what is required under section 153,
24	subsection (2). So it's really, I suppose yes, I needn't say anymore.
25	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. You can switch off your microphone.
26	Councillor Joe Behan.
27	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I am conscious I spoke already, but just to answer
28	Councillor Murphy's question about has it come up at AILG meetings, the whole
29	questions of the powers of councillors. I can guarantee you at absolutely every
30	meeting that I attended it is foremost on the agenda. Because councillors all around
31	the country have had the same experience we have in County Wicklow, which is a
32	gradual erosion of our powers. In fact, while I was on the AILG executive we met a
33	delegation from the Council of Europe who were examining how this country
34	performs in terms of the Charter of European Local Self Government, and we were I

1 think third last in terms of the league table, in terms of the amount of power that has 2 been taken into the centre and removed from the local area and the local politicians 3 and the local councillors. In fact, a seminar was held, which a number of members 4 here attended, on the whole question of local powers and returning local powers to 5 councillors, and one of the big issues that we were dealing with over the last year and 6 a half, and I was on an advisory committee on this, was there's a new Planning and 7 Development Act which has been rammed through the Dáil, two days after the Local 8 Elections by the Government - parties represented here: Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil and 9 the Greens - where effectively the powers that we already have with regard to 10 development plans, for example, having a six-year development plan is now going 11 out to a ten-year development plan. Powers that we would have in terms of how we 12 would actually deal with planning matters generally removed again from us to the 13 centre and giving the Minister the power to basically decide our development plan 14 for us. 15 16 So to answer Councillor Murphy's point, yes, it has come up at absolutely every 17 meeting. I don't want to sound like a recorded message here but, in fact, it is an issue 18 for members right around the county -- right around the country. 19 20 Specifically with regard to what Councillor Snell has proposed and what Councillor 21 Duddy has proposed. First of all, with regard to what Councillor Snell has said, I 22 would agree that we should get legal advice, but I don't agree the chief executive 23 should be picking the legal adviser. We have, under the powers of the Local

by the Council, to advise us on our needs, and we have two eminent barristers here,
luckily we have two barristers here in the chamber now, who I am sure could easily
advise us, or the Protocol Committee or representatives of the different bodies on the
Council, as to what senior counsel would be a person who would give us objective
advice from the point of view of the elected members. So with that caveat I would
certainly support what Councillor Snell has said.

Government Act we have the power to nominate a senior counsel ourselves, paid for

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I don't -- I understand where Councillor Duddy is coming from, but I don't agree
with him fundamentally, because what he's effectively saying is that whatever is
going on at the moment let it on. Well, in fact, one of the things that's going on at

1	the moment is the challenge to our development plan that hasn't been heard yet. And
2	this motion is a way of counteracting any question that might arise in that case, as to
3	whether we were informed about this. So what the other side will be, or what the
4	judge will be told, oh, the councillors agreed, they handed me the power at the
5	meeting on the 1st July. So that's too late as far as I'm concerned. So I understand
6	why Councillor Duddy is being very constructive and how he is being constructive,
7	but I don't agree. I think we should not pass this motion for the sake of the people
8	we represent. And again, I would urge people not to vote for it. Thank you.
9	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I don't think there's any other
10	speakers looking to come in. So, chief executive.
11	MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you, members, for very
12	interesting discussion on the matter.
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14	I suppose to start, this resolution is not, I suppose, of my making or of my desire, I
15	have to say on the record. The 2001 Local Government Act enshrines in legislation
16	the provisions and the reserved functions of the members. If I can quote from the
17	Act from section 153(2): "Where an action or other proceeding relates to the
18	exercise or performance by the local authority of a reserved function, the chief
19	executive for that authority shall, in the doing of any such act, matter, or thing
20	referred to in subsection (1), act with the express authorisation of the elected council
21	of such local authority, and in any proceedings such authorisation shall be deemed to
22	have been given unless or until the contrary is shown."
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24	So heretofore, I have, and my office has, been acting for the members in defending
25	your reserved functions. The judge in our particular case that is ongoing at the
26	moment, the case was listed for 18th June, has asked for the express resolution of the
27	members giving me the authorisation to defend the case. Judge Farrell in recent
28	days, it has only became aware to me today, has ruled in the Dun Laoghaire case
29	where the judge heard pleadings on whether a resolution was required or not, has
30	ruled that a resolution is required by the members to defend the case. This has come
31	to light, I suppose, after 23 years of the Act working as it was intended and the chief
32	executives of every local authority defending the actions brought against the reserved
33	functions of the members, and primarily it arises around the time of the development
34	plan.
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As has been mentioned, we have had several challenges to our development. There are two I believe cases ongoing, live cases, I suppose, at the moment. And what the court has asked our legal advisers is to go back and ask you for a resolution to confirm that you are happy for me to defend the development plan in this particular case. It is not taking away any power from the members; it is a belt and braces approach to what is enshrined in legislation.

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9 I have raised this matter, because I am deeply concerned about it, with my colleagues 10 in the department, both on the planning side and on the local government side, 11 because the Act is very clear in what it says, but the courts have decided that they 12 want a resolution. So in order for me to be able to defend any case brought against 13 the Council in respect of the reserved functions of the members of this Council, and 14 any policy documents that you have passed as part of that function, this resolution is 15 required. The legal opinion, the memo that is before you was prepared by our senior 16 counsel, so that is our, the advices that we have from our senior counsel. That is 17 why I shared it in the format that it is.

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19 We are where we are with this, members. And it is completely up to yourselves on 20 this matter. I know I think there's maybe three motions to be considered before the 21 resolution is put or not put to you, but that's a situation that we find ourselves in. We 22 have a case ongoing, as it was listed in court, and it is due to be back before the 23 courts. It was mentioned before about timelines, and the court's timelines do not 24 accord with Council meeting timelines. If we're to come back for a single resolution 25 for each case that comes before the court I'm happy to do that, but it may mean 26 calling special meetings at odd times. But that is completely (inaudible).

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What was felt by our counsel is that this resolution gave us a belt and braces
approach to defend the reserved functions of this authority, and I will leave it at that,
Cathaoirleach. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, chief executive. Councillor Peir Leonard.

32 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes, I just want to ask, I know it has come to light that

- 33 this resolution is needed for this case but what are the implications about past cases
- 34 where the resolution wasn't? Does that leave the Council up? And if we pass this

1 then is that an acknowledgment that we didn't pass resolutions for the previous cases 2 and does that leave us legally exposed? 3 MS O'GORMAN: I don't believe so. I mean, this has never arisen before in the 23 4 years of this piece of legislation being enacted. There is a new planning and 5 environment court being set up, and it has come to light as part of this. A practice 6 direction was issued by the President of the High Court to all practitioners in this 7 space looking for, instructing that they should seek this resolution, and asked for 8 feedback on it as well from the practitioners. And my understanding is that there has 9 been a large number of submissions to that practice direction, trying to clarify why now and not when the act was enacted back in 2001. But it doesn't jeopardise any 10 11 rulings that have been made, unless they are time bound, I don't think we're in any 12 jeopardy there. 13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Fortune. 14 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Yes, I am just reacting to 15 what the CE has said. Yes, I could understand where you're coming from if you had 16 just come to us with the case you're trying to deal with, but you've come to us with a 17 resolution that is all encapsulating, and I can think there's no way we, as members, in 18 my opinion, as I expressed already, should approve that. So I think in coming to us 19 with what you have come to us with I think you've just gone too far. 20 21 Also to pick up the point that Councillor Behan is saying, I think he might have been 22 misunderstood. I think what Councillor Duddy was articulating there is more so 23 what the Act reflects on behalf of the members. And to be honest, I think your 24 resolution is, just to put it in my language, is so far offside that if members approve 25 it, well, it'll be the shock of my time as a public representative, because there's no 26 way it should be approved. But if you were coming to us on a case-by-case, this is 27 your case, this is your problem, bang, I don't mind how many emergency meetings 28 you call. I'm a public representative. I put myself forward to represent the public, 29 and I'll do that to the utmost best of my ability. I just think you have overcooked the 30 pot. 31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to respond? Okay. Councillor Dermot O'Brien. 32 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Just a quick one for the chief executive. Again in terms 33 of case-by-case or scenarios that are in play, to give us a sense of the risk factor from 34 the flip side of what might the judge do if we don't, or how might the plaintiff feel,

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delighted or -- you know, in a different scenario. What are the risk factors if it plays out, if this resolution is rejected today? CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks. We will do it one-by-one. MS O'GORMAN: To just acknowledge what Councillor Fortune said. I won't comment any further on it, but I acknowledge it. Councillor O'Brien, the judge has indicated that if a resolution isn't forthcoming in the case, and all going before him in the court, that our case will be dismissed because we have will been deemed to have not been able to defend the case. Therefore, the applicant's case is adjudged to have succeeded. And that has implications I suppose particularly in the development plan, whether it is around population or whatever it might be, but it will be beyond the individual case's merits. So it does come at great risk. Because I mean whether or not the chamber liked the development plan or whatever it maybe a resolution was passed to adopt that plan and that's the plan that's there. So any challenge that goes undefended against that plan effectively downgrades the plan, you know, if we can't defend the decisions that were made, whether all members are in agreement or not, regardless, the plan was passed, so therefore that is the plan in place. But if we cannot defend an action against the plan, which is what the judge has indicated would be the case, our case would be dismissed as not having been defended, therefore the applicant's case is successful. CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Glennon. COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I am wondering, chief executive, if you deleted the words "but not limited to" would it satisfy your requirements of defending the case in complying with the practice directive? I think that is what is scaring some of my colleagues. In the fourth line, "including but not limited to," if you were to delete "but not limited to" I think that is very all-embracing, whereas including "the exercise of reserved function in the context of the development plan," I am just wondering would that satisfy the needs of the resolution. In other words, it equips you to defend the case that's pending by the Cairn, because it relates to the development plan. MS O'GORMAN: Yes, I have no issue with that. I suppose we were trying to, I suppose, be all-encompassing in terms of the powers that I would as chief executive

1 ordinarily and copper-fastening that's included. I don't have an issue with that 2 amendment. 3 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: I propose the deletion of those four words. 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder for that, please? 5 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: I second that. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Miriam Murphy. 7 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: It is probably not relevant, but I will ask anyway, is all 8 the county councils of Ireland getting this only at the July meeting? And is it known 9 how many our county councils have passed it or reject it? And I suppose wearing 10 my disability hat wearing, I see words and letters being changed in documents that 11 really will not make difference. It might change an understanding, but then if it goes 12 to court it's a loophole, and it just turns around then. So I would be a bit worried 13 about changing words and how strong it would stand up in a court. I have 14 experience myself bringing a certain hairdressing chain to an equality court and the 15 wording was absolutely just thrown out. So that would be my experience of it. But I 16 would be interested to know about the different other kind of councils and what their 17 reaction was to it. 18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Chief executive. 19 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you. Currently there are four local authorities - so, 20 ourselves, South Dublin, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and Fingal - with actions 21 ongoing. As in, there's judicial reviews of their county development plans ongoing 22 listed in the courts, but every local authority in the country is facing this. So South 23 Dublin I think have gone and sought their resolution. Dun Laoghaire tested it in 24 court, and that is Judge Farrell's ruling that I referred to, and Councillor Duddy 25 referred to, where the judge has determined that a resolution is now required. So 26 Dun Laoghaire are now considering their position. I know Fingal County Council 27 are going -- their meet is on Monday, there's is the second Monday of the month, and 28 they're going to their meeting on Monday with their resolution. So this is coming at 29 all local authorities unfortunately. That's the position we're in. 30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Scott. 31 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I unfortunately couldn't make 32 the briefing earlier, so I have just been listening to the discussion here very closely.

- And I hear what the chief executive is saying regarding kind of, I suppose,
- 34 copper-fastening what is already in legislation. It strikes me as very bizarre that we

1 are going to have to do that. However, having sat on a previous Council and 2 attended so many hours of meetings, both of the development plan and seeing the 3 whole democratic process involved, getting in all the public submissions, crafting 4 that plan to the best of our ability as publicly elected representatives on behalf of our 5 constituents, the very fact it is being challenged in court is a concern, but it would 6 absolutely frighten me if we were not able to send our chief executive to defend it. 7 And to me, that would be absolutely paramount that (inaudible) we all passed 8 democratically would be defended in court.

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10 So I would comment on this point. I would support Councillor Glennon's changing 11 of the words. Maybe it would take away that concern that I do understand has been 12 expressed by other councillors, that the resolution is too wide. I would ask the chief 13 executive, in terms of timeframe, would you really have time to consider this and to 14 bring this onto the agenda in September or would that affect the court case, or are we 15 time bound that it needs to be done right now? Thank you.

16 MS O'GORMAN: We were in court, as I said, about ten days ago on this. We could 17 defer it to September. That's completely within your gift members. But we have 18 been asked by the registrar of the court to submit the resolution. We were asked to 19 bring it to the members at the first meeting after the court hearing, which is today. 20 We could go back to the court and say the members wish to refer it. We are at risk if 21 we do that, that they may strike out our case regardless. Because we said we would 22 bring it at the first meeting. Now, recognising the fact that obviously it is your 23 decision, I think it would be very harsh of a court to strike out a case on that basis, 24 but I'm not trying to scare you, but we were asked to bring it to the next meeting of 25 the council and that's why we're here.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Duddy.

27 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Cathaoirleach, go raibh míle maith agat. I would like to 28 acknowledge the CEO's contribution and her response. I notice though she speaks 29 about two cases being live. When I spoke in global terms I imagined, you know, that 30 there was significant litigation. So if this resolution isn't passed you would be 31 required to seek the express authorisation of the councillors in those two cases. Is 32 the CEO in any position to present to us the details of those cases or maybe the case 33 that's at hand? I understand it might be Cairn Homes, is it? So that if we were 34 presented with something there that we could make a determination on in relation to

1	that case, we may be in a position to express our authorisation, if a presentation was
2	given to us on that case.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.
4	MS O'GORMAN: The two cases are Cairn, as we have mentioned, includes
5	discussed, and the second one is Fox. They're the ones that are before the court at
6	the moment, both in relation to the development plan. The Cairn one is in relation to
7	the population targets and Fox is around the ministerial direction, but we are named
8	as a party to that action as well. We have several more in the pipeline that haven't
9	been listed as yet, but they are a number of them.
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11	I am in your hands, members. I would prefer to leave with the resolution today,
12	because the court have asked for it. I think we just put ourselves in jeopardy for
13	something where we are just copper-fastening what is already enshrined in
14	legislation for you.
15	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Behan.
16	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: With respect, chief executive, you just said before that
17	comment, you said a court would look would be like very, very, I suppose, I can't
18	remember the words you used, but unfair maybe is not the right word, to throw out
19	your case. And you're not taking the case, as I understand it, it's the other party
20	taking the case. So they're not throwing out your case. And I am quite sure it is
21	possible for your legal representatives I correct myself, our legal representatives to
22	say we're seeking the advice of the elected members as per the 2001 Act, as per the
23	practice directions of the President of the High Court.
24	
25	And I think we're really getting to the meat of it now, thanks to Councillor Duddy,
26	because what he's really saying is what I am saying, which is: Tell us what are we
27	being challenged about and let us as mature public representatives, all 32 of us,
28	decide whether you are right to take this action or that action. I don't accept, with
29	respect, chief executive, that the court is going to throw out our argument your
30	argument because the councillors have looked for more time to get more
31	information. That is actually within the spirit of what has already been decided by
32	two eminent judges. So on that basis I think we should be proceeding along the lines
33	that Councillor Duddy has now suggested, which is, if we have to have another
34	meeting in July, let's have it. And let's have a look at the detail of this case and let's

1	have a look at what we think the chief executive should do with regard to that.
2	That's what the Act is allowing us to do. It's not saying we must agree a resolution
3	worded by the chief executive. There is no such resolution in the Act. It's us, we
4	have the power to decide, and by doing what Councillor Duddy is suggesting we're
5	actually in conformity with the Act.
6	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor.
7	MS O'GORMAN: Just to be clear: We're not taking any action. We're defending
8	cases. We're defending cases, judicial reviews of the County Development Plan. So
9	we can defer it to September, as I said, I have no issue doing that, but the court
10	may - may - look unfavourably on that. They asked us to bring it to the first meeting
11	of the Council after the court hearing.
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13	In the South Dublin case, if I refer to that, they were told, they told the applicant that
14	they could bring a case to dismiss the motion for want of a resolution to defend. So
15	that was the option put to the applicant in the case in South Dublin. So South Dublin
16	have now gone back to their chamber and got that resolution. Otherwise, the
17	applicant would have brought a case to dismiss.
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19	It is completely up to yourselves, members. We can wait until September if you
20	want more time to consider it, that is not a problem, but we are under time pressure
21	because we have a case, the Cairn case is live before the courts. And it is not for me
22	to take action. It is for me to defend the development plan of this county. Thank
23	you.
24	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor John Snell.
25	COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thank you. Chief executive, I hope you appreciate that
26	people are trying to work with you, genuinely trying to work with you here. This is a
27	huge item and I know you have outlined that you have been asked to put it on the
28	first meeting in July, and I think it was important to have this conversation here
29	today. But this is a one-item agenda, and I honestly think we should have a special
30	meeting here in July to deal with this. But I would like to help you and your officials
31	in regards to defending our County Development Plan.
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33	Our County Development Plan, as I outlined earlier, was two and a half years of hard
34	work and I just want to remind the members that it was unanimous support from all

32 elected members for the County Development Plan, and it was passed. So, therefore, it is important that it is defended.

- I thank Councillor Glennon in regards to the changing of the wording because it was something that bothered me. "Including but not limited to the exercise of reserved 6 functions." Too far-reaching, too far to go in regards to us as public representatives, needs to be taken out.
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9 In regards to the whole dialogue around giving you this wide-reaching powers. Yes, 10 to defend our County Development Plan. I understand that. But the powers that you 11 would have been given is an eradication of our powers I believe because we were 12 being taken out of the equation to a certain degree. I honestly think you, as a chief 13 executive, should come to the elected members with case-by-case basis. There's new 14 councillors here who are only elected a number of weeks ago, who are not privy to 15 the cases.

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17 Today is the first time I have heard mention of this Fox case. The first day. Fourth 18 term in Wicklow County Council, first day I have heard the mention of the Fox case. 19 No inclination of what they're taking our Council to court for. Yes, the Cairn case 20 was widely publicised. But again, no documentation. We get documentation on 21 everything that is coming up on the agenda here. I could fill rooms with 22 documentation for what comes up on the agenda here. Nothing in regards to the 23 legal case from Cairns, nothing from the Fox case. I suggest that that needs to 24 change, and we have a special meeting. That these, both of those cases and the 25 implications of what's happening there be sent out to the members. Because you are 26 going in to defend our decision, but the new councillors have as much right to know 27 what is going on as the people who voted them, or worked on that last County 28 Development Plan, because it impacts how they deal with business going forward for 29 the next six years.

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31 I think that Councillor Malachaí Duddy, his suggestion is excellent. And I don't 32 know whether you can today remove what you've asked for here and go with the two 33 cases that's in front with us. I still think that's a big ask, because the members are not 34 aware of the two cases, but we're trying to help you.

You're the one that's suggesting September. September is too far away. As elected members we make ourselves available to this local authority to represent the constituents throughout County Wicklow, and this is a huge decision that is being asked. And I know that most of us don't have a grasp of actually what's the implications behind it, and it's very unfair, whether you're here a long time or a short time, it is very unfair on us to come to that wide-ranging decision to give you the authority that you are seeking.

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And now I accept that we are rowing back a little bit. Everyone wants to help you,
but not to the degree that was being sought initially and not without the relevant

12 information, the legal opinion, our two organisations that I mentioned earlier, and in

13 regards to having a special meeting, because it can't be decided here today. What

- will be decided here today affects generations of people sitting here in this chamberlong after we're all gone.
- 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, councillors. We have a couple of more speakers and
   17 proposals I would like to get through. Not that I am trying to speed things up here
   18 because it is an important topic.

19 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Just on a point of order, I would ask you not to ignore20 what Councillor Snell has said.

- 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, we're not.
- 22 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Okay.
- CATHAOIRLEACH: No, no. I am just trying to get through the agenda, and I am
  also trying to get through the proposals that have been put forward as well. I am
  going to go online. Councillor Edward Timmins.
- 25 going to go online. Councillor Edward Timmins.
- 26 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Just to remind previous members, and for the benefit of 27 new members. The Cairn Homes case is about disputing the population targets that
- 28 are set in our County Development Plan. The ironic thing is here we had no say in
- 29 those population targets. They were imposed on us by National Planning Guidelines.
- 30 So the chief executive has been put in a really difficult position; she's been asked to
- 31 defend a County Development Plan that was effectively imposed on councillors. We
- 32 did not set the population targets in the County Development Plan.
- 33 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Hear, hear.

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1 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: If you remember, I and other members raised the issue 2 about the population targets being a real problem in the development plan because 3 they were based on the 2016 census, they were completely outdated when we were 4 drafting our County Development Plan. The ironic thing is we are going out now to 5 defend a decision that we had no say in putting ourselves in such a position to defend 6 the development plan that was not of our making in the sense that population targets 7 were imposed on us as councillors. So that is just an information for new members, 8 how ironic and contradictory this whole thing is. We are being asked to defend 9 something that we didn't actually impose, draft, have a decision-making part in the 10 first place. Thank you. 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to invite Councillor Murphy in online, and then

Councillor Leonard, and then we're going to go to the proposals that are being made. COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Councillor Edward Timmins has just read my mind. Because I have done a few county development plans, and Ireland's population in housing development, we don't have that authority, either our county or our local area as well. That's always been a big issue, every time, every time. And it's always been taken away from us as to what we wish to get.

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Just going back to the CEO, maybe if that is possible, to ask you this: The two live cases that have been mentioned here, how near are they to being heard? Will our decision affect a delay in them cases? And, as well, this is the first time I would be very, very unsure, uneasy in voting, I actually have no knowledge of this. And again we are being forced into a vulnerable position, especially for new councillors, and for older ones as well, because we don't always have the knowledge either, because it's not been given to us.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Leonard.

28 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yes, I was going to say in the interest of transparency, 29 I would feel more comfortable if I had the details about the two cases, and then, as 30 Councillor Snell proposed, I think we do need a special meeting about these to get 31 them off the table and, you know, get that part out of it. And then I suggest that we 32 bring it to the protocol, or we set up some sort of a steering group to create protocol 33 around how we are going to deal with this going forward. We have the disposal 34 notice at the start of, you know, every agenda meeting, so maybe every quarter we

1	could have anything that's going to come up. But I think the protocol meeting and
2	committee that will be decided could create some sort of a brief to bring to the wider
3	group of members for us to vote on. I don't think we are going to decide how we are
4	going go forward with this, and I think that we do need a steering, a cross-party
5	steering group just to put some protocol together around it, and then it could be voted
6	in by all members.
7	CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to comment before I have one more? Councillor
8	O'Neill, sorry.
9	COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I will be as brief as possible.
10	Again I don't know whether you have to be a new member or here a while to
11	understand this, I am sorry I missed the briefing earlier on, but I would absolutely
12	agree with Councillor Snell and Councillor Duddy, that, you know, to get this in
13	plain language out to every member of the chamber as soon as possible.
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15	I am a little bit confused there with the Cairn Homes thing now. I mean we went
16	through probably half an hour, three quarters there before the name was even
17	mentioned. It's only a while ago there we had a material contravention gone through
18	for the building of 329 houses by Cairn Homes in Blessington. I think we should
19	have been aware of this threat as such, or whatever it is, before we were asked to
20	make a decision on that.
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22	On the issue of the population growth levels, that he's a very important one. I
23	brought that up at a planning SPC, and I would be very genuine about the
24	unfortunate people who we have in areas, refugees and whatever, whether they are
25	part of the included in the targets that we have. And this is a serious issue as
26	regards the building and the planning of houses and developments. So that's very
27	important. That we look at that.
28	
29	But again, I see you're looking away there, Cathaoirleach, but that's a very important
30	part. That if our population growth levels are fixed at a figure we have to be very
31	careful there even if it is private housing to maybe give too much permissions for
32	private housing estates and maybe leaving out the social aspect of it. If we are
33	controlled by population growth levels it's a serious issue, you know. But I would
34	again urge you that we all get the information in, in plain language before we make a

1 decision. Because I see powers at local level being eroded in a big way, you know, 2 with the likes of town teams throughout the county and especially in our area, you 3 know, the powers that town teams have been given is frightening. So I wouldn't like 4 to see us giving away much more. 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I said a couple of moments ago that I 6 wanted to get through proposals. I have two speakers; all I am going to ask is that 7 you be brief because I have let you in a number of times and I respect this is an 8 important issue. Councillor Fortune. 9 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yes, I agree with you, this is 10 an important issue, probably the most important issue we will discuss in the five 11 years we're going to be here. 12 13 I think we have had a very mature interaction on this, and I think what Councillor 14 Snell to the CEO is very fair. We're not here to make her life very difficult at all. 15 We think we're doing the right; believe we're doing the right thing. I would just 16 wave a word of caution in slapping out a couple of motions that's been discussed 17 following the good discussion that we've had, because there's a tendency to have a 18 great mature discussion sometimes in this chamber and then put proposals out to the 19 chamber that goes just foreign to it, if you know what I mean. 20 21 So I think that there's a number of things in that resolution that have to be taken out. 22 Councillor Glennon, what he said made a lot of lot of sense. I can see other bits as 23 well. I think we need to reflect on that. Because I think there is an understanding 24 that there's an immediate problem with the court case. And as I said already, what 25 Councillor Duddy has proposed to me is very sensible, and a very sensible approach. 26 What I will say to the members -- and I'm sorry for going on now because this is 27 important. 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. 29 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: What I would say to the members, this is very, very 30 important to members, despite the fact some members -- I don't know whether 31 members see it the way I see it or not, maybe they don't. But it is really, really, 32 really important. What's here before us is a catchall, totally giveaway solution that 33 we shouldn't support. Certain things could come out of it that I think would suit 34 what is going on in the court case. Having a special meeting or another meeting in

1 ten days' time or six days times, or whatever, to me I would have no problem with 2 that, and we could flesh out what Councillor Duddy has put forward so as that that, 3 you know, it makes sense from the point of view of councillors and take it from 4 there. 5 6 But I think just to have a vote today for the sake of having a vote today I think is the 7 wrong thing to do, because, as I said, believe we have had a very, very mature discussion on this and a lot of stuff has been clarified and made sense. But the 8 9 bottom line is we have got to protect Councillor powers. 10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Duddy. 11 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Cathaoirleach, thank you. I would be surprised if to 12 satisfy the court's requirements the law agent couldn't present a précis of the Cairn 13 Homes case based on the court's pleadings, so that we would be in a position to 14 consider granting the express authorisation required under the Act. 15 16 I have just done a cursory search and I would appreciate if the law agent could 17 confirm or correct me, but according to the Court Services website this case isn't set 18 down until the 14th of January for hearing, and it is not for mention until the 16th of 19 December. 20 **COUNCILLOR BEHAN: What?** 21 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: So what is the adjournment date? 22 **COUNCILLOR BEHAN: What?** 23 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Would the law agent be in a position to tell us what the 24 adjournment date for seeking this resolution or this express authorisation is, because 25 we haven't been told that? 26 MS O'GORMAN: We have been advised that we have to have the resolution with 27 the registrar the first week in September. 28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Kennedy. Pat Kennedy, sorry. 29 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, I appreciate where the 30 chief executive is coming from. I also want to thank the chief executive for the 31 informed discussion we had before the meeting here at half past one. I think that was 32 open to everybody. And I don't agree with my colleague, Councillor Behan, that it 33 was behind closed doors, and I have great respect for Councillor Behan, I really do, 34 but it wasn't behind closed doors, and I just want to put that on the record.

1 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: There was no press.

2 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: I do appreciate that this is an issue for a lot of the

3 members, and I am wondering just if it would be possible for -- perhaps Councillor

4 Langrell could contact LAMA to see could he get advice there, and perhaps

5 Councillor Cronin, Councillor Behan and myself could contact the AILG and see if

6 we could get advice there and come back to it, and if the chief executive was

7 available later this week to try and get it sorted. Because I know people are going to 8 be going away on holidays and people have other commitments probably starting off 9 next week with schools being closed and one thing and another, but if it would work

10 that we could come back later this week, as Councillor Fortune said he would make

himself available. If the chief executive was available and the senior staff and if the 12 councillors were available come back this week and try and get it done this week if 13 we could. Thanks, chair. It may work, it may not.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

15 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I am looking for 16 a point of clarity because the discussions seem to be moving into the actual detail of 17

cases, and I am just trying to understand from our perspective that this is about us 18 having made decisions in our County Development Plan, and, as Councillor Snell

19 said, we all voted on it, and it was agreed. So this is about giving the chief executive

20 authority or rubber-fastening that authority to defend those decisions being made. So

21 really the details, the cases don't matter, if they're against what we put in the plan

22 then they are to be defended, and that's a discussion now. While I respect some

23 people have asked about the detail of cases, the detail of cases are not going to

24 change my decision. I want the chief executive to defend the decision that we made 25 in the County Development Plan. And that's it. Regardless. So thank you. Just so

26 that we can get clarity, that's the request.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Do you want to clarify?

MS O'GORMAN: -- as stated by Councillor Flynn Kennedy, yes. 28

- 29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Perfect. Thank you. So we have three proposals.
- MS PURCELL: Four. 30

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31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Four.

32 MS PURCELL: So we have four motions. The first one was proposed --

- 33 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Absolutely, sorry.
- 34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Fortune.

1 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I am really concerned; I think there's an effort being 2 made to force a vote. 3 MS PURCELL: I have the motions in front of me. If they want to be withdrawn by 4 the people who put them forward that is fine. 5 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: We have had a very rational discussion on why we 6 shouldn't vote. 7 MS PURCELL: The standing orders are very clear. Where there is a motion 8 proposed and seconded it can be withdrawn by the person --9 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I just want to put on the record, it is very obvious to 10 me, I am sitting here long enough to understand how things are happening, there is 11 an effort being made here to force the vote --12 MS PURCELL: I will read you the standing order --13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor. COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: No, I am sorry, this is too important as far as I'm 14 15 concerned. -- where there's been great discussion, and the proper thing to do for the chief executive and for the public we represent is to defer this and meet later on it. 16 17 That's the proper thing to do and the right thing to do. 18 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Hear, hear. 19 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I would like support from members on that because 20 there is an effort being made now to rush a vote on this. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just bear with us there. 22 MS PURCELL: I have four motions before me before me at the moment which I 23 must deal with in accordance with the standing orders, and the standing orders say 24 that the motion can be withdrawn only on leave obtained from the majority of the 25 Council present on the request of the member concerned. If the member who put the 26 motion forward wishes to withdraw it and the majority of the Council are in 27 favourite with that we can withdraw the motion. But we have four motions at the 28 moment that I must put before you because they have been proposed and seconded. 29 The first motion is proposed by Councillor Snell --30 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Point of order --31 CATHAOIRLEACH: I beg your pardon. Thank you Councillor Behan. Orla, yes? 32 COUNCILLOR FINN: I just wanted to second Tom Fortune's motion. 33 CATHAOIRLEACH: You understand why we have the standing orders now? It is 34 the members that have these proposals, not the executive. Therefore, I think it is

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1 only right and proper that we go through them unless they are withdrawn from the 2 floor. 3 MS PURCELL: And they will be dealt with in the order in which they are received. 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. 5 MS PURCELL: Okay, we are going to go ahead. Councillor John Snell, seconded 6 by Councillor Tom Fortune, has proposed that a copy of legal opinion be circulated, 7 second legal opinion to be sought by the chief executive, AILG representatives to 8 seek AILG opinion and LAMA representatives to seek LAMA opinion. Is that 9 wording correct, Councillor Snell? 10 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yes. That's correct. But I do think that without the 11 information around the court cases as well we don't have the information to make a 12 decision here. Members have tried to be very, very frank and helpful. I think 13 Councillor Duddy's proposal in regards giving powers for the two cases presented, I 14 would support that. I would support that here. But I still haven't got the relevant 15 information in regards to the cases. And while I accept what Councillor Flynn 16 Kennedy has said in regards to we have to protect our County Development Plan, her 17 party colleague Edward Timmins has outlined that we are protecting something that 18 was foisted on us in regards to the County Development Plan. The population 19 figures was dictated to us, and we had to accept them. And I just think that this 20 hasn't been contested in 23 years. It's Oireachtas legislation that's been handed 21 down. The little powers that we have. And I'm asking members to protect our 22 powers. It will be too late to come back here in a year's time or six months, or 23 whenever, if they hand away their powers now. 24

25 I want to support the chief executive in defending the case, but, like, it's a big ask 26 what you've done. You've come into the chambers today. Granted, you've given the 27 courtesy of half an hour before the meeting to go through it. But yet there's members 28 here going to be asked to make a decision today based on no information in regards 29 to Cairn's properties, their information, their case or Fox's case. They know not one 30 iota. They've seen nothing, they've been handed nothing in front of them to make an 31 informed decision on those cases. And yet, I still want to defend our County 32 Development Plan through you as the chief executive, but I am not prepared to give 33 up the powers that you are seeking, and that's why I thank Councillor Glennon in 34 regards to that, because that did worry me, "including but not limited to the exercise

1 of the reserved functions." And that was wide ranging, and you've accepted that 2 yourself, that it was very broad ranged, what was being sought here today. So are 3 you prepared to scale that back? Like, we're going into motions, proposals that's 4 been listed to us but yet the chief executive hasn't outlined what the chief executive 5 is prepared to do after a very constructive discussion here. Is the chief executive 6 prepared to row back on what was presented on the clar here? Will you accept to 7 take them off? Will you accept to just put the two cases in front of the members here 8 today? Or will you come back by the weekend or next week and have a special 9 meeting and put it to bed? Because I think it is grossly unfair of anybody to make 10 such a huge decision without the relevant information in front of them. And while I 11 accept the AILG hasn't met and LAMA haven't met, but they can contact those 12 organisations. They don't have to wait for a meeting. You can go and contact them. 13 They represent us. They're our union representatives, in fact. So they can get legal 14 opinion. And the same, the legal opinion that I am seeking, the second legal opinion, 15 whether it is through the chief executive, I know members have spoken that they 16 prefer to get their own legal opinion, but again that's a contradiction to the proposal 17 that I have there. So we have to have broad chamber consensus, and not rush stuff 18 to --19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell. 20 COUNCILLOR SNELL: All I am saying is it is common sense. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell, the chief executive might have a suggestion. 22 MS O'GORMAN: Can I make a suggestion? And thank you, Councillor Snell. Yes, 23 I am quite happy to accept the wording that Councillor Glennon put in. And to be 24 very clear, the memo in front of you was drafted by our senior counsel and the 25 resolution was drafted by our senior counsel. Okay. So they are not expressly my 26 words. 27 28 Could I suggest that I reword a resolution that deals specifically only with the Cairn 29 case for today? The Fox case is, we are part -- a notice party to the case. It is a case 30 against the Minister, we're named in it. It is live, it is ongoing, but it is not as 31 pressing. 32 33 In relation to Councillor Duddy's suggestion around briefings and whatever else, I 34 have no issues with briefings. Cases that are ongoing are subject to legal privilege,

1	as you know, the members know, so we cannot circulate the pleadings or the
2	proceedings, but we can give you a briefing on it. That is not a problem. It can't be
3	for public consumption because it's an ongoing case. Happy to do that.
4	
5	So if members are happy I will have a three-line resolution that deals specifically
6	with the Cairn case to get us to where we need to be in terms of Cairn, and the rest of
7	it can wait. If members want to withdraw their motions, I can draft that and put it
8	before you. If that is agreeable to the chamber.
9	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell.
10	COUNCILLOR SNELL: Can I just thank the chief executive for her proposals
11	wholeheartedly. I think there is now consensus that we are moving in the right
12	direction, and everyone is on the one page. So we're all flying the one flag. Could I
13	also ask for a copy of the resolution that was passed in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown or
14	South Dublin, or other local authorities, just to see what they passed? But I am
15	prepared to take what you are saying at face value, and I will be supportive.
16	CATHAOIRLEACH: So, Councillor Snell, are you withdrawing your motion?
17	COUNCILLOR SNELL: I am.
18	MS PURCELL: Is everybody in agreement? (Agreed.)
19	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.
20	MS PURCELL: Councillor Bourke, are you withdrawing your motion?
21	COUNCILLOR BOURKE: I withdraw my motion.
22	MS PURCELL: Is everybody in agreement? (Agreed.) Councillor Duddy, are you
23	withdrawing your motion?
24	COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Yes.
25	MS PURCELL: And everyone is in agreement? Yes. (Agreed.) Councillor
26	Glennon, are you withdrawing your motion?
27	COUNCILLOR GLENNON: With some reluctance, yes.
28	MS PURCELL: And is everybody in agreement? (Agreed.) Thank you.
29	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Fortune.
30	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Yes, I would like to second Councillor Snell's proposal
31	and again, I would like to thank the chief executive for her response, because I have
32	given you a lot of stuff on it today at various gatherings and I think that is a very
33	proper decision and a very mature decision and I want to thank you for it.

1	MS O'GORMAN: Members, just to be very clear. This is not something I wanted to
2	ever be in the chamber discussing with you, because the Act is the Act, you know.
3	But we are where we are. In terms of South Dublin, they're going to their meeting on
4	Monday. So the case has been heard and the judge has asked for the resolution after
5	the case has been heard, so they're going to get it on Monday. Dun Laoghaire argued
6	the case against, and the judge has ruled that they now require it, so I will be talking
7	to my colleague in Dun Laoghaire the next week. Fingal have a number going
8	before their council on Monday and I will copies of them and circulate them to the
9	members. I will draft something now if you want to move on and come back to it.
10	CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes, I was going to say.
11	MS PURCELL: I missed a motion. Sorry, the fifth one proposed by Councillor
12	Fortune, seconded by Councillor Finn, I presume is withdrawn also. Thanks.
13	COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Yes.
14	CATHAOIRLEACH: And the chief executive has given a commitment to come
15	back as soon as she can today.
16	MS O'GORMAN: I will do that now.
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Everyone happy to move on? (Yes.) Thank you for your
18	patience. I have tried to give everyone a fair hearing because I know how important
19	it is.
20	
21	We can move on now to item number 6: "To receive a presentation and note the
22	County Wicklow Skills Strategy. "
23	MS EARLS: Cathaoirleach, I might just come in here for a second while the team
24	are setting up. I am very happy to bring in this positive strategy to you. It is before
25	you for noting.
26	
27	So, as we know, Wicklow is a thriving county, it is growing quite rapidly and has a
28	huge potential for business and investment, but in order to capitalise and benefit
29	from that potential we need to have a skilled and available workforce. The purpose
30	of this skills strategy is to ensure that we can develop the necessary skills and the
31	training, to maximise those opportunities for the county. In this regard, we engaged
32	KPMG to commission a skill strategy report for us and we have Dr Aoife Doyle and
33	Patrick Moore here to make a short presentation to you on the skill strategy. Thank
34	you.

1	DR DOYLE: I hope you can hear us okay. I am Aoife Doyle. I am an associate
2	director at KPMG. Some of you may have come across this before. We're a
3	planning economics research unit within KPMG. Myself, Patrick and our colleague,
4	Christina, have been working on this strategy for the last couple of months now. Our
5	colleague and managing director is also on the call today with us.
6	
7	What we are going to do today, I suppose, is talk you through the process that we
8	undertook as part of this research and present you with the findings emerging from it.
9	I suppose what has been noted already, you know Wicklow is very much a rapidly
10	growing county with a significant business potential, but of course that is very much
11	dependent on the availability of key skills and key skill workers in the county, which
12	of course is key to maintaining competitiveness and also making sure the county can
13	continue to be competitive and attract further investments. Of course the availability
14	of key skills and skills workers is a challenge that many counties across Ireland are
15	facing. Wicklow has a very pertinent challenge. So as part of our research we are
16	working to identify some of the key skills across County Wicklow and also to
17	understand some of the wider inhibitors and enablers to attracting and retaining these
18	key skills to the county.
19	
20	In terms of our agenda today, we will give you a quick overview of the project
21	firstly, we will then take you through those enablers and inhibitors.
22	
23	I am going to pass over to my colleague Patrick, who is going to take you through
24	some specifics now.
25	
26	Wicklow Skills Strategy Presentation by KPMG
27	
28	MR MOORE: That was a quick run-through the contents, the very comprehensive
29	contents of the Wicklow Skills Strategy. Thank you very much for listening. If
30	there is anything else you would like to add to this.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.
32	DR DOYLE: That is perfect Patrick, thank you very much. We are happy to take
33	questions today or afterwards.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, just to say before I go on, I am looking for a time 2 extension to 5:30 as I try to get through. Councillor Behan, Councillor Flynn 3 Kennedy. This is for noting, and I know that it's gone through the economic SPC, 4 and I will have Councillor Fortune come in in a second, and it has been 5 recommended by the CPG as well. So, Councillor Fortune. 6 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I just want to say that yes, this 7 is an absolutely excellent report, and I would just like to thank all the participants 8 who put it together. I think it's a fantastic bible. If we were able to -- and I have said 9 this to this lady, she knows what I am going to say. If we were to deliver this it 10 would make us the best county not alone in Ireland, but in the globe. So the key to it 11 is going to be the delivery and who is going to deliver it. And in my role on the 12 Economic Development SPC I will be very interested over the next 12 months, for 13 example, in hearing more from the leads under the various categories and what their 14 programme is, and what they are going to do, and what their delivery times are. That 15 kind of stuff will be very, very important, because in tourism we have been talking 16 about it for 35, 40 years in all kinds of guises and phases, and just picking that as an 17 example, but we need once and for all to put flesh on the skeletons that we're 18 developing. 19

And I just have to make a critical comment as well. I am extremely disappointed that with all the entities that are involved in this that there was no public reps involved in putting this together. I think that's wrong. I think there's skill sets in this chamber that's second to none and there should have been a public rep. I know they told us they did public consultation and blah-de-blah. But I make the point, and I am quite serious about that point.

26

It is an excellent piece of work, and I would like to thank the two people from KPMG for their presentation. I have heard them do it before. The report is excellent. So we now have to make sure we make it happen. How we make it happen is the big challenge.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Flynn Kennedy.

32 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you, Aoife

- and Patrick, for that presentation. As Councillor Fortune said, an excellent piece of
- 34 work. I was delighted to launch the public consultation back in June of last year, and

1 one of my questions was actually going to be, where is it going to sit? I am 2 assuming it is under the Economic Development SPC. So I look forward to 3 Councillor Fortune spearheading this plan and pushing it forward and ensuring that it 4 gets implemented. But what I would also say is that there are a number of other 5 partners there, so I would ask that perhaps where the other partners are connected 6 with a local authority that it could sit as a standing agenda item on their business. So 7 the likes of Wicklow Tourism and areas like that, if that could be brought back. 8 Because I do think these strategy documents, if they're not living, they can wane a 9 little bit. And really, this is an excellent piece of work. And it is going to prepare us 10 for the future. So we've huge economic developments coming, and we need a skill 11 set there to support it.

12

13 I just have a question for Aoife and Patrick. And one is around the partners. So 14 what is the commitment given by the partners at this stage, and have they signed up 15 to the tasks that have been assigned to them? My other question is in relation to 16 some of the timelines around short- to medium- and medium- to long-term, what is 17 the expectation around those timelines? What does it actually look like? And how 18 will the members here other than through the SPC get regular reports back? It is just 19 monitoring of the strategy seemed to be a little bit lacking in the strategy document, 20 so I am just wondering, and that might be a question for the officials: How are we 21 actually going to monitor this strategy going forward? Thank you, Cathaoirleach, 22 but well done to all involved.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I have a few more speakers before
we go back to questions. Can I go online now for Councillor Edward Timmins,
please.

26 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Yes. Thanks, chairman, and thanks for the report. I 27 think you did a report about a year ago, a similar report, and I am just wondering 28 what has changed. I don't have the July report in front of me. But what has changed 29 in the report? There's two or three other points. You make no mention of the 30 KWETB. They are involved in a lot of training as part of their remit. Also, you 31 referred to outdoor education. Are you aware there's an outdoor education centre in 32 Baltinglass that is quite a popular location? Also, no mention of IDA visits. 33 Wicklow has really suffered over the years; we've had little or no IDA visits. I'd say 34 we're at the bottom of the list of Ireland of how many visits have come from the IDA

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1 to various counties. I think that is something that needs to be addressed. Also work 2 hubs, there is probably more room for development of work hubs, that doesn't really 3 happen much in the county. Last couple of things. Transport you referred to, that is 4 a real problem in the west of the county. We have no dual carriage or motorway. 5 We've no train station. We rely totally on buses. With our population, the bus 6 infrastructure, people particularly going to Dublin, buses going to Dublin, especially 7 from Blessington and further down West Wicklow, that is an issue, lack of public transport. Lastly, who will use this document? Will it go through the SPC? Who 8 9 else will it be circulated to? Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Leonard.

11 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you for the document. It is very good. I have a 12 couple of things. In relation to the offshore renewables, just to make sure that we 13 don't displace any existing training facilities. You know, private training facilities. 14 We have substantial one down in article, ASL, and they have been doing tremendous 15 work. So I think it is important we identify what is there in the county and not 16 displace anything by creating, you know, new centres of excellence and stuff like 17 that. You know, they need to be part of it, and they need to be stakeholders in it. 18 Then just in relation to the tourism and hospitality thing, I think the Made in 19 Wicklow and the Wicklow Craft Strategy goes hand in hand with Wicklow naturally. 20 You could be getting double the value if you linked those two projects together. I 21 think it's important that they're linked even from a retail platform and from a 22 producers point of view. You know, you could kind of -- it could be cross promoted. 23 Lastly, just under the agri, food and forestry, as I always say, we are an island nation, 24 and, like, I mean our fishing industry on the east coast is disappearing. In a 25 generation or two we're going to actually have no fishing industry here, because it is 26 not spoken about, we don't even have a policy committee in the Council here about 27 it. There's huge potential there to diversify. The fishermen, the existing fishermen 28 down in Arklow are being impacted already by the surveys for the windfarms and 29 stuff like that. There's opportunities to look at other kinds of fishing and to start 30 having that conversation. So I think it's important that the agri, food -- I don't know 31 whether the fisheries has been discussed in that, or I suppose my question is, where 32 does that sit in there and will it be part of it? Because I think with BIM there's a lot 33 of incentives, a lot of financial incentives to kind of start this conversation and get 34 the fishermen involved and work with the windfarms as well as part of it. Thanks.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to invite Aoife and Patrick back in because I've 2 three more speakers and then I'll wrap it up. 3 DR DOYLE: So we have been trying to respond in terms of this, there's quite a lot 4 of questions. That question on the KWETB, that is a very good point. One issue we 5 refer to that on that is that is one of the key resources we utilised in terms of 6 developing the strategy; was their statement strategy about 2024. So we strongly 7 relied on that document. We should also say that Wicklow County Council has 8 established a skills task force at the beginning of this project, and they sit on that task 9 force, and we were able to receive feedback from them as part of that. In terms of 10 the key partners and so on, certainly (inaudible) the key partners are listed as part of 11 the sectoral plans. I think that (inaudible) plans between the partners would be 12 useful, and that might be another action that would emanate from this strategy, 13 specifically that would be helpful. 14 15 Patrick, do you want to come in on any of those questions to add detail? 16 MR MOORE: We relied very much on KWETB. We were in constant exchange on 17 goals and targets and data as well. We incorporated quite a bit of data from the 18 KWETB on all the training facilities. We also listed them as one of the collaborators 19 for the delivery of the project. 20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I will invite Councillor Dermot O'Brien in. 21 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thank you very much, Cathaoirleach. 22 Thanks, Aoife and Patrick, for the presentation and the report as well. There's a fair 23 few pages in the full strategy, which again is testament to the work that has been 24 done. And I think for any of us who want to check in on that, there's a lot of detail. 25 26 I just want to say, Cathaoirleach, first and foremost it's both inspirational and 27 aspirational, and I think that's okay to have those two in the same sentence. I do a lot 28 of work with young people, and we talk about, and we have asked them in person do 29 you picture yourself living and working and flourishing in Wicklow in your future, 30 and we don't often get the positive answer to that. So I think this strategy offers a 31 scaffolding for a future where people stay here, people might even choose to come 32 here, because there's exciting things happening and it's real. So I think if we can 33 honour the aspiration of the strategy and obviously start looking at the delivery that 34 will make a big difference.

1 2 Again I would have to mention, and I would say across all the SPCs, the inhibitors 3 are also looking out at us from the report. And when we take on board the inhibitors 4 of housing, tourist accommodation, transport and connectivity and business supports, 5 we're talking about big issues that if unresolved will always be inhibitors to the 6 success of the skill strategy. So I think for all of us, for all the partners, for all the 7 SPCs, shining a light on those inhibitors and finding workarounds or resolving them, 8 or at least considering them, will be a big part of the success of the plan. But I look 9 forward to supporting it, Cathaoirleach, and I think it is a really brilliant opportunity. 10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor John Snell. 11 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And thanks to both speakers for 12 the presentation. Excellent presentation. I think the key word is delivering. It is 13 delivering a pathway for our youth. It is making sure that they can identify in 14 regards to opportunities to remain on our shores, to make sure that they can get real 15 employment opportunities that can be carved out, and that is why we need a 16 collaboration between all the stakeholders. And I think Wicklow County Council 17 has a huge part to play in that. 18 19 In regards to the screen and content creation in Clermont campus, it's been going 20 brilliantly over the last number of years, and it's grown and grown, and Wicklow has 21 identified an opportunity there for the whole county. Indeed, I believe IDA land in 22 Greystones is moving along as we speak in regards to delivering to the same 23 industry. 24 25 In regards to the renewable energy sector, we're strategically located along the east 26 coast here in offshore wind energy. And I think it is vitally important to the youth of 27 County Wicklow, and further afield, that they get the expertise that will be needed 28 for the SSE Airtricity Scheme and also the Codling Windfarm off Greystones, 29 Wicklow. This is something that really needs to happen now. Something that, you 30 know, we need to be able to upskill our young people and giving them the 31 opportunity to avail of a career for the rest of their life. 32 33 I would harbour concerns. We did have a presentation from our tourism officer here 34 a number of months ago, and obviously people are aware in regards to the hospitality

in the tourism sector the pressure that they're under in regards to we have a lack of
availability in regards to bed units because of the immigration pact that's been
implemented within the state, where our major hotels, B&Bs, are being consumed in
dealing with asylum seekers. And that is putting pressure on counties like County
Wicklow where we don't have the bed space for people who want to come here and
spend time, particularly overnight visits.

8 In regards to the forestry sector, I must say that our county, while not unique, but 9 certainly unique to me, when it comes to forestry, you know 10% of the land mass in 10 Ireland is covered by forestry. We seen a situation where the International Financial 11 Services in Ireland put a forestry, international forestry fund together, and they 12 appointed Bertie Ahern at the time. And then we discover that, you know, they had 13 set up an offshore fund on the British Virgin Islands, and they'd gone into 14 collaboration with a private Swiss bank where they were in negotiations to sell off 15 7% of the land mass of Ireland to Chinese investors. And thankfully it was resisted. 16 It was over a decade ago. But that's why I am saying all the best planning in the 17 world can be unhinged very, very quickly, and it's vitally important that, you know, 18 all the stakeholders stay true to themselves and true to the Irish people in regards for 19 now and into the future, because had that deal gone through not only would we have 20 lost 7% of our land mass or forestry, but the whole industry, it would have left only 21 3% of the forestry industry in privately owned hands.

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So I still want to go back to the point that our young people in this county need the training and expertise within the forestry industry in County Wicklow, and I would encourage you to keep following through on your strategy and your

26 recommendations, and I support you wholeheartedly.

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

COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thank you very much, Cathaoirleach. I want to say
thanks for the presentation. I am a member -- well, I have been a member of the
SPC for the fast five years and I hope to continue on that SPC as well over the next
five. I see the work that goes into these strategies and the work that goes on with our
staff here in Wicklow County Council as well. I know I raised concerns at the time
about consultation with the entire county. Obviously I am speaking as a Councillor
from the west of the county, and I know it is said time and time again, but the west is

often forgotten about, and again this is something that I raised during this process;
that I was concerned that there wasn't enough consultation with stakeholders that are
involved in industry and organisations in the west of the county. But I just want to
say thank you to the Council staff that contacted me looking for names and contacts
for the people in the west. So look, I just want to acknowledge that because too
often we do hear from this side that we are forgotten about. So I just want to
acknowledge the work that went into this.

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9 But one thing I will just say while we're on the topic. There are a number of zoned 10 lands in the area, in West Wicklow, that's zoned for industry and they're sitting 11 vacant for numerous years now. It's been raised time and time again with councillors 12 from the west of the county. But unfortunately I think until we improve our 13 infrastructure, and Councillor Timmins mentioned this himself in his contribution, 14 until we get our transport and our infrastructure improved in the west of the county 15 we're going to have huge problems in attracting any industry to the area. I think it's 16 fitting that we again mention the need for the upgrade of the N81. We have raised 17 this time and time again as councillors here from the west, and I will hope that the 18 Council will continue to push for that work to go ahead on the N81 and exhaust 19 every avenue possible to get that back on the agenda. But I do feel that we have land 20 in the west of the county that's just sitting idle. For example, in my own town in 21 Dunlavin, we have land in Milltown that is zoned for industry, and I have asked for 22 updates on what's actually happening with that land, if we are actually going to do 23 anything with it, but there doesn't seem to be any push from the Council to attract 24 business or encourage investment in the area. But I would ask you to look at these 25 lands. I know there's lands in Blessington as well. There's lands there that we can 26 look at and try and encourage investment into the area.

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I like a number of councillors from the area are very proud of where we are from, I am proud to have been born and raised there, I am very lucky to be able to continue living there and to work there, but a number of my friends and peers I grew with unfortunately had to move elsewhere due to jobs or lack of housing, or whatever in the area, they had to move out. But I would hope that other people in future generations would continue to live in the area and have pride of where they are from. So thank you very much. CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. The last Councillor is online. Councillor Miriam
 Murphy.

3 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Thank you to the two 4 presenters. Just something that always worries me with strategies is being left on the 5 table, and I suppose that is for a different section. But I think the strategies are a 6 good thing. It does compile information that maybe we can't reach ourselves. But I 7 think with the strategy there is always the famous word of funding. I mean we have 8 to live in the real world. You know we're getting as much money as we are allowed 9 in Wicklow and it has been scaled back every year, that budget is less and less. How 10 do we make these realities and dreams - I suppose, which they are dreams - come 11 true for our next generation? I mean we can (inaudible) and it would be brilliant. 12 But we have be in reality. Where is the funding coming from? It's a whole circle. 13 But we need to make sure that this is delivered, and with positivity as well. Every 14 part of Wicklow, be it urban or rural, is a beautiful place to live, and it is a beautiful 15 place to rear your children and it is a beautiful place to retire to, but we have to have 16 infrastructure, we have to care for the elderly, for people with disabilities, we have to 17 have transport accessible to all. The whole strategy has to be accessible for all, and I 18 would be worried about that.

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I just want to ask one question: Is there a review on it? Will there will be a reviewof the strategy? And will it be reviewed on the SPCs?

22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I will invite maybe Aoife or Patrick
23 to come back here, or Leonora. Go ahead, Aoife.

DR DOYLE: Thank you very much, Councillor Murphy, and for all the feedback and queries today. We are cognisant funding is a key issue. There has been set out very high level of delivery of the framework with the strategy again per sector,

- 27 because the KPIs and so on. But that very specific implementation plan is something
- that will have to be developed. I suppose in terms of the sector under review of the
- 29 plan that could be for Wicklow County Council themselves to decide, (inaudible) to
- 30 come in for plan on review. That certainly wouldn't be our call necessarily, but we
- 31 would be happy to support if that was something that was required.
- 32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Aoife. Leonora.
- MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. First of all just to thank the members for
   their contributions. It is great to see that there is, you know, such interest in the

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1 strategy. I suppose just from my perspective, it does sit within the economic 2 development arena, so it will be with the SPC for economic development and sports. 3 4 Councillor Fortune, yes, I think we earlier agreed to disagree on the skills task force. 5 But I suppose where we're coming from the skills force is any object of the task force 6 is that you have the right people sitting around the table. In this instance the 7 objective is funding and training and implementation. So the task force is made up 8 of all the main education and training organisations and agencies within the county, 9 and also the funding agencies. So that skills strategy will meet again, the skills task force will meet again to look at the strategy because we now move into the 10 11 implementation stage. Because as the members have rightly said, we don't want the 12 strategy to sit on the shelf, we want to see action out of this. We are lucky we have a 13 huge amount of buy-in from all the agencies who are part of the process right from 14 June to October of last year when we did the public consultation and right to now to 15 the formulation of the strategy. So we have that commitment from the partners. And 16 it is in everybody's interest that they do feed in, because if we can get people in onto 17 the training courses that is then the feeder channel to the jobs that are all going to 18 come along into the particular areas that we have highlighted as the main job 19 opportunities for the county.

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I suppose just specifically in relation to Councillor Leonard's query and the company, not displacing that training company. That company is part of our offshore renewable energy network. So they are actually hugely involved in the whole area of training and development for that particular sector and industry. So there won't be any displacement there in relation to that. In fact, they play an important part of the overall.

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Councillor O'Brien, yes, I mean as you say, aspiration and inspiration is very important, and we do want to see the young people staying in the county. We want to avoid a situation where we continue to have over 70% of the county workforce leaving the county every morning. So there are great opportunities there, particularly as you say, Councillor Snell, in the area of content creation. And I think particularly the new members when they come out to the campus next week they will see there's

1	really exciting opportunities out there, and there's a real excitement and energy
2	around the hub out there.
3	
4	In relation to other hubs, yes, we are developing other hubs. There's one coming on
5	stream in Greystones. It won't just be limited to film and content creation. We will
6	openly welcome anybody into it.
7	
8	We are looking at, as I said the agencies we have on board include the National
9	Marine College of Ireland and we hope, we are looking at opportunities around
10	developing technician roles for the offshore energy.
11	
12	Yes, tourism, lack of beds is not only an issue that is tied to Wicklow, but it is one
13	we will have to kind of keep pressing the button to see what we can do.
14	
15	Training and funding, yes, will be the biggest issues around the implementation
16	stage, but I think the fact we have so many agencies on board, and I think because
17	Wicklow has been identified on the east coast as a main county for the offshore
18	energy there's opportunities there.
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20	Infrastructure, yes, sure, Director Lane is going to solve all those problems, so I have
21	no fears on that front.
22	
23	And Miriam, as you say, funding, but again that's why we have organisations and
24	agencies like Enterprise Ireland, also on the task force, because we'll keep their
25	pockets as much as we possibly can and get them to help us with the training that is
26	needed.
27	
28	So there will be a review process. The SPC, we will report back to them. We will
29	include updates in the chief executive's report. And then as, you know, things
30	develop and there's any events or issues arising we will arrange to engage with the
31	members. Thank you.
32	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Leonora. Chief executive.
33	MS O'GORMAN: Thank you all, members, for your contribution on this, and I just
34	want to say thank you to the KPMG team, and I suppose express my thanks to

1 Lorraine Gallagher who started off on the project and Leonora too who look it over, 2 they have done sterling work to get it to where it is. It is only the start. The next part 3 is the implementation and getting it come to light. 4 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Thank you to Aoife and Patrick and everyone 5 who contributed to it. We look forward to working with you in the future for the 6 betterment of the county. Thank you. 7 With your permission then we're going to the suspension of standing orders then. 8 Just for full transparency, what I am planning to do then is go to the resolution, so we 9 have the wording of the resolution. 10 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: If you want to take the resolution first. 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, I am going to go by half four because we agreed half 12 four. Then what I am proposing, we are going to move up item number 8 - "To 13 consider the Wicklow County Council Draft Strategic Policy Committee 14 Scheme" - because I know it was a topic of conversation in the AGM, and I will 15 finish off then with the chief executive's monthly report, if that is okay. Councillor 16 Behan. 17 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. 18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Bear with me. Thank you. 19 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: And Helen read out the terms of the motion, so I presume 20 I don't need to read it out, and I am not trying to add to the workload of the chief 21 executive or anything, but it just came to my notice over the last five or six weeks 22 through press reports that two substantial parcels of land at what we call Old 23 Fassaroe, which were originally zoned in our previous development plan effectively 24 for a new town, have come on the market. One parcel of land is owned by 25 Roadstone, and the other is owned by Cosgrave brothers, developers. And in our 26 previous development plan we had changed the zoning of that site from primarily 27 employment uses to mainly residential with allowance for recreation, some retail, 28 some employment, and effectively a huge amount hopefully of affordable housing. 29 30 It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for us as a public authority, to get control of a 31 huge area of land on the outskirts of Bray which I think would provide housing for 32 many of the people, not only from the North Wicklow area but also further south. 33 And the model I would compare it to, a previous county secretary here who 34 subsequently went on to be county manager in Dublin South County Council, Joe

Horan, who sadly is no longer with us, had a model scheme called -- basically for
design of a new town called Adamstown in Dublin south. Now he was a visionary,
he was someone who really passionately believed in local authority and public
service, and he combined the best talents of people in Dublin South County Council
along with private developers and government agencies to effectively design a new
town.

8 I think we have an opportunity to do something like that on this occasion. And 9 added to that, we have an opportunity to bring new life into a concept that was 10 actually part of the original thinking with regard to that site, which was the extension 11 of the LUAS line, the Green LUAS line, from Cherrywood all the way to that 12 particular site on the outskirts of Bray. Now subsequently, a change came where the 13 LUAS was going to be diverted onto the DART line. I never really felt that was a 14 great idea, because we have a DART service in Bray already from Bray to 15 Greystones. I felt a LUAS connection on the south side of Bray, which was 16 originally proposed, would provide a magnificent opportunity for many commuters 17 from southern parts of County Wicklow, particularly Wicklow Town, Greystones 18 and Arklow, to get onto a public transport system, park their car on the outskirts of 19 Bray and get into town or the other stations along the way.

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You might think this is pie in the sky, and I don't blame you if you do, but I noticed
on Friday last actually that the government are considering extending the Green
LUAS line from Broombridge to Finglas, where they say they are going to bring it
within a catchment of 50,000 people. Well, I don't see why we can't be in that
particular ballpark as well. Because we have again this opportunity to look and
lobby for this service.

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Now, 400 acres of development land on the outskirts of Bray is going to cost a lot of money. I accept that. I think invitations for expressions of interest on one of the sites I think expired on Friday. The other, it hasn't been offered, as far as I can see, officially for sale but it was reported in the business papers that it is for sale.

So I suppose what I wanted to try and do was put out the concept here to all of you
today, and obviously the chief executive and the management staff, to ascertain

1 whether people think in principle it is worth supporting, and then obviously to go 2 immediately to the most powerful man in the country, who happens, just happens to 3 be a former member of this Council and is now the Taoiseach, to see would he and 4 the other Cabinet Minister, Stephen Donnelly, get on board with this idea, because it 5 will be life changing for many, many thousands of families in this county if this 6 could be realised, but it will need Government investment. Wicklow County 7 Council are not going to have the money to do this. But I do believe the chief 8 executive most certainly has the ability and the vision to bring it all together. And I 9 really would appreciate if members of Council who consider this as something 10 worthwhile to progress and see if we can actually make it a reality. Thank you. 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Peir Leonard. 12 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I would like to support Joe's motion. Joe mentioned 13 this to me last week, and I know a lot of people where I live probably would say why 14 do you want to support something for Bray, but I actually was on the LUAS myself 15 there a couple of weeks ago for the first time I'm ashamed to say and I was with a 16 friend who travels on the N11 and the M11 every day and she said, when we were 17 going home in the car, this is where it always -- you might as well just stop your 18 clock and say we're stuck in traffic. I was saying why don't we extend this further. 19 Then when I looked into it after the motion, after Joe had mentioned it to me. All of 20 the Government policy aligns with what Joe has proposed here. Like the TII, it's in 21 every plan, like, you know. Sort of it probably might be a little bit premature but it is 22 there in everything to extend this out. And, you know, the LUAS, it's 20 years now. 23 I just think it is a no-brainer to explore this. At the very least explore it. But I do 24 think Minister Eamon Ryan should be on it. He's very enthusiastic about the 25 extension of this as well. And they're trying to get traffic out of the city centre. Half 26 of Arklow travels up every day. This would, it would tick a lot of boxes, it would 27 mitigate the housing crisis. You know, we could look at exploring the affordable 28 housing on the site. It would increase quality of life; people wouldn't be stuck in 29 traffic from one end of the day to the other, coming late home at night to their kids in Arklow, and Wicklow and Greystones. I just think, and our coast, our DART, I 30 know they're looking to invest in the DART, but as we know the DART line and the 31 32 train line is in real jeopardy because it's on the coast. Like, the LUAS is not. I think 33 it should be prioritised. And I fully support this motion. And I hope that everybody 34 else does too.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. 2 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you for 3 the motion. I am delighted to say that I have had some conversations with the chief 4 executive already in relation to this site also in relation to the Oldcourt House site in 5 the middle of Bray, or what is referred to as "The Green Lung" in the county. And 6 one of the challenges I think that Bray has is that - and it was actually highlighted in 7 the skills report there - 43% of the population of this county live on 9% of the land, 8 which is in Bray and Greystones. We are absolutely crippled. And I know a lot of 9 the councillors from the west talk about the struggles that exist on the west, and they 10 do indeed exist, but there are equally struggles on the east coast of the county that are 11 really, really challenging.

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13 The site, Bray as a district has no more public land. We have no land left to build. 14 That is my understanding. Joe Lane can understand me, but my understanding is that 15 we don't have any more public land to build on in Bray. So when it comes to affordable housing, when it comes to social housing, we're going to have to look to 16 17 work with partners. And many in this chamber disagree with that but we don't have 18 any other choice. This potentially could give us the opportunity to have land to look 19 at developing and look at having some choice around that. So I don't necessarily 20 disagree with the spirit of the motion at all, Councillor Behan, and, as I said, I have 21 started those discussions with the chief executive.

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My one caveat I will say is that once you put this in the public domain owners of land increase land prices, and that is something that we are going to have to be very, very conscious of and work with. Because the site at the Oldcourt House, my understanding is that is still sitting there. It hasn't sold, and it has complexities around it. And do I think that this is going to answer all the housing problems for the whole district? No. I don't. But I think we're very limited in our options at the moment.

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I also don't think the Taoiseach has the money sitting in his back pocket either,
Councillor Behan, as much as you might suggest he does, and I think we might have
to be a bit clever and look at potentially development levies. I don't even know if

1 they can be spent on that. But I think we would have to look at various options. But 2 yes, it is definitely an option for us. Thank you, Cathaoirleach. 3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dermot O'Brien. 4 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I just want to support 5 the motion from Councillor Behan, and commend him for the diligence that he 6 shows in spotting opportunities like this, and what an endorsement of local 7 democracy this could be; where somebody spots an opportunity, makes an 8 observation, proposes that we respond to the opportunity, encourage us to consider 9 all the moving parts that have been expressed that I won't re-express, but all the 10 moving parts of how this could be transformative for our community and for the 11 people who live there and future generations, and I think the challenge now for us is 12 to do that consideration. As has been expressed, there's a lot of partners required to 13 deliver on something like this, so the sooner we get them around the table the 14 quicker we can move this along and get to a point where decisions can be made. But 15 big respect to Councillor Behan, and I fully support the motion. 16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Tom Fortune. 17 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Yes, I also support Councillor 18 Behan's proposal. I am not going to repeat, the councillors who have spoken have 19 covered it very, very well. Just a practical maybe solution angle on it, it's probably 20 something that could be brought, for example, to the Strategic Policy Committee. 21 Because I think that the Strategic Policy Committees should actually be working on 22 stuff like this, and this is the kind of thing that should be on agendas and explored to 23 make the county overall better. So if that could be an opportunity, to start putting 24 flesh on something like that, and then engage with whoever needs to be engaged 25 with. I realise it is going to be very expensive and the funding obviously won't come 26 out of local authority, but the local authority have the vehicle and the way maybe to 27 access what needs to be done. So maybe the SPC is the way to kick this off and 28 make sure it doesn't just disappear into a black hole. 29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Silvester Bourke. 30 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. First of all, I think it is 31 important for the management to look at every possible site that comes on the 32 market, the feasibility of it, as to whether it is a good fit for the Council's objectives. 33 This probably would be a good fit. But we have had situations like this before in my 34 own area, in Arklow, where we considered and exhorted the manager to buy the

1 (inaudible) site and the site down at the harbour, that's currently for sale, but it fell on 2 deaf ears. So, you know, perhaps it would have been better not to mention it and 3 quietly mention it to the management rather than publicly troubling it, because when 4 you trouble it publicly the opposite seems to happen in my experience. So I will just 5 leave at that. But I do think management have a responsibility to look at it. 6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Chief executive. 7 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Look, I welcome the spirit of the motion. 8 I have no issue with it at all. I have had discussions with a couple of members from 9 Bray around I suppose land acquisition in general. And to Councillor Bourke's point, 10 we do look at all land that comes on the market and see is it suitable to our needs. 11 Our major issue is the funding of the acquisition of such sites, and I think as 12 Councillor Flynn Kennedy rightly pointed out as soon as the Council's name is 13 mentioned the site suddenly appreciates in value. It is a very strategic site. 14 Absolutely. It could bring value to the county. But as Councillor Behan has rightly 15 pointed out, I don't have the funds to purchase it, as it stands. There are vehicles 16 there that we could pursue certainly. But I suppose we have to make sure that it suits 17 our needs. I am quite happy to write and engage with whoever the members wish me 18 to do. So I am very happy to do that. But it is beyond the gift of this local area to 19 fund the purchase of that site as it stands at the moment, and I think that is 20 appreciated by the members. 21 22 Just by way of note, I did work with Joe Horan for several years and I was involved 23 in the conglomeration of that site in Adamstown, so I know the complexities and the 24 challenges that are with it. Up for the challenge, but again, the first hurdle is to 25 identify how we could possibly potentially fund such a site. So thank you, members. 26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, chief executive. And can I commend Councillor 27 Behan on bringing this forward? Unless there's any dissenters, we take it we are 28 agreed upon? Agreed? (Agreed.) Thank you very much. 29 30

Can I look for a seconder there, just to bring up one of the items that I said I am going to change, to consider the SPCs? I am bringing up, proposing it, can I look for a seconder? Councillor Stokes. So we're going to go back to the resolution that we agreed upon earlier. Helen, do you want to --

1 MS PURCELL: Thank you. Teresa is going to put the wording up on the screen if 2 you bear with us for a second so you will have it in front of you, and I will read it out 3 as well. This is going back to the section 153 and the amended wording put forward 4 now by the chief executive. 5 6 So the amended wording for the resolution is that "the chief executive has the 7 express authorisation of the elected Council within the meaning of section 153(2) of 8 the Local Government Act 2001, as amended, to defend the judicial review 9 proceedings entitled Cairns Homes plc v. Wicklow County Council, 2022 JR 0922." 10 11 So that requires a proposer and a seconder? 12 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Propose. 13 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Second. 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Snell proposes. Agreed? (Agreed.) Agreed, 15 thank you. Can I thank you, chief executive. I know there was a long debate, it was 16 worthwhile, and thank you for taking on board the concerns of the members. 17 18 Can we go now to consider the Wicklow County Council Draft SPC Policy 19 2024-2029, please? 20 MS PURCELL: Just to brief on it very briefly. You have in front of you a draft SPC 21 scheme. It has listed in it the six SPCs with the titles as suggested at the annual 22 meeting. They are: Economic Development and Enterprise, chaired by Councillor 23 Tom Fortune; Housing, chaired by Councillor Graham Richmond; Transportation 24 Infrastructure Delivery and Emergency Services, chaired by Councillor Stephen 25 Stokes; Climate Action, Biodiversity, Environment, Energy, Marine and Recreation 26 and Amenity, chaired by Councillor Erika Doyle; Planning and Rural Development, 27 chaired by Councillor Timmins; and, Community and Social Development, chaired 28 by Councillor Caroline Winstanley. 29 30 The draft scheme, as have you in front of you, sets out the role and functions of the 31 SPCs: When they'd meet, what the procedures are, how would they be made up. It 32 is recommended that a minimum of one-third of membership would be from sectoral 33 interests, and those sectoral interests are listed in the SPC guidelines that we have 34 received. The SPC would put together a multi-annual work plan which would be

1	linked into the corporate plan. And it is suggested that any elected members who
2	would like to go onto the SPCs would have an active involvement and positive
3	mindset.
4	
5	In that regard, we will be sending a letter out to all the elected members asking you
6	to list in order of preference which one of the SPCs you would like to be a member
7	of. Each member can be a member of one SPCs and a maximum of two. It is
8	suggested that there would be six elected members on each of the six SPCs in
9	addition to the Cathaoirleach. So there would be seven elected members in total on
10	the SPCs. And we will try as far as possible to accommodate preferences when they
11	come back on that.
12	
13	If you are happy to go forward with the draft as it is at the moment, the next steps are
14	public consultation. The public consultation process involves the national
15	stakeholder pillars; the sectoral interests via the PPN; we would carry out widespread
16	public consultation via our own local media and our website; and there is a minimum
17	of a one-month period for the public consultation; and then it will be suggested that it
18	comes back on the agenda on the 2nd of September for the adoption by yourselves
19	with whatever amendments you require with a view to actually getting the SPCs up
20	and running in October. So if there are any questions.
21	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. I open it up to the floor. Councillor
22	Behan.
23	COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Yes, could I welcome this. It is a really much better
24	arrangement than what we were looking at at our last meeting and I am quite happy
25	to propose it, but I just want to make one enquiry. I did make a strong case I think
26	on the last occasion for housing to be a standalone and it is. Does that mean all of
27	housing, so, housing capital and, you know, current, if you like, so that it's the one
28	subject, if you like, that whoever is on that SPC can get their teeth into the entire area
29	of housing? Because I know it will come across two directorates as far as I can see.
30	Thanks. Otherwise I'm happy to propose it, Cathaoirleach.
31	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thanks, Councillor. I am going to ask the chief executive.
32	MS O'GORMAN: That is a matter for the scheme to determine but yes, I would
33	envisage it being in the one.
34	CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Peir Leonard.

1 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I want to thank the chief executive for the changes in 2 the layout of it, but I would concerns with the climate and recreation. There seems 3 to be an awful lot in the one directorate. And I know marine was added there but I 4 think the marine would be better placed on the economic, because it is about, you 5 know, creating incentives for -- you know, to increase marine activity and the 6 fisheries. So, I think it would be better placed under Economic SPC. There was a 7 Marine Development Committee previously, and I think something along those lines 8 that would include all the stakeholders and include a representative of the BIM on it. 9 MS O'GORMAN: Yes, the marine function, I suppose, sits with that directorate, 10 with the Climate. It seems like an awful lot, when you name out every element of 11 that directorate, but it does sit naturally there. But there is nothing to say there won't 12 be cross over with the Economic Committee, and that makes sense that it will cross 13 over, especially around development. So I think I am comfortable with it sitting 14 where it is, because it is about protection of the marine, about the foreshore, about 15 coastal erosion, and the economic opportunity. So it does kind of straddle both, but I 16 think for the purposes of the management of the SPC it should stay where it is. But 17 it absolutely can report in and speak with the economic SPC and have an active part 18 there.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I have a seconder after Councillor Behan proposed that, 20 please? Councillor Dermot O'Brien. Thank you. Councillor Snell. 21 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yes. Look it, thanks a million. Just in regards to the 22 SPCs, the guidelines state that they meet a minimum of four times per annum. In the 23 Housing SPC we tried to meet bimonthly, because there's such a huge portfolio 24 involved in it. And I actually think it might assist the chambers, should all SPCs go 25 to bimonthly. I think there's a huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes, and 26 if I am being entirely honest I have to say that two hours a month in this chambers is 27 not enough to get through the business of the day, and that's why good functioning 28 SPCs would be helpful. The information could be dissected out through municipal 29 districts as well as obviously a Corporate Policy Group will be privy to information, 30 the SPCs, but I do think it has to function -- it has to filter down to the grass-roots 31 members in municipal districts. And if you're not on a number of the SPCs you're 32 kept in the dark. A lot of what happens in SPCs -- unfortunately members will come 33 in here, and unless you're privy to that SPC you're sort of the dark, like what

happened here earlier. And I think to assist what we're doing; I would suggest that they should meet bimonthly.

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4 I also just want to look into the figures regards SPCs. If you're proposing seven 5 members, so six plus the Cathaoirleach, through six SPCs, it would need 42 6 individual places. If you take out the Cathaoirleachs of each SPC, it means you've 7 only 26 councillors left. Ten councillors, if the chairs just sit on their own SPC, as 8 would be normal, it would leave the other six SPCs filled by six positions, 36 places. 9 So it'd mean ten councillors would have to make up the other ten places. So they 10 would have to sit on two SPCs. I am sure everyone is quite busy. Apart from the 11 SPCs, the municipal district, the corporate policy, the protocol and the various other 12 committees that you put yourselves forward for, that doesn't even leave space for the 13 various community groups that you have represented to get here in the first place, 14 you're going to very, very busy. So I think you need to have a look at the numbers. 15 Unless we're statutorily obliged to have seven members on each SPC I think you 16 should reduce it to the chair and five. But I think you will find it hard to get 17 members to fulfil those SPCs. It's not an issue for me, but I am sure it might be for 18 others who have other interests outside of the Council.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to take that?

20 MS PURCELL: Just to say I wasn't involved in setting up the SPCs schemes five 21 years ago, but I think there does tend to be an awful lot of interest in actually sitting 22 on the SPCs, so I can't seeing there being a problem filling them. But the guidelines 23 are there in relation to the suggestions on the numbers. So, you know, we can play 24 around with them a little bit. In relation to meetings, yes, it's a matter for each SPC 25 to determine how often they meet. And there's also in the guidelines a suggestion 26 that they do feed back to the municipal districts, and they also feed up, as you know, 27 into the Corporate Policy Group. And that's why they ensure that there is somebody 28 from each of the municipal districts on the Corporate Policy Group, so that they can 29 feed back. So that could well be an agenda items for the municipals to actually 30 receive reports from the SPCs, or for the full council.

MS O'GORMAN: I was going to suggest, we could have a standing item every quarter: Reports from the chairs of the SPCs. And that would give everybody in the chamber and opportunity to hear from the SPCs about what has been going on in their particular SPCs. It is being done in other counties; it works very well.

1 Because, as you say, people, if they're not involved in it they sometimes mightn't get 2 the information, or if they're not involved in one of the ancillary groups attaching to 3 it, the scheme, as Helen outlines, the guidelines around the membership, if we do 4 struggle to reach seven members we can look at that. But I think the first port is to 5 ask members what SPCs they're interested in and see what the expressions of 6 interests are like on that, and then we can come back to the members with a 7 suggestion around individual SPCs if there is an issue. 8 COUNCILLOR SNELL: No, look it, that is very helpful. And one other issue, in 9 regards to, if we're only proposing going out to the public participation network 10 groups in September how soon will they come back? 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: No, it is now. We go out from today. No, from today. 12 COUNCILLOR SNELL: So will we be in a place to have the SPC up and running in September? 13 14 CATHAOIRLEACH: October I'd say. 15 COUNCILLOR SNELL: October. 16 MS PURCELL: Yes. We have to carry out a minimum of one month consultation. 17 That is why we were so keen to get that on today's agenda; so we can get out there, 18 start the consultation, have a month, six weeks, and then it would be ready to go on 19 the agenda in September. And that would realistically -- because you have to write 20 out then to the pillars, and you have to get all your nominations in, realistically 21 you're looking at October for meetings. 22 COUNCILLOR SNELL: I think it is hugely important that this Council was formed 23 on the 23rd of June, if we only have one meeting in October, you don't have one in 24 December, it means within a six-month period the SPCs only sat once. So I am 25 proposing that it be bimonthly, every two months. So obviously for this year, I think 26 two would be sufficient. If you could fit them in. But they would need to be in 27 place, and it would need to have a meeting in December. We're already starting 28 behind and it's just to make up that time. So I do think it is important that each SPC 29 would fit two in this calendar year. 30 CATHAOIRLEACH: I can answer that. It is in the agenda. But plus the fact too 31 from the CPG, we had three new chairs this morning joined us on the CPG, and trust 32 me, they're willing to get going, and they're committed, and I can see from listening 33 to them this morning that they have taken on board what you have said because they

1 have already said it to me at CPG that they're willing and rearing to go forward, and I 2 can't see a problem going forward with that. 3 4 Can I ask Councillor Cronin to come in there now please? 5 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thanks very much. Just something to bear in mind 6 when the SPCs concerned. Unfortunately when I was on the Economic 7 Development SPC they were arranged for the same day and the same time as my MD 8 meeting. They were arranged for ten o'clock on a Monday morning and our MD 9 meetings are on at half ten on a Monday morning. Just bear that in mind when they 10 are arranging. Now I know it is down to each individual SPC, but it was very 11 unfortunate that last time, although I mentioned it time and time again, that they 12 were arranged for the same day as my MD meeting and unfortunately I missed a 13 number of them. So I just want that on record, to bear that in mind for the future. 14 Thank you. 15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I am sure the chairs will take that on 16 board. Councillor Joe Behan. 17 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Just in relation to the people who would be invited onto 18 the SPCs from outside bodies, et cetera, I think five years ago I proposed that not just 19 the PPN but if there are members of the public out there who want to be considered 20 for serving on the SPCs can that be done? Do they have to be part of the Public 21 Participation Network? 22 MS PURCELL: They have to be representing one of the pillars, and they are 23 actually specified in the guidelines as to where those members -- where the 24 membership should come from. But community groups are part of it through the 25 PPN, so they can go into it that way. 26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Helen. Councillor Dermot Brian. 27 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Just a quick one. Building on Councillor 28 Cronin's point. It would be brilliant if the chairs, again it is probably their 29 prerogative, if when we get the invitation to choose the SPCs that we would like to 30 go on, if they were able to give us a sense of when the meetings would be that would 31 be amazing, I think. And just even to build another layer to that. We have a young 32 person sitting on the Climate and Biodiversity SPC, which again is a huge 33 recognition of how this Council invites the voice of young people into those space, 34 but again if they knew in advance whether it is -- I'm sure they would be devastated

1 to be taking time off school, but to know in advance they would be able to plan that 2 in advance. So if the SPC offers were coming out and we had a sense of when the 3 meetings might be, that would certainly help me to decide which one I would like to 4 sit on. Thanks. 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: I suppose I can make an appeal because all the chairs are here 6 online, that it is communication and transparency, and that will help all of us going 7 forward. So I make that appeal here today to the chairs of the SPCs, that you even 8 send that bit of information out as soon as you can. Is that okay? Okay. Thank you. 9 We need a proposer. 10 MS PURCELL: We have proposer. 11 CATHAOIRLEACH: I need a seconder. 12 MS PURCELL: We have. Councillor Dermot O'Brien. 13 CATHAOIRLEACH: Sorry, I beg your pardon. I am going to move on now to the chief executive's monthly report. Can I just say, it is five past five, I want to get 14 15 through it, and I want to give everyone an opportunity to ask their questions and not 16 to have to write in because we are not back here until September, so if you can keep 17 it within the three-minute timeframe and ask your questions I really would appreciate 18 it today. So Councillor Silvester Bourke. 19 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: I would just like to ask for an update on the Greenway, 20 the Shillelagh to Woodenbridge Greenway, please. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: I will take them in groups of three. Councillor Joe Behan. 22 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: I am looking for an update on Rehills land in Bray, the 23 site that we had earmarked for affordable and social housing. It has dropped off the 24 CEO's report. What is the latest situation regarding the bus lane, the mad bus lane 25 proposal on the N11? There doesn't seem to be any further news on that. What is

- 26 the update on that? Does the chief executive have knowledge of this document, the
- 27 data protection GDPR document for public representatives? Because in that
- 28 document it says that it is sufficient, if a councillor makes a written representation or
- an oral representation noted by a member of staff that's sufficient under GDPR. Is
- 30 the chief executive aware of that? And is she happy to introduce that policy to all
- 31 her staff? And lastly, we're now in a situation where hedges are growing across
- 32 public footpaths in many parts of the county, and in Bray particularly along the
- Boghall Road we have a major problem. The owner doesn't seem to care about it. I

1	ask the chief executive, do we have the power to go in, cut that and bill the owner for
2	public safety reasons? Thank you.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Shane Langrell
4	COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Cathaoirleach, chief executive, I would like to add to
5	that, me a rural man, a farmer, hedge I know we're out of season, you can't cut
6	until September, but I find it is the same landowners that do not cut their hedges.
7	One particular road I can see it hasn't been cut in five to six years. It is a liability.
8	Where are we on that one? Secondly, the old Garda station in Ashford, I'd like to
9	know where we are with that. I am being inundated with calls and emails, and while
10	I was out canvassing the last three weeks.
11	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. That is three. Groups of three if
12	that's okay.
13	MS O'GORMAN: I am going to ask Joe to deal with the Greenway and Rehills, and
14	the bus lane. On the GDPR, I haven't seen that document you're referring to
15	Councillor Behan. I will examine it. I will have a look at it and come back to you
16	directly. Hedgerows I think would be Joe as well.
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Joe, maybe you will come in.
18	MR LANE: The Greenway, I presume you're talking about Arklow-Shillelagh only.
19	That route selection I believe has nearly been complete and we should have more
20	information in the next couple of weeks. I think there was one area that was being
21	recommended and I think that has been resolved. Rehills, as I detailed the last time,
22	the PPP, they went through their process, and they had trouble with financing. We're
23	currently looking at that, but we are still dealing with the same finances, with the
24	same challenges, and we must go within our own work programme now that we don't
25	have the help of the PPP. So when we get to that we will look at it, but it is behind at
26	the moment. We are trying to get the 2024. The challenges that were with the PPP,
27	we are looking with the idea of talking to the department on a schedule, but the costs
28	and challenges will still be same, so the access and other issues on the site.
29	
30	The bus lane, we are with the regional office looking at the design of that. But again,
31	you've a conflicting area with the bus lanes there and just the sheer volume going
32	through Kilmacanogue, and that is where the problem is, there is currently designs
33	being looked at regarding a solution to both Kilmacanogue, the on and off ramp and
34	Enniskerry junction, and I will be back to you on that.

1 2 I don't know who asked me about the Boghall Road, you might give me details of 3 that particular one and I will come back to you on that. If it is an ongoing problem, 4 give it to me and I'll come back to you on it. 5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We can go back to --6 MS O'GORMAN: Hedge rows. 7 MR LANE: You might give me the exact location, and I will get the engineers to 8 report on the problems because it is a new one, and I just need to look at it myself 9 and I will come back, okay, both of you. 10 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you. 11 MR NICHOLSON: Cathaoirleach, in relation to Ashfield Garda Station, the 12 members will be aware that the Council bought that under the special funds a couple 13 of years ago. We bought the Carnew Garda Station -- sorry, the Carnew Bank and 14 the Ashfield Garda Station. A local group have been formed to develop that and turn 15 it into a community centre for the people of Ashford. Their first port of call would 16 be a Part 8 planning application, and then seeking funding under town and village, or 17 leader, or some other fund. So we meet on a regular basis. They're making very 18 good progress. They have the team set up. They have got some indicative drawings. 19 And it is all very good at the moment. The next step will be a Part 8 planning 20 application. 21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy. 22 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you, 23 chief executive, for the report. I am just looking for clarity, Cathaoirleach, on the 24 out-of-hours homeless services. This has been brought up a number of times in 25 Bray. And we're still struggling to get a written document that details outside of 26 normal working hours, and particularly at the weekend, what is the protocol and 27 position with referring people to the cold weather facility or San Remo, or other 28 facilities. I think I have raised it before. We are ringing the helpline, and we are 29 being hold if someone is from Wicklow they're not going to be help them out in 30 Dublin and yet we're being told the Dublin number should respond to them. So 31 many of us in this chamber have had this issue come up for them, so we really need 32 very clear instructions and guidelines on what we can do when someone comes to us 33 outside of normal working hours, and they actually have nowhere to go. Thank you. 34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Peter Stapleton.

1	COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just following up on the					
2	Carnew Bank of Ireland property and what stage it is currently at. And also, there's					
3	mention that it's due to begin design agreement in July, but prior communication					
4	from the Council has mentioned that contractors were going to be appointed as of					
5	2023. So just understanding why there's been such a long delay in getting that up					
6	and running. And just in terms of what the Council are now proposing to deliver					
7	there, it still has the title of remote working hub, but having undergone my own					
8	informal consultation through canvassing around Carnew, it is very clear from the					
9	community that some element of community centre facility rooms would also be					
10	much needed in the area, and if there are proposals to incorporate that into the					
11	building it would be good to know.					
12	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Orla Finn.					
13	COUNCILLOR FINN: I am wondering is there an update on the IDA site in					
14	Greystones which was to have a film centre built on it. All activity seems to have					
15	stalled. It was expected that this centre once built would bring a lot of jobs to the					
16	area and so it is a concern nothing seems to be happening at the moment.					
17	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. That is three.					
18	MS O'GORMAN: Okay. I am going to ask Michael to respond on the out of hours					
19	homeless service, and then I think the rest are for Leonora around the Carnew					
20	property and the IDA site.					
21	MR NICHOLSON: Cathaoirleach, I am aware of the issues regarding the out of					
22	hours and we plan to actually develop a written procedure to make it clear who is					
23	and who isn't responsible. We're working on that. I will get back to you as soon as it					
24	is done.					
25	MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. The Carnew Bank of Ireland building. So					
26	yes, we are trying to get to design stage. This is on the first phase of the funding,					
27	and then once we have it to this point and a Part 8 that allows us to go to the next					
28	phase of actually doing the conversion. The funding was based on it being a hub,					
29	and so that there's where the proposal remains at the moment. Because the funding					
30	is dependent on that.					
31						
32	Our information from different areas and different networks that we're in is that the					
33	hubs are still popular in certain circumstances because people don't necessarily want					
34	to be working at home. And we're tying this in with our economic strategy around					

1 the whole piece of people who are currently working out of the county and travelling 2 to Dublin, that if we can create an opportunity for them that they can come to and 3 stay in Wicklow, and work in a hub in Wicklow, that where we're working from. 4 And most recently we've had two network meetings with tech companies and 5 different companies who said they would definitely be interested in that area. So 6 that's where it is at the moment, and we will keep you informed in relation to that. 7 8 In relation to the IDA site in Greystones, our understanding is that the delays there, 9 there were a few different delays, including the actors strike, which delayed progress 10 on it, but our understanding is that they do intend to go on site very shortly. 11 COUNCILLOR FINN: Thank you. 12 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to online now. Councillor Miriam Murphy. 13 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Sorry yes, I'm awake. Just looking at the questions 14 there. Thanks for the chief executive's report and detail as well. I know I have said 15 this to the housing director last week. But I think it would be interesting to have a 16 break down, I am sure the other municipal districts would be interested in this as 17 well, how many people with abilities is on the housing list in our districts. I think it 18 is very important to know. I think it will open a lot. I think we need to be cognisant 19 of what the need is, and how hard it is for those people. It is quite serious for some people because they're a prisoner of the homes that they're in at the moment. And 20 21 that's not right either. 22 23 Also moving on, I would just like to ask another break down maybe for the 24 September meeting in our outdoor staff. In our districts are we understaffed. But is 25 there room for improvement for outdoor staff? I think outdoor staff that are there are 26 doing this amazing work but certainly an increase in outdoor staff I'm sure would be 27 welcome. And also in the housing section again we seem to be, I feel, understaffed. 28 And I think we need to investigate our staff's, I suppose, needs in reaching out to 29 working staff in Housing. I feel that we need to investigate that. Thank you 30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Edward Timmins. 31 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Thanks, chairman. Two questions. One is the 32 Baltinglass RDF (inaudible) second application for further funding to extend the 33 works to the rest of the townland as originally envisaged in the original proposal. It 34 was unfortunately not successful. I would like to ask can we get information on why

it was not successful. If we could get some feedback on that. Secondly, I noticed
the public lighting contractor is finishing up and it is stated in the manager's report
that you hope to have a contractor in place on July 24th, three weeks away. I am
wondering how close we are to that. Because that is a huge issue on doorsteps; lights
not working and taking up to two years or more to be repaired. Just simple repairs.
Thank you.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Dermot O'Brien. 8 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. A couple of quick 9 ones from the housing section. Thanks again for the report, and the detail in it. It is 10 very much appreciated. Just looking at the relets and voids issue and the challenge 11 of the availability of contractors. It is probably something maybe for the SPC to 12 perhaps take on, because we all know as members that people are contacting us 13 every single day about their express need, and we're all looking at the list and we're 14 looking at the numbers, but I think we really need to find a dynamic response to how 15 we fill that gap if contractors aren't available or if there's a deficit in that space, we 16 really need to put our heads together. I know that in the previous Council there was 17 a community wealth-building model that was presented which is again a dynamic 18 way of supporting people to come together as contractors and do work within the 19 county, but that just jumped out at me.

20

Just two more, Cathaoirleach. One around the private rented accommodation in terms of regulation and enforcement, and again, very important, very welcome. And we know that in our own districts, well I can speak for Bray, that the response to our own properties is phenomenal in terms of issues that are arising and how we responded to them, but I am wondering what kind of resources are required to do that well and do that efficiently because I imagine it is big work in the private rent sector.

27

28 The last one, again alarming, Cathaoirleach, that in the emergency accommodation

29 figures that we have six families or individuals who are in emergency

30 accommodation for 12 months or more. So again, just to flag that as a worry, which

31 is in stark contrast to the previous year. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

32 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. That's three.

33 MS O'GORMAN: I might deal with one or two them very quickly myself. It ties up

34 I suppose what Councillor Murphy was asking about outdoor staff and then what

1 Councillor O'Brien was asking about the relets and voids. We're looking at -- at the 2 moment our district staff are doing an awful lot, an awful, awful lot and doing it 3 exceptionally well, with very limited resources. So I have asked Michael's team to 4 look at the housing function and how that might, might be better accommodated if it 5 was controlled centrally and delivered districtly to free up staff and allow I suppose a 6 standardised approach to relet repairs and void repairs across the county, because the 7 standards vary from district to district.

8

9 So to answer I suppose Councillor Murphy's question, we would probably need -- we 10 certainly do need more outdoor staff. Getting and retaining staff is extremely 11 difficult, whether they be staff that are based in-house or staff that are outdoor, it is 12 exceptionally difficult in a market where people can pick and choose where they 13 want to work. So we are trying to kind of market ourselves as an employer of choice 14 and offering obviously blended working and all the different incentives that we have. 15 Things that would have been unique to the local authority pre-Covid are now 16 available everywhere, so it is quite difficult when we can't compete on pay. Our pay 17 is what it is. But that's something we're looking at I suppose in a holistic way across 18 districts, to see how best to maximise what we have and where additions need to be 19 made across the districts.

20

Michael will come down on the breakdown of the disability, and then Leonora might
come in on Baltinglass and Joe on the public lighting.

23

Just on the private rented accommodation inspections, they are difficult. They certainly are. We were allocated a resource as part of the department funding, but it is not enough to do it. They are really only scratching at the surface. But with the advent of more private rented accommodations it is something we really need to get on top of it.

MR NICHOLSON: Cathaoirleach, just following on from what the chief executive said, the good news is that the indoor staff in housing is almost back to full capacity. We had a few months there where with people leaving and illness and promotions and transfers we were down a few; we're almost back to where we were a few months ago. So that is good news. And I do apologise to the members who have been looking for a service, there have been some gaps, but that is being filled and by the end of July we will be to a hundred percent of our accommodation, which is great.

- I spoke to Councillor Murphy on this last week on this issue, an awful lot of
  applicants don't actually declare their disability, there is quite a lot of hidden
  disabilities, so it can be often difficult to prepare a comprehensive list of who has a
  disability because it is something that people have to declare, and some don't wish to
  for some reason, but we are trying to compile a list, as Councillor Murphy suggested,
  of those we are aware of. The same with those who are aged, because again we do
  provide age-friendly accommodation as well, so the more of that the better.
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12Just to back up what the chief executive says, yes, we would need an army of staff to13investigate, inspect and report on all the private rented accommodation. We do the14best we can, but we are just chipping at the surface. We would need an army15literally to look at all the private. We are very good, as has been suggested, on our16social housing, but on our private rented it is a mammoth task. And it is not just us,17every local authority is the same.

18

19 As regards getting contractors, yes, the issue really is the availability of contractors 20 and the prices we are getting. We are using framework agreements, and we are 21 moving towards more planned maintenance as opposed to response maintenance, and 22 that is proving fruitful. But again, it is an ongoing battle, and we are competing with 23 the private sector in terms of getting work done, and we keep doing the best we can, 24 and we are trying to turn around houses as quick as we can, because obviously 25 having a vacant house, apart from the fact it is denying somebody a house, it is also 26 loss of income for the Council as well.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Leonora.

MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Councillor Timmins, yes, in relation to the
 RDF in Baltinglass we will send out the feedback. It is not hugely informative

- 30 feedback that we get, but I will get an email out to all the members. Thank you.
- 31 MS O'GORMAN: Joe, on the public lighting.
- 32 MR LANE: Sorry, yes. As detailed last time, we were tendering, so we had a recent
- 33 call for tenders. Two contractors have submitted tenders recently, they're currently
- 34 being assessed and will be assessed over the next couple of weeks, and we hope to

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1	appoint a new public maintenance contractor in the next few weeks after we have
2	gone through the tender evaluation process. We have the tenders in.
3	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Peir Leonard.
4	COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I just have a couple of things. Just in relation to the
5	RDF and the procurement of vacant buildings in Arklow, in particular, I want to ask,
6	where is that at? And, if possible, I know I was told that when the CPO, if it's
7	successful that the properties will be just flipped, there won't be any development
8	there, but I think there's a missed opportunity you know to kind of maybe keep some
9	of the land for use for the Council, whether it is car parking or you know other uses,
10	and I don't know whether that is possible. You know, rather than just flipping the
11	whole site, to have a look and explore the opportunities of other possible uses for the
12	community before its flipped.
13	
14	And then just the upgrade, general upgrade, windows and doors of social housing
15	across the board, could we get some sort of timeline and statement out about the
16	funding? I think if people know whether it is going to be four years, ten years, or is
17	this endless? There's a lot of people, and the condition is really, really bad, I'm
18	talking about doors literally not shutting and timber windows falling out of houses.
19	They are particularly bad and in bad disrepair and it is really affecting people. So
20	some sort of statement and clear timeline and pathway forward for the replacement
21	of those we're pushing the whole private sector and insulation and upgrades, but
22	we have got this huge gap with our social housing stock.
23	
24	That's it I think.
25	CATHAOIRLEACH: Are you sure? Thank you. Councillor Pat Kennedy.
26	COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Just two things for the
27	chief executive. One is, chief executive, I did ask you back sometime around
28	December/January in relation to writing to the ESB about the outages that is
29	continuing Rathdrum, Aughrim and the rural areas, and it is continuing. Nothing is
30	happening. And I know you did come back to me and say they hadn't come back to
31	you. If they still haven't come back to you, would you mind writing back to them
32	again? It is causing huge frustration to people in their homes but also businesses
33	who have to close some of the time because of the outages.
34	

1 The other thing I wanted to bring up is the community land in Rathdrum, and I know 2 I brought this up before. But I know we did appoint a consultant, but nothing is 3 happening and it's causing huge frustration in the community, especially among 4 clubs who need them, who need this land and especially the Avondale GAA Club 5 and Athletic Club in Rathdrum need this land, but nothing is happening with this 6 consultant, and I think it is time now we made a decision to move in a different 7 direction because it is going on far too long with nothing happening. Thanks, 8 Cathaoirleach.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Nobody else wants to come in bar Councillor so I will let you10 in there.

11 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And it is not a question. It is 12 words of praise for the chief executives and the two directors in housing, Michael 13 Nicholson and Joe Lane, and the acting director Theresa O'Brien, for the great report 14 that was given to this Council last Thursday from the Human Rights and Equality 15 Agency with regard to equality particularly of how travellers are treated in this 16 county, specifically with regard to traveller-specific accommodation. And they were 17 very praiseworthy of the work that has been done, which was really led Theresa 18 particularly. I think with the exception of Donegal and ourselves every other county 19 that were surveyed had shortcomings in their plans, but we were found I think to be 20 one of the best counties. And that is down to the work of all of the staff in Wicklow 21 County Council. I would also single out Mary Rose Corcoran as well for her 22 specific role there.

23

They highlighted the LTEACC, which is a body that we are represented on here as members, as being one of the important initiatives that we're taking and something that hopefully will continue. Thank you.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Behan. Thank you for raising that
28 important issue. I only have one more speaker.

COUNCILLOR FINN: I just have a question, please. It is in relation to an estate in
Newcastle there. Now, I think the estate is called Seamount. I didn't come today
with that prepared. A couple of the residents there have asked me if it would be

- 32 possible to get the date, the exact date or certainly within a week of when the
- retrofitting of the houses there is going to take place. I know it has been scheduled
- 34 to take place, but I don't think they have been informed yet. Their main concern I

1	suppose really was around the fact that they would be buying oil for the winter, and
2	they don't want to spend a lot of money on this to discover that three weeks later
3	basically that it is no longer relevant. Thank you very much.
4	CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Chief executive.
5	MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. The ESB have not replied to me. So I will
6	write to them again and I will copy you on my correspondence to them, Councillor
7	Kennedy.
8	
9	I will ask Leonora to talk about the RDF, the vacant buildings. I'm not sure if the
10	funding under that scheme would allow us to do as you proposed, Councillor
11	Leonard, but we can certainly look at it. Leonora might be able to clarify it for you.
12	Michael might talk about the windows and doors, the conditions survey. And then
13	Theresa will talk about the community lands in Rathdrum. And, Councillor Behan,
14	thank you for your kinds words on that.
15	MR NICHOLSON: Just a couple of areas. Just for the new members in particular,
16	the housing maintenance budget is assigned to each MD and that covers ongoing
17	maintenance. It wouldn't cover the likes of window and doors. We would depend on
18	funding from central government to cover window and doors because they are
19	obviously a costly item. We do the best we can. We try to tackle them on needs
20	basis. We take the worst cases first and work backwards. A lot of stock are old
21	stock, and all require windows and doors, and again it is a mammoth task to replace
22	them all. I will try and get a list of timeline of when they will be done per estate.
23	
24	In relation to the travellers, yes, and I would like to also pay tribute to Councillor Joe
25	Behan who was too modest to state that he chaired the LTEACC for the last five
26	years, so a lot of the praise is due to Joe for that because we're only as good as the
27	chair and Joe was a great chair in fairness to him.
28	
29	Retrofitting of houses, I will try and get an update on that for you, Councillor Finn. I
30	haven't got an exact date. Between Joe and I we will sort it out. Thanks.
31	MS O'BRIEN: Councillor Kennedy, I will have to check that out with I know
32	there was a master plan being done, but I will talk to the local Sports Partnership and
33	come back to you on it.
34	MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

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1 2 Councillor Leonard, yes, so the ownership of those buildings is very complex, as you 3 know, and our former TRO was trying to identify the ownership and had of kind of 4 bottomed that out a bit. For the members who don't know, Deirdre Whitfield who 5 was our town regeneration officer retired last Friday, so our new town regeneration 6 officer Stephen Clarke is taking up his position in two weeks' time, so that will be 7 one of the items that he will be prioritising. We just need to try and establish who 8 actually owns it. Thank you. 9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Is that it? Is that everyone? Perfect. Okay. So we go onto 10 item number 9: Correspondence. 11 MS PURCELL: Just three very brief items. Members have been circulated with an 12 awful lot of correspondence but among it there have been three circulars LG10/2024, 13 which deals with Local Authority members' gratuity; LG11/2024 which is the 14 allowance and expenses of elected members, that supersedes the 2022 one, and we 15 will be talking through it in a little bit more detail tomorrow for anybody who is 16 coming to the induction training; and LG12/2024 is revised annual remuneration 17 amount from the 1st June which hasn't been paid yet, but there will be some arrears 18 coming on that soon. And then just to remind you about the induction training, 19 there's quite a lot of it here tomorrow and you have got the emails then for the 2nd, 20 3rd, 9th and the 19th or 18th, all the dates anyway. You've got all the emails with all 21 the training in it. So looking forward to seeing you at it. Thanks. 22 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Just one item I have. There was a lot of interest 23 here at the AGM about the Sports Partnership, and I know a number of members put 24 themselves forward. So I spoke to the Sports Partnership, and they are offering that 25 if one person from each MD wants to go onto the Sports Partnership they're willing 26 to accommodate that. Okay. 27 28 So I hope you all enjoy your summer break, and we will see you back in September. 29 MS O'GORMAN: Just to remind members that the training is open to all members, 30 both new and existing, so you are free to come to as many sessions you like. 31 MS PURCELL: And there are links; you can attend it remotely as well if you wish. 32 33 (Time noted 5:34 pm) \* \* \* \* 34

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