

ORDINARY MEETING OF WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL
HELD AT COUNTY BUILDINGS, WHITEGATES, WICKLOW
TOWN AND VIA TEAMS
ON
MONDAY, 4th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 2:00 PM

STENOGRAPHER: Niamh Kelly-Leahy, RMR, MBIVR

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1 Proceedings commenced on Monday, 4th November 2024 at 2:00pm, as follows:

2

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Good afternoon, members. So we can just get ready there,
4 please, and start off with the roll call. Thank you, Helen.

5 MS PURCELL: Thank you, and I would like to welcome everybody to the meeting.
6 I would ask that all the members speak into their microphones for the benefit of
7 those who are remote. We have had a full audit carried out on the sound for those
8 attending remotely and there aren't any issues, so that would help immensely. Any
9 members of the public who are attending, if they could turn their microphones and
10 their cameras off, please. Thank you very much.

11 Now, for the roll call.

12

13 Councillor Danny Alvey?

14 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Present.

15 MS PURCELL: Councillor Mark Barry?

16 COUNCILLOR BARRY: Present.

17 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Joe Behan will be late. Councillor Sylvester
18 Bourke?

19 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Present.

20 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Melanie Corrigan?

21 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Present.

22 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Avril Cronin?

23 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Present.

24 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Erika Doyle?

25 COUNCILLOR DOYLE: Here.

26 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Malacháí Duddy?

27 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Anseo.

28 MS PURCELL: Present. Apologies from Councillor Gail Dunne. Councillor
29 Louise Fenelon Gaskin?

30 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Present.

31 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Orla Finn?

32 COUNCILLOR FINN: Present.

33 MS PURCELL: Present. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald?

34 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Present.

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

1 MS PURCELL: Thank you.

2 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, members. I will open the floor to condolences,
3 please. Councillor Melanie Corrigan.

4 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to pay my
5 respects to the family of Tony McLoughlin of O'Kelly's Jewellers in Bray. Tony was
6 predeceased by his wife, Alice O'Kelly, and they're one of the longest running
7 businesses in Bray, O'Kelly's Jewellers. A lot of people would know them for
8 making plaques and awards for sports throughout the whole of the county, as well as
9 their jewellery business. I just want to pay respects to his daughter Joan, and his
10 sons, Paul and Brian, and to all their families, their children and their grandchildren.
11 Thank you.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Corrigan. Councillor Timmins.

13 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Thank you, Chairman. I would like a vote of sympathy
14 for Garda Aaron McNamara from Barraderry, Kiltegan. A young guard of 30 years
15 of age who died suddenly about a week and a half ago. A massive funeral in
16 Rathvilly for him, attended by hundreds of his colleagues from Store Street Garda
17 Station. I would just like to propose a vote of sympathy for his family.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Patsy Glennon.

19 COUNCILLOR GLENNON: Likewise, I would like to be associated with what
20 Councillor Timmins has just said, but in addition, John McCarville who was just
21 buried this morning. John was the only detective in the Baltinglass and Blessington
22 area for many years, helped many people over the years, nice and discreetly did his
23 job. He was very proactive in helping people. And a massive funeral this morning
24 down in Ballymore Eustace attended by a lot of people from County Wicklow and
25 County Kildare. So I would like a vote of sympathy to his wife and his two sons and
26 his daughter.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Glennon. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

28 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I am not sure if this
29 is the right place or not, but I wonder would we, on behalf of the Council, extend our
30 sympathy and solidarity to the people of Spain. I know we have a large population
31 of Spaniards in Wicklow, including under my own roof, and perhaps maybe we
32 could extend our sympathies and solidarity to the ambassador, or whatever is
33 appropriate, considering the loss and devastation that's being experienced there at the
34 moment.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor O'Brien. I wholeheartedly agree with
2 you. Councillor Tom Fortune.

3 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Can we pass condolences
4 on to the family of Danny Hadden who died recently in Greystones. Danny would
5 have been associated with Greystones and Kilcoole over the years in the GAA
6 presence. Also he was a long-time employee of the library service. So maybe we
7 can remember him today and condolences to all his family.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Fortune. No others. I have my own
9 two here. Sorry, just we have had a tough time in Wicklow here. I just want to offer
10 my condolences to the family of Anthony Walker, a young man taken too early. And
11 I know he will be sadly missed by his mother Miriam, his dad Tony, his sisters Julie
12 and Katy-Jo family, and extended family. And also to the family of Rita Heraghty. I
13 know she will be sadly missed by her daughters Siobhán, Aoife and Maeve and her
14 son, John. May they rest in peace. I would ask you to stand for a moment's silence.

15 MS PURCELL: Sorry, can we also extend our sympathies to the family of Lynol
16 Mpofo, who is the brother of our colleague Sharon Delany Mpofo. Thank you.

17 (A moment's silence.)

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Members, just before we go to the agenda I just have a couple
19 of congrats on behalf of all of us rather than every one of us coming in. I just want
20 to offer my congratulations to Tearmann Community Gardens who won first place in
21 the respective category The Pride of Place in Monaghan on Saturday night. Also,
22 Tinahely Recycling Centre who came runners-up in their respective category. And
23 Wicklow Murals, even though they didn't win, it was a terrific project, and I am sure
24 they were just pipped at the post.

25
26 Can I also offer my congrats to the Tidy Towns who had an event there on Friday in
27 Croke Park, I think, was it, yes. I just want to congratulate Wicklow, Arklow,
28 Greystones and Bray for winning gold medals. I know Wicklow's points went up by
29 14, which was fantastic. And I want to also congratulate all the other medal winners
30 as well. I can do that on behalf of all of us. Okay.

31 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Also we should include in that Síofra Lawless in
32 Greystones.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: Just bear with me one minute. Councillor Timmins, and then
34 I'll coming to you, Councillor Fortune.

1 COUNCILLOR TIMMINS: Yeah, I would just like to be associated with the great
2 achievement of Tearmann Gardens in Baltinglass. I would also like to congratulate
3 Tinahely Senior football team, and Peter Stapleton, my colleague here beside me,
4 one of the members of that team, for their great win in the county final over, I am
5 sorry to say, Baltinglass, by a point. But after a 40-year wait congratulations to
6 Tinahely and really well deserved. And they also had a fantastic win in the first
7 round of the Leinster Club yesterday, beating a fancy Portarlington team. So best of
8 luck to Tinahely as they go on through that championship.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: It is nice to start a meeting on a positive note. Councillor
10 Fortune.

11 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Just to add to what you are saying, Cathaoirleach.
12 Síofra Lawless from Greystones who has just won her second gold medal at the
13 boxing championships. She is up there now on the pedestal with the likes of Katie
14 Taylor. So congratulations on behalf of everybody.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Fortune. We will go to the agenda
16 now.

17

18 So, to confirm and sign minutes of ordinary meeting of Wicklow County Council
19 held on Monday, 7th October 2024, and there should be copies attached. Proposer,
20 please. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald and Councillor Pat Kennedy.

21

22 Item No 2: "To confirm and sign the minutes of special meeting of Wicklow County
23 Council held on Monday, 7th October 2024. (Copy attached.)" Can we have a
24 proposer? Councillor Shane Langrell. Seconded by Councillor Caroline
25 Winstanley.

26

27 Item No 3: "To consider the Chief Executive's Report in accordance with Part XI of
28 the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and Part 8 of the Planning and
29 Development Regulations 2001, as amended, for the construction of 74 social houses
30 at Tinahask Upper, Arklow, Co. Wicklow. (Report attached.)"

31

32 MR BOWES: Yeah, there's 74 social housing units in Tinahask Upper. I believe
33 this was presented to the Arklow MD on separate occasions, and the Chief
34 Executive's Report is with you now for acceptance.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Perfect. Looking for a proposer. Councillor Edward
2 Timmins. Sorry, Silvester Bourke.

3 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Cathaoirleach, thank you very much. Cathaoirleach,
4 this is very important Part 8 to the Arklow Municipal District. We have, as you
5 know, quite a large number of people on the housing list and this is Council-owned
6 land that we have honed for the last probably 35 or 40 years. And I believe that, if
7 we go ahead with these houses it will alleviate a huge housing pressure on an awful
8 lot of families, so I would like to propose that, but I would like to make an
9 amendment to it. I would like to propose that if we accept this as per the manager's
10 recommendation that an additional person be appointed to act as go-between during
11 construction. Because there will be issues there with traffic management and coming
12 out through the Churchfield estate and down through Abbeyville, a lot of
13 construction traffic will be using that. And it is a sensitive issue for residents in that
14 area, traffic flow, and I believe that we should have a liaison person there to smooth
15 out management of the construction site. There could be say, for example, the health
16 and safety officer may double up or expand their role on-site to actually liaise
17 between community and residents associations and construction teams to ensure the
18 smooth operation of this site. Otherwise you're going to have a lot of angst and
19 people will be coming to the local councillors to sort out all those issues. And it is
20 the similar to way, say, the CPO for the roads bypass, as you know their manager,
21 often a liaison person is appointed to cooperate between landowners and the
22 construction company to make sure that there's no problems. Irish Water did it for
23 the construction of the sewage treatment plant in Arklow; they had a liaison person.
24 So I believe we should at least put that into the manager's recommendation, and I
25 propose it.

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Miriam Murphy.

27 COUNCILLOR MURPHY: Yes. I would like to second the proposal, but I would
28 also like to echo what Councillor Bourke has just said, because we had this presented
29 to us on two occasions over the last year and the conversation of the construction and
30 the transport issue did come up because of the high level of activity that will be
31 there. I must say the detail on the report of it was excellent, and everything is very
32 easily and simply lined out for everyone to see. And we do welcome new housing
33 all the time in Arklow, and I would like to second this proposal.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. No other Councillors want to come
2 in. I will ask the Chief Executive to comment on it.

3 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members, and thank you both for proposing and
4 seconding the proposal. Just in relation to a liaison person. What is before you is the
5 planning application per se, and it is not part of the planning authority to do that. We
6 can certainly agree it and take it on board. It would ordinarily form part of the
7 contractor's responsibility, but we can certainly make sure that there's somebody
8 in-house available to step into that space as well as the project moves forward.
9 Absolutely no problem with that at all, Councillor.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Councillor Pat Fitzgerald.

11 COUNCILLOR FITZGERALD: Yeah, I fully support the development of the 74
12 houses. And I do note that there were concerns there, and they have, in my opinion,
13 been met. There are seven conditions there dealing with houses. I won't name the
14 houses. And I believe 76 houses -- I think we need 940 units in the Arklow area at
15 the moment. So these 76 houses, or 74 houses will be 74 families off the housing
16 list, and I am fully behind this. There might be things that happen during the going
17 on, but in my opinion it is a great day for the people on the housing list in the
18 Arklow area.

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

20 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Yeah, I think all of the Councillors in the Arklow area
21 get, you know, the housing reps every week, and a lot of people are living in dire
22 situations for years and years and years, so this will be very welcome, and I hope
23 they're built as fast the ones on Sheehan's Corner were done, that was a great
24 success.

25
26 Just going forward in the future, though, like a lot of these land parcels up above the
27 town, and really we should be pushing for access out onto the M11 and N11. You
28 know, that needs to be for any expansion of sites in the future. A lot of the traffic
29 comes down through existing estates into the town and while there might be the
30 capacity to take these 74 houses there's not to take any more than that. So I think,
31 you know, the main roads and access onto the N11 needs to be prioritised as well.
32 And as part of the development levies I think, you know, any future development
33 levies going forward should prioritise being put into those roads to make them

1 happen going forward. But I do welcome this, and I think it will give a lot of people
2 hope. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I have no other requests to speak.
4 So, Silvester as a proposer, Councillor Miriam Murphy has seconded it. We are
5 happy to move on. Everyone in agreement? (Agreed.) Thank you for your
6 cooperation. So we will move on now to Item No. 4 --

7 COUNCILLOR BOURKE: Do you have to take a roll call on Part 8?

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: We didn't the last time, I don't think. Did we? No. We had
9 one at the last county council in Wicklow and we just done the same.

10 MS O'GORMAN: Unless there's dissent, Councillor Bourke.

11 CATHAOIRLEACH: There's no dissent, I take it? Okay. Thank you.

12

13 Item No. 4: To consider and adopt the Draft County Wicklow Plan. And we should
14 have all received a copy attached as well. I will invite Deirdre Burns. Thank you,
15 Deirdre.

16

17 Ms BURNS: You all received a copy of the Draft Heritage Plan. I am going to
18 move through the background to it, how it came about and the next stages in the
19 process and a little bit about the Heritage Forum and about implementing it.

20

21 So the context for the Heritage Plan is in national policy rather than legislation. So
22 the two main things there are the National Heritage Plan and Heritage Ireland 2030,
23 and in action 148 of that it calls for the resourcing and implementation of county
24 heritage plans to maximise the effectiveness and assist in the delivery of Heritage
25 Ireland 2030. And that is echoed I suppose in the Heritage Council plan or place and
26 time, that advocates for county heritage plans as being the ideal way to implement
27 national policy in a local context. And the Heritage Council emphasises that it
28 reflects a long tradition of collaboration between local authorities and the Heritage
29 Council. Also of course the Heritage Plan has its context in our local strategy, so the
30 County Development Plan and the local strategies are set out there, the Local
31 Economic Community Plan, things like our Outdoor Recreation Strategy, our
32 Corporate Plan, Creative Wicklow Plan, et cetera.

33

1 So this is the fourth Heritage Plan for County Wicklow. It's a five-year strategy
2 setting out how Wicklow will manage and protect our natural-built cultural heritage
3 for the next five-year period, and really sets out how we are going to work with
4 others to do that.

5
6 The plan was prepared, as I say, in response to national policy and it was prepared in
7 accordance with methodology produced by the Heritage Council. It is implemented
8 by the Heritage Forum. And the Heritage Forum, I don't know if you can read all the
9 members there, the Heritage Forum is a widely representative group set up by
10 Wicklow County Council. The role of the forum is to meet, agree and prepare the
11 Heritage Plan and to implement the Heritage Plan

12
13 So the members of the Heritage Forum are there. Each of the five Municipal
14 Districts are represented by an elected representative and the forum is chaired by
15 Councillor Snell. We also have statutory representations from statutory bodies like
16 NPWS, National Monuments, Inland Fisheries Ireland, for Wicklow agencies and
17 groups we have representations from County Wicklow Partnership, Wicklow
18 Uplands Council, BirdWatch Ireland. We have two representatives nominated by the
19 PPN, and then in Wicklow County Council myself and colleagues in our libraries,
20 archives, biodiversity, which includes climate action team, are also representative.

21
22 So typically the forum meets four times a year to implement the plan and oversee it.

23
24 So I suppose in Appendix 2 of the plan we give a representative sample I suppose of
25 actions from the last Heritage Plan cycle. And the reason for this I suppose is really
26 just to give a strategic document, and it gives rise to lots of projects and plans, so it is
27 really just to give a flavour for the different kinds of actions there. I won't go into all
28 of those. I can talk about any of them if you want, but really you've things like the
29 Wicklow Community Archaeology Service; Glendalough Heritage Forum which is a
30 partnership with UCD; the Our Wicklow Heritage Network which is a partnership
31 collaboration with the National Museum of Ireland; the Brittas Bay Biodiversity
32 Project, some of you might be quite familiar with that; work with the Local Studies
33 Library on things like producing education resources; the Wicklow Barn Owl Project
34 is another one that we have worked on; the Geology Wicklow, an example of the

1 publications that we have produced over the years; we have done a lot with digitising
2 with our archivist working in partnership with the Heritage Council Funding in
3 digitising various; and then things for the Decade of Centenaries under the Creative
4 Wicklow banner as well we have done quite a lot of projects; and then I suppose
5 significant things like managing the Wicklow Heritage Investment Scheme and the
6 Community Monument Funded Projects.

7

8 So a little bit about the process. We are in stage 6 of it there. So basically we had
9 public consultation on the pre-draft plan between May and July. We had invited
10 prescribed bodies and members of the public to make submissions. We had 75
11 online submissions and additional 11 written submissions. We had five meetings
12 with each of the Municipal Districts, and we produced a short film which is basically
13 a missions paper.

14

15 So out of that we gathered the information and really identified our priorities, our
16 priorities for our teams, and incorporated those into the plan. At our last Heritage
17 Forum meeting then at the end of September we agreed the contents of the draft plan
18 that we have here before us.

19

20 So the contents of the plan really has its vision, the aim, and then it just has six
21 strategic themes under which to achieve these. The first one, protecting our heritage,
22 is really all about increasing the capacity of the heritage sector both within the local
23 authority and within the wider community. The second theme about connecting
24 people and place is really about stimulating greater access for all and curiosity about
25 heritage. Sharing and celebrating our heritage is the third one there and that's all
26 about instilling pride of place and engaging with communities to celebrate what we
27 have and avail of more communities to do that. Collaboration and partnership is
28 really about using the Heritage Plan as a catalyst for partnership, and we have good
29 examples of that, I suppose things like our collaboration with UCD and also with
30 other bodies like National Parks and Wildlife. Number 5 is all about building and
31 sharing knowledge, so really expanding our knowledge base and addressing gaps in
32 that. And then number 6 is all about responding to climate change, and that's really
33 to do with actions to do with establishing a baseline for adaptation and mitigation
34 and taking nature-based solutions to help reduce the impacts of our planned change.

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So they're the main thematic areas. So for the implementation of the plan, the plan is a strategy, it'll be implemented via an annual work programme prepared by the Heritage Forum every year. The core funding for implementing the plan is jointly through Wicklow County Council, through my own role and my own heritage officer budget, which is matched by the Heritage Council who have a dedicated Heritage Plan budget. There's various other funding sources, like, say, the Community Monuments Fund which supports archaeological projects; BHIS and the HSF, which support architectural heritage; things like the Creative Wicklow budget; the Climate Action Plan; the National Biodiversity Action Plan Fund; and then, collaborations and in-kind contributions.

So the next steps in the process really I suppose is, you know, hopefully to adopt the plan here today, to allow us to enter a second round of consultation, then bring this -- take on board the submissions received to this and then to come back to the full Council again hopefully early in the new year for the adoption of the plan.

So that's it. Thank you.

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

COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. First and foremost I want to thank Deirdre Burns for the work that she's put into this, and her colleagues. They may be one of the smallest teams within the Council buildings, but they certainly don't have the smallest workload. A huge amount of work goes in. I want to thank fellow members of the forum. We get huge buy-in from members of the public and the various organisations that have a deep responsibility to our history and our heritage. And while it's always -- I suppose a lot of what we do down here in the Council Buildings is planning for the future, and of course the present, I think it is very important that we also protect what's gone before us in regards to the past, and that's why I would like to see at our budget meeting maybe on the 25th November some funding put to one side to help people who are out there looking after old cemeteries, not cemeteries that are being used but old cemeteries, something that we brought up last year, and unfortunately there was no funding. We were hoping to get separate funding through each Municipal District to take care of old cemeteries. And whether that's looked after through the environmental section or through the heritage officer,

1 but either/or it's something that needs to be done. We have to protect our history.
2 Again just to say to Deirdre, there's a mountain of work gone into this. The buy-in
3 has always been excellent but for Deirdre and her colleagues, what they do day in
4 and day out here in regards to protecting our heritage and our history, and as she says
5 in regards to projects like what's happening in the biodiversity out in Brittas Bay is
6 excellent, and I think I would endorse this. I would ask all members to support it so
7 it can go back out to public consultation and let the public have their final say on it.
8 Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Snell. Would you like to propose it,
10 Councillor Snell, being the Chair?

11 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yes.

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

13 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and delighted to
14 second it, if required.

15

16 Again this is a brilliant piece of work, and I don't think we should ever understate the
17 importance of the heritage work that happens in the county, in particular in the Draft
18 Plan Action 2027 jumped out at me, Cathaoirleach, and it talks about "working in
19 partnership with providers to support the delivery of inspiring and relevant heritage
20 education for children, young people and educators in a range of settings with an
21 emphasis on the outdoor classroom and nature-based learning."

22

23 And again, that as one action in its own right I think is the work of transformation. I
24 work with a lot of young people who talk about the need for clinical services to help
25 them manage their wellbeing, but I think connection with nature and access and
26 support for being out and about and spending more time in those spaces is also part
27 of the wellbeing and even healing for that matter. I really endorse this plan,
28 Cathaoirleach. I think it is brilliant to see the number of submissions that have come
29 in and how that has guided the draft. And I'd love to see the -- and I will certainly
30 commit to supporting this, I would love to see the Heritage Forum include as much
31 as possible the voice of young people. Some people think that heritage is for older
32 people, but I think the more that we engage and support the engagement of young
33 people I think that will serve us well. There is a concept called nature deficit
34 disorder which really suggests that if people don't spend time in nature then they're

1 going to forget how important it is and then forget to look after it. So I very much
2 endorse this, Cathaoirleach, and great works, Deirdre.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor O'Brien for seconding it as well.
4 Councillor Lourda Scott.

5 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach and thanks, Deirdre. I think
6 Councillor O'Brien had read my mind because I was going to highlight that action
7 about the heritage education for children and the emphasis on the outdoor class trip
8 as well. It is a lovely piece of work, Deirdre, and I think there's a fantastic actions
9 and plans in it. And it is nice to see that the Biodiversity Plan now will be sort of
10 taken out of the Heritage and work as a new policy on its own. I think those two
11 documents will really complement each other.

12

13 Just one comment I have is, I kind of do say this for a lot of our policies that we
14 have, is that I would like to see more measurable outcomes with a timeline on them.
15 I know you're referring to, there will be an annual work programme developed by the
16 Heritage Council, but I would just like to see, as I said, more measurable, where
17 possible, and time-bound outcomes. Just there is a lot of beautiful work in here, and
18 I say that out of a desire to actually see as much of those actions come to fruition as
19 possible. So that would just be my only constructive comment. But otherwise I
20 would look forward to seeing it go out to the people and seeing what the response is
21 from the general public. And thanks for all your hard work as usual, Deirdre, and
22 team.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: I am going to take one more speaker, because we have only
24 one more, rather than doing it in groups of three. So Councillor Leonard.

25 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: I just really want to thank Deirdre for all her great
26 work and Catherine and Gerlanda, and Yvonne Whitty, the archaeologist, and the
27 whole team. I think we all take our heritage for granted but I think, like, this team
28 run on a very minimal fund, and I think if we all, I suppose, come on board with
29 endorsing, giving some of our Municipal District funding, discretionary funding
30 over, just a minimal amount, to the small heritage team it will actually have a
31 tremendous effect throughout the county. Our heritage is really important, not just
32 for, you know, our past but also for social connection of people, like Dermot has
33 said, about the, you know, kids and education and stuff like that, but also the people
34 that get involved in these projects; we're creating kind of third spaces outside of pubs

1 and outside where people can connect, and it's really needed in our local
2 communities. It's also really beneficial for our creatives. You know most of -- we
3 have a tremendous amount of creatives across the county, and our heritage, our
4 natural heritage and our built heritage is really important to protect and conserve and
5 restore. So any extra funding that we can channel into it I think will reap the
6 rewards. Thanks.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Deirdre, there's no more speakers if
8 you would like to say anything. Thank you very much for the presentation. Thank
9 you, Councillor Snell and Councillor O'Brien for proposing and seconding it. Thank
10 you, Deirdre.

11

12 Okay, members, we will move on to Item No. 5: "To receive a presentation: The
13 East Coast Railway Infrastructure Protection Projects (ECRIPP)."

14

15 You're more than welcome here this afternoon. I know a lot of members are eager to
16 hear your presentation.

17

18 MS CREGAN: Good afternoon, Cathaoirleach, and thank you all for having us here
19 today. We have brought a bit of a posse as you can see. My name is Jane Cregan. I
20 am the Deputy Corporate Communications Manager with Iarnród Éireann, and I am
21 the communications lead for this project. So I am joined by Damien Keneghan who
22 is the project lead from Jacobs Consulting Engineers for the East Coast Infrastructure
23 Project. I am also joined by his colleague Ronan Hallissey who is the environmental
24 lead, and my colleagues, Cian Lynch who is the Project Manager for ECRIPP, from
25 Iarnród Éireann, and Mick Danaher who is the Head of Programmes and Projects for
26 the Infrastructure Department at Iarnród Éireann.

27

28 So if it is okay with you, Cathaoirleach, what I would propose is that Damien is
29 going to give the presentation and then afterwards if there's any specific questions
30 we're very happy to answer them, and then if anyone else who is part of the
31 delegation needs to answer it they will come forward to answer if that is okay with
32 you.

33 CATHAOIRLEACH: That is perfectly fine. Thank you, Jane. You're more than
34 welcome, Damien.

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MR KENEGHAN: Good afternoon, everyone. So the agenda today, I am going to do a quick introduction, then we're going to talk through the emerging preferred scheme, I am going to talk about the programme, for when we are going to bring it to planning and hopefully to construction, and I am going to leave plenty of time for questions and answers.

So, introduction. So the background to this scheme is it's a continuation of the work Irish Rail have been doing over many, many years. Jacobs, who I work for, have been involved since 2022 but Irish Rail in the early noughties have been doing works along these stretches to protect the track against the effects of sea level rise, coastal erosion and the impacts those have on the track. We have been involved since 2022 and we have been looking at the work that Irish Rail have done over many generations but have also looked at what we need to do to get the project to the year 2100, and to protect the track for future rail expansion.

What we have are five coastal cell areas, as we're calling them. So CCA1 there is in Dublin City Council and Dun Laoghaire area. It's Merrion Gates to Seapoint. CCA2 is Killiney. And then the ones we're here today to talk to you about are CCA5, CCA6.1 and CCA6.2. CCA5 is Bray Head to Greystones North Breach, CCA6.1 is Kilcoole to Newcastle, and then CCA6.2 is down to Wicklow Town.

So the project objectives. I suppose there's a number of objectives there, but the main thing is to protect the rail line; to protect the rail line against future climate change up to 2100 but also to look at it from a safety perspective. What do we need to do now to protect the line, to keep it safe to expand the rail services and we keep people moving? We have to do this in a sustainable way. The works that we have to do involve rock, involve walls, involve concrete. We have to try design these schemes to minimise that impact. Ronan Hallissey is here today. He's our environmental lead. These schemes are being delivered within some of the most sensitive areas on the east coast of Ireland. We're working within a live rail environment; we are also working within a live coastal environment. So the environmental impacts on people, places and the ecology and habitats can be

1 significant if we don't manage them correctly. I suppose we have to manage this in a
2 circular economy perspective and reduce the amount of carbon we are generating.

3

4 So the ECRIPP scope is to project the rail line. So there's discrete areas from
5 Merrion down to Wicklow that we have identified that are at risk from coastal
6 erosion and flooding over the next 50 years, 75 years and 100 years. Our scope is to,
7 where there's going to be an impact over the next 25 years, up to 2050, we will
8 intervene and deliver protection works to 2075. So from a one-in-200-year storm
9 event, or standard of protection as we call it, we will intervene in those locations.
10 But as Irish Rail have done before, and will continue to do it, this is just a step, a
11 long-term step into protecting the rail lines so they can improve and enhance the rail
12 network.

13

14 So we look at the project benefits, I suppose they're obvious in part but also what
15 we're trying to achieve here is to protect the rail line. We are trying to allow Irish
16 Rail to plan for the future so they can look at stuff like the DART expansion, look at
17 expansion of services down to Wicklow and down to Rosslare, but also we have to
18 keep in mind that the works that we are doing are going to have an impact on people
19 and ecology. So we're trying to reduce the amount of land we have to work within,
20 try to work within the rail boundary as much as possible, and if we have to go onto
21 beaches try to minimise that impact. Improving or maintaining access in locations, and
22 obviously I mentioned earlier about the environmental impacts.

23

24 So what we are going to talk about now are the emerging preferred schemes. I
25 suppose to be clear; the emerging preferred schemes are the projects that we are
26 bringing to planning, they are the projects that will go to tender, and they are the
27 projects that we will bring to construction.

28

29 Just for some context, here's a -- we flew a UAV survey, which is an unmanned
30 aviation vehicle, along the coast taking images of the track and how it sits within the
31 environment. So for obvious statement this is Bray Head. Move onto the next slide.
32 So the works that we're going to do with Bray Head, at Bray Head there are seven
33 discrete locations that we have identified that need additional works to get them to
34 the future state. So (inaudible) and Irish Rail have delivered a massive package of

1 work in the noughties to protect the structures as they sit on the cliff edges. So we
2 are going to put some rock armour in front of those structures to protect them against
3 future storm events and sea level rise. At Greystones North Beach our emerging
4 preferred scheme is to put in some rocky headlands, and that will protect the tunnel.
5 So in that location the majority of the track is in tunnel, we're trying to protect that
6 tunnel into the future from erosion and being exposed to the sea.

7
8 Just to give some examples of the structures that are there. So as I said, there's
9 existing structures that were built a couple -- nearly 25 years ago and beyond. We're
10 going to put some rock structures in front of those to give them that extra bit of
11 protection to the effects of climate change.

12
13 Again this is just a cross-section at Greystones North Beach. So we got some rocky
14 headlands there. There is a space behind it to put in a footpath. So normally a rock
15 revetment sits at the bottom of the cliff, a rocky headland, there would be separation
16 from the body of the cliff to where the rocky headland will sit. There is an image
17 there, I know it is smaller on that screen, but that just gives an example from a
18 location in the UK of what is rocky headland may look like.

19
20 Again just for some context, and it is a nice image, we have got, this is down in
21 CCA6, what we can see here is a barrier beach, as we would call it, and then we have
22 got the track and then we have got the land behind it. As you can see, there's very
23 little to protect the track from the effects of storms, of sea level rise and wave
24 overtopping. What we are doing is adding an extra bit of resilience to that track so
25 we can maintain services.

26
27 Again just to show you this, and I suppose, I think you were all shared this slide pack
28 prior to this, it is slightly difficult to see on that screen but what we are proposing in
29 this location is some intervening in specific lengths of the track to add rock
30 revetments and sea walls to the area. There are existing revetments there that we
31 won't be intervening with, or we won't be interfering with anything else. We are just
32 going to go and put in some rock revetment supplement those existing ones.

33

1 Again here's an example, and this is some rock revetment that Irish Rail did in the
2 last number of years. As you can see there there is the track on the right, and then
3 we have got some rock revetment and then we have the beach. So this is just
4 supplementing and adding rock revetments to where there are existing. The
5 cross-section there shows you a back -- do you see the black lines, that's a back wall.
6 That's just an extra layer of protection in case an extra store event came, washed out
7 some of the rock revetment we had an extra bit of resilience there.

8

9 Again CCA6.2, we have got similar. We have got some rock revetment and back sea
10 walls down to the Murroughs, down to Wicklow. So again, it is a continuation of the
11 rock revetments that are there.

12

13 So we look at the programme. Where we are now, we're in the winter '24. So public
14 consultation 1 starts on Wednesday. We're going to run to four weeks, to the 6th
15 December. We have public consultation days in Wicklow on the 20th, on the 21st of
16 November. When we complete that we will finalise our option selection report.
17 We're hoping to start preliminary design in January '25. And from '25, we run to
18 April '25 and then summer we will come back out to the public again, and I assume
19 we will be back here again, presenting to you on the preferred scheme. So we're at
20 emerging preferred scheme now. We'll take the feedback from the public; we will
21 include that in the option selection report, and we will come back and advise what
22 we're going to do then.

23

24 The reference design will then run until November '25, and then what's called the
25 environmental impact assessment report which will support the planning authority,
26 that will be complete March '26, with planning submission May '26. This is the first
27 non-statutory public consultation that we are starting. We are doing another
28 non-statutory public consultation for public consultation 2 in the summer, but the
29 statutory consultation will start in May '26. That will start run I assume for a number
30 of weeks. Beyond planning submission, it is very hard to gauge how long it will take
31 to be in the planning system. I probably stress again; we are working within a very
32 sensitive environmental area. Any land that we take to do works we have to justify.
33 If it can't be justified there's potentially measures where we might have to go to
34 Europe to satisfy the planning authority, which is called Imperative Reasons of

1 Overriding Public Interest. So through the design, through the option selection,
2 through the multicriteria analysis that we have prepared, we've always had that in the
3 back of our mind. What can we do to protect the rail line, but what can we get
4 consent for?

5

6 Just for some other dates, we're looking at detailed design and tender around 2028,
7 and then September '28 potentially contract award. We think these projects may take
8 between six and two years to construct. That's because we're working within a rail
9 environment, within a live coastal environment, so we have to work with tides, we
10 have to work with rail services. So at the moment we're gauging it around six to 24
11 months.

12

13 I will open it up to the questions and answers. Thank you.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Before I open up to the members, I am sure they
15 won't mind me speaking first on this occasion, which I rarely do to be honest with
16 you.

17

18 Thank you very much for your presentation. I won't lie to you, I am sitting here in
19 shock, nothing do with yourselves personally. But the reason I wanted to speak first
20 is because it is personal to me: my family are from the Murrough. In fact, my aunty
21 and my uncle were born on Killoughter which has now washed away right down on
22 the Murrough.

23

24 I just want to emphasise that to us in this chamber, and this town, and this county,
25 the Murrough, it is much more than a railway line for us. It is a way of life. It's in
26 our blood. And to hear some of the timeframes there is truly shocking to be quite
27 honest with you. And again, I know it is not your fault here, and don't take personal
28 blame. Just again, it's shocking because if I am getting your dates right it could be
29 up to 2030 before works start or finish, start, you know.

30 MR KENEGHAN: Completion.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Completion. 2030. So we're talking just over five years.

32 Given that we're probably on average having two storms per year at this stage, and
33 that's being generous --

34 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: -- my fear is when we come back here, whoever is in this
2 chamber in a couple of years' time, will have another plan because there won't be a
3 Murrough to protect. It'll be gone. And I understand that, you know, sustainability
4 and the environment and the habitat and all have to be protected, but there won't be a
5 habitat to be protected, there won't be any environmental impact because it'll be
6 gone. And I know you're saying there that there's a plan B, I presume that's to move
7 the railway line in. I am presuming here, rightly or wrongly.

8

9 And then I am just looking at the slides there, it hard to see them, but to me the
10 railway line even when the works are complete, I'm talking from Wicklow up to
11 Greystones, the CCA6.2 Wicklow, there doesn't look like much room between the
12 rock armour and the railway line. Would that be a fair statement to make?

13 MR KENEGHAN: In certain locations, yeah, it is quite tight, yeah.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yeah. And I understand that, and I suppose in the sense that
15 we are lucky that there is a railway line there because if there wasn't I don't think this
16 conversation would be happening. And I'm disappointed to hear again the timeframe
17 but I am grateful for the line being there because if it wasn't there we wouldn't have a
18 Murrough, the sea would be on top of the lakes.

19 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: You know. If you look at some of the Council literature in
21 terms of tourism and that, it's the lakes, it's the mountains sweep down to the sea, and
22 for that to be eroded and gone and lost forever. Because once we lose this, as
23 someone who grew up in Wicklow Town, I remember two cars being able to drive
24 up side-by-side and back down the Murrough. Now you have room for one person if
25 they're lucky to walk on the Murrough. I don't know if you are familiar with the
26 term, but we have a monkey pole here.

27 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah, yeah.

28 CATHAOIRLEACH: Which gauges from, there's a history with ships and so forth.
29 But if you were to look at every time it has been moved, it's been moved quite a bit
30 in the last couple of years. And as public representatives -- and I will finish on this
31 and open up because there's quite a lot of speakers looking to come in. But as public
32 representatives, you can understand not just at election time it's all year round, every
33 time there's a storm, social media lights up, our phones light up, and we get it in the
34 neck, even though Wicklow County Council wouldn't have the resources to do what

1 requires to be done. This needs to be driven politically as far as I am concerned at
2 national level because -- and I know, and in fairness I'm not going to play politics,
3 Deputy Stephen Matthews has been very cooperative and working very hard on this.
4 I'm not saying that out of politics, I'm being genuine on it. But if we don't have the
5 political level at national level I fear you will be back here with plan B. And I dread
6 the day that I have to sit here and listen the railway moved in because what we've
7 done then is we've lost one of the most precious natural resources we have here in
8 the town.

9

10 And I will finish on this note: During Covid times people when were only allowed
11 get out 2 to 5 kilometres at the time, for people's mental health even to get out. And
12 I think the message that has to come out of here today on my behalf is that this is
13 much more than a rail line for the people of Wicklow Town and County Wicklow;
14 this is our DNA. And if we lose this, you know, all I can say is shame on us if we go
15 and lose this great amenity on our doorstep.

16

17 So while I'm in shock here I want to express, not at you personally, my anger as well
18 that we have got to a stage now where this didn't just happen overnight, this has been
19 going on for the last 20 plus years and now we're being told it is another five years
20 before works are complete. And again my fear is in five years' time we're not going
21 to have anything here.

22

23 I am sorry, members, if I am being a bit personal about it, but it is how I feel.

24

25 I will open up now to Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

26 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you for
27 the presentations. It is very much appreciated. I share some of your thoughts,
28 Cathaoirleach. And it is personal. I am on the other end. So, I am the Bray end.
29 We have sensitive issue at the moment in relation to the Cliff Walk. We're
30 experiencing some of the erosion and damage there which I am sure you are very
31 much aware of.

32

33 So one of my questions is very much about the public consultation. Because one of
34 the challenges that we have at the moment is that our officials are doing a huge

1 amount of work to try and get the Cliff Walk open, the public perception is that not
2 enough is being done, and we have a number of very well-intentioned groups
3 actually actively opening the Cliff Walk themselves and removing barriers. So the
4 public consultation about this is going to be really, really important. So I would be
5 interested to hear when you talk about public consultation exactly what that involves
6 and how members of the public are going to be able to, I suppose, engage with that
7 and really understand. Because we're seeing the presentation here and we're seeing
8 some of the images, and they are a bit -- you know, they're pretty intense, but we
9 know that that's what's going to be needed. We speak in this chamber all the time
10 about increasing the rail line and about how that is the future for Wicklow, and if we
11 don't get to that stage we're going to have serious problems, and this is part of the
12 wider picture.

13

14 I was glad to see you mention the ecology and the environment, and obviously Bray
15 Head has its Special Amenity Order, and I'm sure you're aware of that.

16

17 So yeah, that is mainly my question, Cathaoirleach: What the consultation is going
18 to look like, how in the community that is going to be. I am hoping that it's not
19 going to be just online because I think people will need to have a conversation
20 around it. And will there be plenty of opportunity -- can I just thank you as well for
21 doing the pre-consultation, because I think sometimes when it is left just to statutory
22 we kind of miss the boat a bit. So Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Danny Alvey.

24 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you all of you for
25 coming in to present to us. It is appreciated. However, I would like to echo what
26 Councillor O'Brien has said there around the plan. When I looked at it and I seen the
27 timeline of 2028 I couldn't help but feel is this too little too late when it comes to the
28 works that are needed on this coast. I think really they needed to start about 20 years
29 ago and now we're talking about them starting four years from now. I also have a lot
30 of concerns about the types of work that we're carrying out, especially in terms of its
31 effects on the environment. And the Murrough SEC as it stands, some of the
32 qualifying interests of the Murrough are annual vegetation of drift lines, perennial
33 vegetation of stony banks, and it has been found that rock revetments can directly
34 negatively impact upon them. So I just wonder what is being considered there. I

1 also wonder will there be an environmental impact assessment report carried out and
2 will this be open to the public to see what effects those have.

3

4 I suppose the big downside to revetments, and which we have all seen very much so
5 in Wicklow Town, is that the force from the waves can sometimes be moved
6 upwards from the revetments or to adjacent coastal areas. So the revetments were
7 expanded down in Wicklow Town down along the Murrough, but the effect we saw
8 from this was accelerated erosion from the period where the revetment stopped. And
9 so, we have seen that accelerate even more over the years especially from storm
10 events and the speed at which they're done, it is colossal and hard to believe. Every
11 time somebody goes walking up there after a big storm 1 or 2 metres of it is gone,
12 and it is now right up against the vegetation and the railway line. So I just wonder
13 how that's taken into consideration and as part of that then I am wondering are there
14 any other types of coastal protection works being examined. For example, have we
15 looked at breakwaters, groins, beach nourishment, dikes, nature-based solutions.
16 The Heritage Plan we just spoke about and adopted there says "the specific object of
17 our Heritage Plan is to support and encourage nature-based measures to address
18 coastal erosion." So I just wonder what effects and measures we are looking at in
19 that regard. Thank you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Just before I go on to the next
21 speaker, I actually forgot to ask my question. Sorry about that.

22

23 In a few moments I will let you back in, after a few more speakers.

24 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah, no problem.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: How far the north from Wicklow Town are you going to go
26 with the rock armour?

27

28 I will let one more speaker in. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

29 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. And thanks, Damien
30 and team, for the presentation. It is interesting, I was going to crack a joke, it doesn't
31 feel right, that the letters R-I-P are in the acronym for this presentation. I won't go
32 there.

33

1 I think it's actually, there's one part of this type of work, and I do a lot of work with
2 young people around how we project futures that are better than the present, and I
3 actually, when reading the document, I actually give credit to long-termism, because
4 if we avoid and ignore and dismiss long-termism then we're always just scrambling
5 and we're always just patch-working instead of really providing and exploring deep
6 solutions to the problems that we're facing. But I think there's something about how
7 we pitch long-termism. To build on what Councillor Flynn Kennedy talked about, I
8 think we need to talk to the public about long-termism and its value and importance
9 because I think people look in the present they see the dangers which have been
10 illustrated very clearly here, and they want the solution now because the risks are
11 unfolding in front of their eyes, which is an obviously a big challenge.

12

13 One of my questions, and I think as well ultimately you already hear the tension
14 around, if this is about the future of the rail network and also the future of the
15 ecosystem, then there's tension already around which one of those merits the most
16 attention, merits the most value, and what compromises might be needed along the
17 way. Again I think we have to do that sensitively and as collaboratively as possible,
18 but I think some people will be disappointed along the way, and I guess that's the
19 reality.

20

21 Two questions, Cathaoirleach. Yeah, I mean, and maybe it's, I don't know how far
22 the question is but even I get a sense of it today, what determines the pace of a
23 project like this? I know from sitting on the SPC in the last term that Marc
24 Devereux -- this stuff hasn't just started in terms of Irish Rail, this work has been
25 going on, there's been so much thought and work and conversations and meetings.
26 So it's not popping up out of anywhere in that sense. But I guess I am curious in my
27 own sense of what determines the pace, because the shock has been expressed,
28 maybe it is not a shock from other perspective, it is a reality, because if we know
29 what determines the pace, is there anything that will speed up the pace I guess is the
30 back-end to that question.

31

32 And then the only other question is: Is there any sense -- and again looking across
33 the continent at the moment and some of the devastation happening, is there any
34 scope to gauge the threat of if 2028 is the beginning of the work, if it kicks off in

1 2028, yeah, to what extent do we gauge or what are the threats when knew -- and
2 Councillor O'Brien has already illustrated very concretely the threats from his
3 perspectives, but yeah, have you identified what the threats are between now and
4 then and again do they merit an increase in the pace of the project? Thanks,
5 Cathaoirleach.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: I will hand over to you, Damien. We will do it in groups of
7 three. I know that was four, but I am different.

8 MR KENEGHAN: The public consultation, just in relation -- so it starts on
9 Wednesday, and what we are doing this week is we are sending out leaflets and
10 flyers to members of the public, and we're making them aware that the public
11 consultation will commence. We have online brochures, we have online -- the
12 option selection report will be online. So everything that we have done to develop
13 the project since 2022 will be online for review. As I said, we're doing three public
14 consultation days. So one in Dun Laoghaire, one in Bray and one in Wicklow.

15 They'll be on the 19th, 20th and 21st. We have a community public liaison officer
16 on the project to take phone calls and questions and pass them to me or the design
17 team to respond to. We have an email account; we have a website. So any way we
18 can engage with these people. And I suppose it is open, if members of the public
19 would like to meet us on site I am sure we can make accommodations in the future.

20 MS CREGAN: And I suppose just to add to that, we have put out in the stuff out in
21 the media, I did a --

22 MS O'GORMAN: Sorry, would you mind speaking into the microphone so online
23 can hear you.

24 MS CREGAN: We put out a press release this morning. I have done a piece on East
25 Coast FM today. What is really important is for all of you to share the details with
26 your constituents as well so that word gets out there. It will be in all the local papers
27 this week as well but just word of mouth from yourselves would be really important
28 as well.

29 MR KENEGHAN: Ronan Hallissey, our environment lead, wants to say something
30 about the option selection.

31 MR HALLISSEY: Listen, I think it is really important to say there's a lot of -- I
32 think you verbalised it best, a lot of emotion around this issue here. I think this is
33 what this process is about. So we're at what we are calling an emerging preferred
34 route option time and we're going out to the public and to yourselves obviously to

1 make comment on that, and it is only by getting that feedback and that commentary
2 back that we can, you know, consider all of these elements. I think it is -- we are
3 though working in a planning system that is really, as I am sure you all know is very
4 difficult and is pretty slow ultimately. And I think particularly in an area like this
5 where we have the sensitivities of the Murroughs, you know we have the stony
6 banks, we have the Murroughs SPA for example, and we have the little turn using
7 that area. You know this is really tricky. So we just need to be aware of that in
8 terms of any -- I mean you're talking about can this be quickened up for example.
9 We have to be aware of the constraints here. We are, excuse the pun, between a rock
10 and a hard place because we're trying to protect the railway line but we're also trying
11 to protect the European sites. We're also conscious of the walkways, the place
12 people use to walk their dogs and so on. So there's a lot of things to be considered.
13 So that's why this takes a long time. But ultimately that planning process is out of
14 our control.

15 MR DANAHER: Hello, Cathaoirleach, public representatives, CEO Emer and
16 colleagues from Wicklow County Council. Yeah, Mick Danaher is my name. I have
17 been involved with Marc and previously Margaret Harnett on a lot of work along the
18 east coast main line. The main thing to remember first and foremost is that, I know
19 we discussed the pace of the project and what sets the pace. There's no risk to the
20 rail line right now. We are monitoring every single week, a number of times per
21 week. The interventions, like one of the deputies said, this isn't the first time we had
22 conversations with Marc Devereux and myself. I was infrastructure manager for 12
23 years during three of the worst hurricanes of five in our history: we had Katia, we
24 had Ophelia, and we had Darwin. So we do know what is occurring. But what we
25 were able to do in those instances was we were reactive. We were always reactive.
26 Now we're aligning this project with the United Nations Goal 13 which is about
27 climate change adaptation for the future. So we have to, as Damien said, go through
28 the planning process. It is horrendous to see the loss on the Murrough and of course
29 that's emotional, people care obviously about their environment and their area. For
30 us, though, you know, it's a difficult thing for us to go on to somebody else's land to
31 implement interventions to protect a railway that is not on that land. So we had to
32 kind of, after Darwin, New Year's Darwin struck 2014, so new year's day we
33 mobilised a quarry and machinery and staff to come in and save as much of the land
34 as we could at that time. Probably we would be prosecuted if we did that now. We

1 are in a very, very tricky place. I mean, political will. Will we get a ministerial
2 order if we lose another 6 or 8 metres at the Murrough? That's where we nearly need
3 to be looking at next. Because this planning process, as Damien mentioned, in terms
4 of IROPI, we're all in this together. So there's no fear of the -- there's unbelievable
5 concern in terms of the railway. Because plan A, B and C is to protect the railway.
6 Not to go inland. We all fail if that happens. We're protecting habitat by keeping the
7 railway where it is on the other side of the railway also. I wanted to give some
8 reassurance that, you know, we're not waiting for 2030 or beyond to do something.
9 If we have to act we will act. So just that's my piece. Thank you.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you.

11 MR KENEGHAN: Can I jump back in?

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Work away.

13 MR KENEGHAN: I think Mick answered the question on programme, unless you
14 want me to expand on that more. Ronan, I suppose to reiterate, we are working
15 within a very constrained environment. To get our Ts crossed and our Is dotted is
16 very important when we go to planning, because anything that we don't do will be
17 identified and we'll be caught out on it. We have to make sure we have all the
18 surveys done, all the assessments done, all the design right to make sure we can get
19 this through planning. It is a planning project before it becomes a construction
20 project. As long as we're in planning we can't build anything. If you want me to
21 answer more than that I can.

22

23 Ecology. So Ronan, touched on it in regard to the SACs and the impact. The option
24 selection report will be online on Wednesday. We have gone through a robust
25 multicriteria analysis on all the options. Be it breakwaters, be it wall raising, be it
26 rock revetments, be it cliff recession. The list is endless. I suppose what we are
27 bringing in to you now is the emerging preferred scheme. It is what we think from
28 an environmental, engineering and economic perspective is the most viable project to
29 meet the objectives of the project, which is to protect the rail line into the future. It
30 is up to you to judge when you read those documents whether we got it right. This is
31 our professional judgment. We based it on modelling and real-world events. We've
32 incorporated the stone from last year into our modelling to make sure that when we
33 extrapolate to a one-in-two-hundred-year-event or bigger storm event we can base
34 that on real world knowledge. It helps, it gives us more comfort we know what we

1 are doing but it gives you comfort that we're able to defend the option that is we
2 being brought forward. I hope that answers that question.

3

4 Option selection report, I think I touched on that. I suppose you touched on
5 long-termism. I suppose, yeah, I will answer that question. All our work to date has
6 been on designing to 2100. When we talk about flood defence schemes people talk
7 about 2100. That used to be a hundred years, it's not a hundred years anymore. It is
8 less, a lot less. We have looked into the future. We identified where erosion will be.
9 And I suppose to answer a parallel question around do we understand the hazards, do
10 we understand the impacts. We understand them from the context of how the
11 beaches will evolve over time in relation to sediment transport. A lot of the
12 modelling we do, we look at waves, and wind and all that stuff. We try to
13 understand where will be the beach will be in 20 or 30 years,/ we throw in storms to
14 help us then. Then we get an understanding of what the risk is. What Irish Rail is
15 doing is a risk-based approach. And once we understand that we can start to design
16 and go, bring through an option selection process what option is the best thing to
17 bring that project to the -- bring it to construction, which is ultimately what Irish Rail
18 want to do as quickly as possible.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: And how far north from Wicklow? There seems to be a
20 2-kilometre gap between Wicklow and Newcastle.

21 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah, sorry. There's the existing CB units that are there just at
22 the Murroughs. I think Irish Rail have gone in and done some rock revetment works
23 there, about 400 metres. We're extending beyond that rock revetment by a couple
24 hundred metres. So just further north of the rock revetment that's there.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Peir Leonard.

26 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thank you very much for that. I don't envy you. It is
27 very difficult. And I know there are a lot of ecological concerns and stuff like that.
28 If we can keep cars off the roads and keep our public transport protected that is a
29 huge priority for me. I live in Arklow and there's a lot of unnecessary people on the
30 road and taking their cars every day because of the poor train service but there won't
31 be any train service if we lose our railway line altogether. So one of the early
32 propositions was to have a detached barrier system, and I am wondering why that
33 wasn't taken on board then as you progress things. And what is causing the coastal
34 erosion? From your findings, you have done a lot of studies at this, in your opinion

1 what is the main cause of coastal erosion and what can we do about that? And then
2 obviously the forward planning. The forward planning in this country is a complete
3 disaster across the cross. Going forward, I understand the need to put the immediate
4 rock revetments in there now, but will there be investments and are there
5 conversations being had been forward planning and detached barrier systems, and
6 detached barrier systems that could be part of the nature restoration and the marine
7 protected areas by combining them with nature-based solutions like the oyster reef
8 restoration and creating habitat on them? Thanks.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Peter Stapleton.

10 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you all for
11 being here and answering our questions. My question is specifically around the
12 timeline and the references you have made to acting within a cumbersome and slow
13 planning process. What impact, if any, has the recent Planning Act that has been
14 passed had on your estimations for the timeline of the project, and what impact has
15 the same Act had on your estimations of the risk to there being a planning delay in
16 the project? And then secondly, just on the timeline, the reference made to if a
17 ministerial order would be coming with 6 kilometres of the Murrough taken away,
18 just an explanation of what that really means or what -- if a ministerial order could
19 be made for those works to commence or any of these works to commence in a
20 quicker timeline. Thank you.

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

22 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for your presentation. I
23 suppose being eagerly awaiting to hear, we knew the work was going on in the
24 background and you know concerns about coastal erosion. I am from Greystones, so
25 again the Cliff Walk has been mentioned. I know it is a separate issue, but they are
26 very much interlinked, and it is a key topic of concern in our area at the moment.
27 And certainly where I live the DART is very well used and we would hope at some
28 point that double-tracking would be put in and that there would be expansion of the
29 DART. So it is very much something that, you know, is very valued by all the
30 constituents in the area.

31

32 Some of the questions I have have already been asked. I am slightly disappointed we
33 have our preferred options here without seeing the alternatives, but I understand from
34 your response they'll be available to view online on Wednesday, so I will certainly be

1 interested in looking at those. Two specific questions. One would be: Is the money
2 ring-fenced for this project along the timeline that you've presented to us or, you
3 know, if not, where does that money stop? And the second thing I suppose again it's
4 back to the public consultation piece, and again we've sort of touched on alternatives
5 and different pieces going forward, is there any room or time or space at this point to
6 pivot to anything other than the plan which you have in front of us which is largely
7 based on rock revetments? And the final thing is just a point on the public
8 consultation, and I make this point nearly you know every presentation that comes
9 before this chamber that involves a consultation process. People in general tend to
10 be a bit weary of public consultation, so I do welcome the fact that you're going to
11 have an actual public consultation day and a community liaison officer. I cannot
12 stress enough to you, and I realise you probably have the maps, and everything done
13 out at this point, but to try and make the information as accessible as possible,
14 because the information you've presented to us it's not easily understood in terms of
15 what that looks like on the ground or actually on the beach. And that certainly has
16 been a criticism at previously consultations by other entities that has come back to
17 me via constituents; that, yeah, the information may have been there but if it is not
18 understandable then really it is not a proper consultation process. So I would just,
19 you know, ask that perhaps particularly on the actual physical days when people
20 come in that it is explained as clearly to people as possible, that you really would
21 need a kind of engineering degree to understand some of the cross-sections that you
22 have put in front of us today, and they're not that easy when you're not familiar in
23 dealing with them day in and day out. I would ask that. And just to really advertise
24 the point that if you have a community liaison officer available to discuss and meet
25 personally to make that upfront and central so that people know there is a point
26 person there. Thank you very much for your time and presentation.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I will hand over to you, Damien, and
28 then I have a couple more speakers.

29 MR KENEGHAN: Okay. Thank you. So the first one was on the detached
30 breakwaters and what is causing coastal erosion. I suppose MCA we carried out was
31 based on a long list of options, detached breakwaters was one of those option, but
32 when we bring it through the process, do modelling and professional judgment and
33 scoring, detached breakwaters didn't score the highest. There are, I suppose,
34 significant issues with detached breakwaters. We are burying habitat. It is a highly

1 protected, sensitive location. When you are putting rock revetments, which is rock
2 armour, in the sea you're in effect smothering other habitats. So there is quite a
3 negative to these interventions as well. Other things about detached breakwaters,
4 this is an aside, from a health and safety perspective, you are creating a destination.
5 So when we score these things from a health and safety perspective, you're creating a
6 destination for swimmers. Around these breakwaters it is quite turbulent and
7 aggressive in how the water moves. So you are a destination but potentially
8 increasing health and safety issues. So all those issues have been put into the
9 melting pot of the MCA, and I suppose the options we presented today we believe
10 are the best options to bring forward to planning and construction.

11

12 I just want to -- so timeline around the impact of the recent planning legislation. Our
13 planners have reviewed the Planning Bill. I suppose the Planning Commission will
14 be enacted soon. I think there's statutory timelines apportioned to that bill, that's 12
15 months I believe. That's untested. They have to get set up, get people in place to
16 process this. I think we need to realise that there's a lot of projects, large, large
17 projects in the planning system at the moment, and I suppose it is a function of when
18 you go in you have to obviously work with the Planning Commission and the people
19 involved. We have been working with MARA who are also recently to get licenses
20 to do surveys, and we will ultimately be going in for what is called a marine area
21 consent next year or the year after. We are working with a lot of new bodies that
22 have been created, so we could be test case, particularly from a marine perspective
23 because a lot of those bodies will be offshore renewables where we are something
24 different. We are coastal protection works. We have engaged with MARA and
25 these people a lot since we started, and we will continue to engage with them.

26

27 Ministerial orders. Mick, do you want to jump in on this one?

28 MR DANAHER: Thanks, Damien. So the ministerial order is basically the last
29 intervention when we're certain we're about to lose something. So what we try to do
30 to move the rock armour further north of the Murrough, in fairness with Wicklow's
31 assistance we bought about another 400 metres work of rock armour to store in the
32 event of a catastrophic storm. We have it on-site. So then I met with senior counsel
33 and said, look, we've tried to screen this out, that didn't work, because as you go
34 further north from the Murrough then you're encroaching on another SAC further

1 north and what happens is if you place the rock armour inevitably the sea will start to
2 eat in the more north you go so the likelihood of losing the SAC is higher. That is
3 why it didn't screen in. So the question to senior counsel then was: At what stage
4 can we go, like does the railway have to be lost? They haven't exactly answered it
5 perfectly, but I would say that we're in a place whereby we're literally looking at the
6 railway being lost, we've worked with Wicklow, we've got the rock onsite. Now, we
7 don't want to get there, we are pushing to get a better understanding of it. I am also
8 advised that the Minister is unlikely to give a ministerial order if we haven't started
9 the planning process. So then it was thinking, oh, do you divide the project up into
10 all these multiple facets of planning, and that would be ridiculous, we'd tie ourselves
11 up in knots. So we are going through this project with our team in Jacobs, and
12 separately we are working with senior counsel to see when can we go and what
13 answer are we going to get. We've prepared as much as we can. We bought the
14 rock; we stored the rock. We've got to wait and see what happens unfortunately. We
15 are, as Ronan said, between a rock and hard place on this one. I know that is not a
16 perfect answer for you, Councillor, but that's the reality of where we are at the
17 moment.

18 MR KENEGHAN: A note here on Greystones, on the DART. I think that point was
19 around the coastal walk, am I correct in saying that? Yeah. All right. Again I
20 suppose our works are to the rail line. So there's multi facets of coastal climb at
21 change. We're dealing with coastal erosion, how that affects the track below. At the
22 moment there's no impediment to the works to the coastal path, I suppose there's no
23 active action to support the coastal path work.

24 MR DANAHER: Just on the walkway as well at Greystones, Marc and I and our
25 teams are meeting on the 20th November, Marc, just to see how we can work a little
26 bit together to see what is possible there. Yeah, just in relation to funding, in Jane's
27 press release today she quotes Anne Graham saying that the NTA are fully
28 supportive of this project. It's not right now prescribed how much it is year-on-year
29 because we don't know, we're working through the process as you all know, but all I
30 can say is that Anne Graham's words are that the NTA are supporting this project.

31 MR KENEGHAN: So there as PC1 and room to pivot other options. This is our
32 emerging preferred scheme. We're bringing it out to the public to get feedback. That
33 feedback will be taken into consideration and will be used to inform the preferred
34 scheme. As I said, we're going to prelim design. There's elements of the scheme

1 that we have to continue to design. We are only at concept stage now. This is at the
2 start of the process. It is not at the end. So we will take the feedback. We will
3 finalise the option selection report. We will document that decision-making through
4 the preliminary design report. We'll come back for public consultation 2 on the
5 preferred scheme and we'll show you how we brought that evolution of the thinking,
6 the logic and delivering this project.

7
8 I wrote down "weary of public consultations." I suppose the work we've done; we've
9 tried our best. And I will say that, we have tried our best to make the material -- we
10 worked very close to Irish Rail and all their teams to try and make the material as
11 legible as possible so people can understand it. We will be bringing a lot of people,
12 not just engineers, to these public consultation to explain stuff in layman's terms.
13 Unfortunately for the images on screen, we're talking about long lengths of coast,
14 trying to distil that on to drawings is quite difficult. What we have right to do is
15 show people where the existing revetments are and show them where we're
16 intervening now. So we can explain that. The images we are using are
17 cross-sections, images of where these works have been done before. We are trying
18 to bring them into public consultation so we can point to stuff as opposed to looking
19 at drawings and plans, which I worked for an engineer firm, they are quite dry and
20 hard to engage with. We're trying to use visuals and videos. There's some really
21 great examples in the UK of similar projects. So when we go to public consultation,
22 and you come to visit us at the end of November we will be able to show you that
23 information to make it a bit more clear.

24 MS CREGAN: If I can add to that, the leaflet that will be going to thousands of
25 home, obviously we're mindful of that, that it is non-technical and we have very
26 clear, simple language, each cell in words what it will mean. Also, we have a
27 non-technical brochure that will be available on the website on Wednesday as well
28 that gives more information but again we're conscious that it is not too overly
29 technical. I appreciate that today's presentation is quite technical.

30 MR KENEGHAN: All right?

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Yeah. I have four more speakers; I'm going to take the
32 four of them if that is okay.

33 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Councillor John Snell.

1 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I suppose unfortunately I am not
2 jumping for joy like previous speakers, and it's nothing to do with the people who are
3 presenting here today. Certainly not. They're all experts in their own field. And this
4 is the problem in regards experts in anything will differ given their brief. And the
5 brief that the group have today is to protect the rail line, and that in itself is hugely
6 important for everyone in County Wicklow and beyond. But you know for decades
7 we have been sitting around listening to people saying that they would access EU
8 funding, they would talk to their colleagues in Government, they would get funding,
9 they were chasing funding left, right and centre. We've had ministers down here in
10 CCA6.2, the Murrough to Wicklow Town, we've had TDs, senators, councillors and
11 community groups. I don't disbelieve that they were not serious about doing
12 something but there's a blockage in the system somewhere. We have a minister say
13 they will issue a ministerial order if there's an emergency and yet we know it is an
14 emergency. If you look at the little stretch of rail line at Newcastle, that's quite
15 exposed as you outlined yourself, and I know you're proposing to do works, but just
16 to put it in some sort of timeline here. At best, after the contract is awarded in
17 September 2028, the lifetime of this Council will be almost up before the works will
18 be finished at best after six months. And that is the quarter 2 of 2029. And at worst,
19 and there's a significant amount of work to be done, it will be more likely that a lot of
20 this will come in in quarter 3 of 2030. Now I don't think anybody, particularly in our
21 Municipal District, and I'm sure the Greystones area as well, will be jumping for joy,
22 because third quarter of 2030 is unacceptable. And I do believe that you know only
23 for Iarnród Eireann, and only for the threat of the rail line, like all the promises that
24 was made in the past in regards to the sea defences and about protecting our beaches
25 and about protecting a special area of conservations, our habitats, our marine life, it
26 was all for nothing. It really was all for nothing.

27

28 So I have a question just in regards to, you may or may not be aware, I'm sure you
29 are aware that there's a proposal to put a maximum of 75 -- the Codling Wind Farm.
30 So we have offshore wind turbines, 75 of them is being proposed. Again it is a long,
31 drawn-out process similar to what you've outlined here today. Do you have any
32 evidence of negative or positive, or do you have an opinion in regards to wind
33 turbines, and do they affect the shoreline in regards to sea erosion of our coastline?
34 And again, if you don't have an opinion to share today I would encourage you to go

1 and have a look and just see in other parts of the world if there is evidence or
2 otherwise, positive or negative, because this is a big project, and I do think that we
3 need to take everything on board here. As I say, the timeline is quite disappointing,
4 but it's not any of your fault that are sitting here. You work for Jacobs you say, the
5 consultancy, you have been working on this for two years. And I do believe that
6 unfortunately Mother Nature is going to catch up with us before any of this timeline
7 that's been outlined here today can be implemented, because this is not about what
8 you're presenting today and you've been quite clear and I commend you for that, you
9 have been quite honest in that it's not what we were sitting around here looking for a
10 decade ago or two decades ago in regards protecting our beaches and protecting our
11 walkways. This is about protecting the rail line. And look it, I wish you well with
12 it, but unfortunately I am disappointed in the timeline. I understand that has to go
13 out to public consultation and there is processes with planning and otherwise. You
14 say you might have to go to Europe even. I hope you have better luck in Europe than
15 people who have sat around here for years bringing people in high places in this
16 Government down to the Murrough to have a look, bringing MEPs and otherwise to
17 have a look, because we never heard nothing from them. It is not a political speech.
18 The reality is that the public is sick and tired of being given false promises and all
19 the time our Murrough is eradicating, and the erosion is taking a huge negative
20 effect. So I wish you well.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Tom Fortune.

22 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. Thanks, Damien, to yourself
23 and your team for what it seems like what you are doing is very, very professional,
24 evidenced by the group you've brought here today.

25
26 So most of what needs to be said has really been said. I just want to make a couple
27 of points. Well, three or four points in fact.

28
29 If I take, for example, along the coastline from, say, the edge of Greystones, Kilcoole
30 into Newcastle, and Mick Danaher will be familiar with this because I would have
31 had a bit of interaction with Mick on it over the years. For example, you're going on
32 to focus on your business, the rail line, I think that's great, and I think you've come
33 across here today to me anyway as being really on the ball with what you are trying
34 to do, but I think you have to work in tandem with other entities. And the area I'm

1 talking about there is, yourselves are involved, Wicklow County Council, the OPW
2 and the National Parks and Wildlife are involved as well. There's been serious issues
3 there over the last number of years with flooding and it's coming in from both sides
4 of the track if you know what I mean, and ye have been more than helpful to the
5 residents. And what makes me highlight that to ye is, and it is in the context of the
6 serious problem coming down the line, there are 18 houses located immediately
7 along that coastline. And, depending on how, as Councillor Snell says, Mother
8 Nature behaves, they're in imminent danger. I think that's very important those four
9 entities would work together, and there's heaps of emails and communications on it
10 and maybe at some stage you might have a look and see how that fits into what you
11 are working with.

12

13 The Cliff Walk has been mentioned by a number of people, and you answered my
14 question in that you are going to be meeting with Marc next week. But obviously the
15 Cliff Walk is a very, very serious issue in our area. And the erosion could be coming
16 from, again you're talking about the erosion coming from the sea, there could be
17 erosion coming from the far side as well. So again with your professionalism and
18 the work you've done, there must be benefit to look at the Cliff Walk and try and
19 come up with a solution that will work, or where you can advise the Council what ye
20 have done, exactly what he have done with the bridge, as you leave Bray you have
21 done some work there over recent times.

22

23 Now if I can comment just briefly on the public consultation. I would suggest that
24 perhaps you would consider an extra kind of public consultation venue to deal with
25 the kind of Greystones to Newcastle section of the coast. As I said to you there's
26 been massive issues in that particular area for a long number of years and people are
27 really, really concerned. You could probably fill a hall on its own with the people,
28 because I attended some meetings in recent times or recent years, and the attendance
29 was quite large. So I think you might just consider that. And maybe you'd look at
30 your communication as well. It's a key issue, what you've presented here today to us.
31 It's a key issue for everybody in North Wicklow and down as far as Wicklow and
32 Arklow, and right down the coast. So everyone is interested. So the problem I
33 experienced sometimes, or I think I observe sometimes is that when we do, when
34 public entities do initiatives like this and say we're going to advertise to the public,

1 they think you've -- you think you've done it, but in real terms you haven't. So I am
2 wondering would you actually -- is it your plan to send a piece of information about
3 what's going on to every single home right down Bray, Greystones, you know
4 through all the villages down into Wicklow Town, down into Arklow, the same as
5 you would if there was campaign going on, everyone would get the communication,
6 and then let every public rep have a PDF of it they can put up on their social media,
7 so that it is in as idiot-proof fashion as you can do it because we're not all engineers.
8 That would help. At least then people have been informed and if they don't partake
9 they don't partake. Yeah, that's really all I want to cover.

10

11 Again I just want to say that we get loads of presentations here, get loads of people
12 in, and I must say I am very impressed with the presentation you have done here
13 today. It's been really, really professional. But communication is key. And you
14 need to treat people as if we know nothing and then give us the information
15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor Fortune. Councillor Duddy.

16 COUNCILLOR DUDDY: Go raibh maith agat. I would like to take this opportunity
17 to thank Iarnród Eireann for the work they have done so far, because much of the
18 work has been done by Iarnród Eireann. I know they have a vested interest there to
19 protect an important asset, but I think the people of Wicklow appreciate the
20 important work that has been done there. I note the habitat there for the little turn,
21 the artic turn, the turn in particular, there's a mammoth migration from the South
22 Atlantic up to the Northern Hemisphere here, and the Wicklow coastline is an
23 important part of preserving that migratory route. So the protection of the
24 coastline there has a huge international dimension from a wildlife perspective.

25

26 If I can just bring you back to the issue of the Cliff Walk outside Bray, linking with
27 Greystones. And I notice that there's no active or immediate works proposed by
28 Iarnród Eireann in relation to the Cliff Walk. But Iarnród Eireann is actually the
29 lessor of the path to Wicklow County Council. That is a historic arrangement where
30 Iarnród Eireann is the successor in title to the previous, to the maker of the lease. So
31 as effectively the landlord of the Cliff Walk I think Iarnród Eireann does have a role
32 to play.

33

1 Now in relation to the East Coast Railway Infrastructure Protection Project. I would
2 imagine that part of that project should be to protect the railway line from falling
3 debris as well as coastal erosion from below, and of course much of the erosion from
4 above as a result of weather and harsh sea conditions. So I would be inclined to
5 suggest that you should see your works and the works in attempting to reopen the
6 Cliff Walk as connected and maybe even dependent on one another.

7
8 I suppose by way of a question, for the future proving of any infrastructure project,
9 particularly for the Dublin region in terms of commuter rail network, how do these
10 works fit in with a possible future for tracking or increasing the number of tracks
11 along that way, along that route, rail tracks to four? Because ultimately, if the City
12 of Dublin is going to have a decent commuter network, it will require substantial
13 railway lines along that route. I just ask if that question could be addressed and
14 remind you to consider or reconsider your input into the Cliff Walk. Thank you. Go
15 raibh maith agat.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: I have only one more speaker if you don't mind, I might
17 just --

18 MR KENEGHAN: Absolutely.

19 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Richmond, unless anyone else wants to come in.

20 COUNCILLOR RICHMOND: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for the
21 presentation. Like previous speakers, particularly in my own Municipal District,
22 Councillor Snell and Councillor O'Brien, that timeline, I find it very concerning. I
23 understand the delay in relation to planning laws. But judging by, as Councillor
24 Snell says, if you are looking at the 2030, I don't think there's going to be a
25 Murrough there, if it's left under the simple fact. What I would also look at is just in
26 the unprotected section from Tinakilly northbound, if there's no works carried out
27 there I'd say that area is the next most serious at risk, and is there a plan for that area
28 in the future? Okay. I will leave at that. Thank you.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. I will hand over to yourself Damien.

30 MR KENEGHAN: Just to go back to Deputy Snell's comment --

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor. We haven't promoted him yet.

32 COUNCILLOR SNELL: I'm not looking for promotion. I live in hope.

33 MR KENEGHAN: I will answer the question though, thank you. So just regards to
34 the Codling Wind Park. I can take that away, but those wind farms are out to sea.

1 We need to appreciate that coastal erosion sediment transfer is a natural process, it
2 happens regardless of what we are doing. So what we are trying to do is manage the
3 track that is beside the coast. So I can take it away, I can take that information, but
4 I'd only -- I wouldn't be able to give you an answer right away.

5 COUNCILLOR SNELL: I appreciate if you would, yeah.

6 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah, perfect. The next question was, for public consultation
7 extra Greystones day. We'll take that away. We'll have a look at what dates we
8 have, and we will get a date in Greystones. I'm sure we can accommodate that.

9

10 The next one was on works with the future four track. I might pass over to Mick and
11 Jane.

12 MR DANAHER: Thanks, Damien. I will deal with the Cliff Walk first, Councillor
13 Fortune, and thanks for your words about our interaction up to now. Yeah, there is a
14 licence in place, but it is dated back to 1932 I think. So we do have a role, of course
15 we do, hence the meeting, but the railway company doesn't have the funding to deal
16 with every problem that we interact with with our communities, with your councils,
17 with our neighbours. We don't have a never-ending book of funds to keep
18 everything doing. We prioritise. We prioritise everything under the IMAC. And it
19 has been mentioned here a couple of times here today, and we have been thanked for
20 what we have done particularly since 2011. We have had a lot of interactions at
21 Kiloctor, at the Murrough, at Ballygannon, between Rosslare and Rosslare Strand
22 and Bray Head. We have spent millions. So we're spending the money as we need
23 to spend the money, millions, but what this is about is like taking the responsibility
24 away from our IMAC, which is our multi-annual contract to fund and manage the
25 railway and get the Government through the NTA to sponsor a specific project to
26 help mitigate what is coming down the road with climate change. That is why I am
27 trying to create that mindset in your minds. That there's two separate actions: The
28 today, IMAC; the future, NTA and climate change.

29

30 In relation to Cliff Walk. When we meet we obviously work together. We work
31 together, we will see what at possible together, but ultimately Irish Rail will
32 facilitate. And as for rock that could be overtopping and coming onto the railway we
33 have catch nets everywhere. We do put in an awful lot of rock netting. We inspect
34 them with drones, inspect them with personnel and ropes. We do what we can to

1 protect the railway but that doesn't mean we're going to go and invest railway funds
2 into the walkway. I have to be very honest. I will support and help but I don't have
3 the funds for that. Yeah, Jane, will talk about the four-tracking. It is not
4 four-tracking.

5 MS CREGAN: I think four-tracking might be a little bit ambitious given what we
6 are dealing with from Bray Head southwards. We only have the single track at
7 present south of Bray, as you're aware, but we do have two separate projects that I'm
8 also communications lead on that are looking at short-term benefits, and I have
9 spoken to some of the Councillors in Greystones about this not so long ago, and we
10 will be out again. The first one is DART+ Coastal South. The first part of that
11 project will be out to public consultation this winter. That is about providing an
12 additional service between Greystones -- from Greystones. So moving from two
13 services an hour to three services an hour for Greystones. So that is something that
14 is coming very much in the short-term. The other short-term project they will also
15 deliver for people south of Greystones is the Wicklow Capacity Enhancement Study.
16 That is due to be presented to the NTA this week about providing additional services
17 to Wicklow that will be operated through our new trains, and the first of which have
18 arrived with us, that would be battery/electric trains. So they would operate as far as
19 Greystones on electric power and then they would operate on battery to Wicklow
20 Town. So they're the two projects. I can't say much more about that because our
21 first presentation on that will go to the NTA, and it will be subject to them to fund if
22 they see fit. But that is what is provided for within our current strategy and it's also
23 provided for within the NTA Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy.

24

25 Just on the communication of the public consultation. We do have thousands of
26 leaflets going to everybody. We also have in-station posters at all stations on the
27 route that are affected as well, and the commercial sites have been taken over as
28 well. We have very good coverage but again people are busy, and people get
29 information overload, so any way we can get the message, any way you can help us
30 with that will be appreciated. Thank you.

31 CATHAOIRLEACH: Yes.

32 MR KENEGHAN: Sorry, one correction to Councillor, alias Deputy, Snell, no
33 Minister has been asked in respect of issuing a ministerial order. We are preparing
34 the groundwork to be able to make sure that when we ask the question we have

1 everything done, hence understanding what an emergency or losing a railway means.
2 Because you said earlier that a minister might have been asked. Nobody has been
3 asked. We are preparing in the event of having to go there that we have all our
4 homework done, hence the interactions with senior counsel.

5 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach, and thanks for clarifying
6 that. No, my issue is that no Minister should need to be asked at this stage because
7 everybody, the dogs on the street, know that this rail line is in jeopardy with the
8 coastal erosion. We had Minister Boxer Moran down here, to name but one, walking
9 along the Murrough in his short sleeves on the windiest day of the year. Everyone
10 can see what's going on there. Every political party and none have been down there.
11 People who have been to Europe and have past -- their political careers are ended
12 went to Europe to bring back funding for this, to save the Murrough. My issue is
13 that the Minister shouldn't need a letter. We have the Taoiseach of the country living
14 in Greystones, could not be any closer. We have a Minister in Greystones, couldn't
15 be any closer. So I don't see why drafting a letter -- I understand you have a process
16 and you're not political, but the truth is, leaving politics aside, every child on the
17 street knows. I actually just read an email there 15 minutes ago from a student in
18 one of the schools here, Wicklow Town, asking what has Wicklow County Council
19 done in the last ten years for coastal erosion on the Murrough, what is the plan going
20 forward. That child could come down here and sit here and she might have learned
21 something. Indeed the Minister himself should be here. He might learn something.
22 Thanks.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Are we done?

24 MR KENEGHAN: Yeah, thanks.

25 CATHAOIRLEACH: Can I just on behalf of all the members and staff here thank
26 yourself Jane, Damien, Ronan, Cian and Mick. I hope you have taken away one
27 thing, that the Murrough is just more than a railway line for us. As I say, it is in our
28 DNA. It's in our genes at this stage. But maybe there's a -- there seems to be a task
29 force for everything at the moment, maybe that's something we might have to look
30 at, to expedite this, because my fear that we will be back here in five- or six-years'
31 time talking about plan B, which nobody wants to do. We want to save just more
32 than the rail line; we want to save the Murrough. And I think that's the message that
33 needs to go out here today.

34

1 But I want to thank you all most sincerely for your presentation. We have learned
2 more today than we have in a long, long time. I look forward to you coming back
3 again with a further update on it. Thank you very much.

4

5 Okay, members. Thank you for your patience and time. I am sure we all know that
6 was a very important topic for us to discuss.

7

8 Item No 6: "To receive a presentation: Briefing in advance of public consultation in
9 accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as
10 amended, for a proposed Bus Park & Ride Facility in Ashford adjacent to the M11
11 Junction 16." We have a copy attached. I will hand over.

12 MR BOWES: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Wicklow County Council are working in
13 collaboration with the NTA Park and Ride Development Office to deliver strategic
14 bus park and rides along the M11/M11 corridor. These park and rides are developed
15 in accordance with the GDA Transport Strategy 2022-2042 and also in accordance
16 with specific objectives in the Wicklow County Development Plan. Today we're
17 going to focus on the bus park and ride at M11, Junction 16, Ashford as we're about
18 to embark on a public consultation process on that scheme in accordance with Part 8
19 of the planning regulations. The public consultation will run from the 6th November
20 until the 4th December, and submissions being received then up until the 10th
21 January. So we have members from the Park and Ride Development Office, Elaine
22 Conlon, and Oliver Dalton, who are going to take you through the scheme and give
23 you more details on it. Thanks, Cathaoirleach.

24

25 MS CONLON: We might just go on to the next slide there. So I am Elaine Conlon,
26 Project Manager of the Park and Ride Development Office, and I am here with my
27 colleague, Oliver Dalton, who is the Senior Project Manager with the Transport
28 Planning and Investment section of the NTA.

29

30 So the Park and Ride Development Office have developed strategies for the Greater
31 Dublin Area and also for a number of regional cities. So the map there on the slide
32 just shows the strategy for each. So it includes 13 new strategic park and ride sites,
33 including seven bus-based strategic park and rides which will be delivered in the

1 shorter term, and then we have three rail-based park and rides that will require new
2 railway stations to implement them.

3

4 So then I suppose in terms of the M11 corridor, we have a park and ride proposed at
5 junctions 6, 11 and 16, which is Ashford. So we have Fassaroe, Kilpedder and
6 Ashford. And then we also have a local park and ride that is proposed at Junction 20
7 Templarainey. So I suppose today's focus will be on the Ashford park and ride. This
8 brings us to the purpose of our presentation which is to commence the Part 8 process
9 for the Ashford park and ride infrastructure.

10

11 So this slide just shows the site location for our Ashford Park and Ride at Junction
12 16 of the M11. So the site itself is located on the northwest quadrant of the
13 interchange.

14

15 So I suppose in terms of designing the Ashford Park and Ride we looked at the
16 following principles of design. So we wanted to locate our site within 500 metres of
17 the national road network interchange for ease of access; to provide a high-quality
18 customer experience, including comfortable waiting areas and attractive landscaping;
19 to provide the appropriate level of disabled and EV charging spaces; to
20 accommodate active travel modes; to integrate appropriate SuDs/nature-based
21 drainage solutions; and to visualise the minimal impact on the site on the
22 surrounding areas.

23

24 This just brings us to our Part 8 layout for Ashford Park and Ride. It includes 210
25 parking spaces including 5% disabled, 10% EV charging, and we also have a further
26 10% of our standard spaces that are future-proofed to provide EV charging spaces
27 into the future, subject to demand. We have a bus turning head with two bus bays,
28 cycle parking, bike lockers and we have incorporated sort of our nature-based
29 solutions into our design as well.

30

31 So this just brings us to a close-up of the interaction. I suppose the junction, the
32 access junction itself is located approximately 70 metres from the roundabout
33 junction that connects the on and off ramps to the northbound M11. We have a
34 40-metre right-turning pocket into the site, and this will be facilitated by widening

1 the carriageway just to the north. We have an extension of the pedestrian footpath
2 on the southern side of the road from the roundabout up to Milltown Lane. We have
3 provided sort of the visibility displays at the junction I suppose in accordance with
4 TII standards. We have an unsignalised pedestrian crossing provided to the west of
5 the site. We will provide ducting at that crossing to facilitate signalling into the
6 future, if the demand requires it.

7
8 Then I suppose just in terms of trip generation in and out of the site. During our AM
9 Peak we're expecting approximately 42 trips in, 13 trips out of the site. During the
10 PM Peak, 12 trips in, 48 trips out. We have also modelled the roundabout junctions
11 at the interchange using our traffic modelling programme, and the results of those
12 have shown that it will continue to operate at a level of service A. So there will be
13 no congestion at the interchange with our development. We also had a stage 1 road
14 safety audit done in February 2024 and, I suppose the recommendations from that
15 road safety audit have been incorporated into our Part 8 layout. We also consulted I
16 suppose with TII, we met with them two weeks ago ahead of statutory consultation,
17 on the 24th October, and they didn't raise any issues in relation to the junction itself
18 and its proximity to the roundabout. And I suppose that was on the back of the
19 results of road safety audit.

20
21 So then I suppose in terms of the planned bus service. The bus service strategy for
22 the Ashford Park and Ride has not been finalised at this point. However, its
23 characteristics are likely to sort of include that it will be serviced by existing bus
24 services. So this will be sort of services that are currently travelling in close
25 proximity to the site, you know stopping at the site with a bus stop provided at the
26 site. We have also done some preliminary assessments on the existing bus services.
27 So we have looked at service frequency, available passenger capacity, anticipated
28 increase in passenger demand, and we have done internal consultation within the
29 NTA, which this process is ongoing, to explore and sort of to advance plans for the
30 bus service.

31
32 So I have just put down "service frequency" here because I know it is probably a
33 question that will be answered. At this point it is quite difficult to be sort of be
34 definitive in terms of an answer for this as our bus service strategy has not yet been

1 finalised, but we do plan to provide a service that is sufficient to attract people to use
2 the park and ride, and I suppose this will be sort of further advanced and accelerated
3 following approval of the Part 8.

4

5 Just in terms of our next steps, so we have a detailed Part 8 package prepared. This
6 includes all our design drawings, comprehensive EIAR screening report, AA
7 screening report, preparation for the Part 8 public consultation includes newspaper
8 adverts, upload of documents to Wicklow County Council online consultation hub,
9 an erection of site notice and it will be displayed at the offices here. I suppose the
10 public consultation itself will go live on the 6th November, so this Wednesday, until
11 the 4th December. And submissions can be submitted up until noon 10th January
12 2025. We anticipate to return to Council for approval at the February meeting.

13

14 So myself and Oliver are here to answer any questions.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you very much. Councillor Langrell.

16 COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Firstly, Elaine and
17 Oliver, thank you for amazing presentation. From a man myself that I only live up
18 the road from this location, it's very welcoming. And I suppose it's not only for
19 residents and people Ashford, you can go further beyond to Roundwood,
20 Moneystown, Larragh, Roundwood, Glendalough, it will be very beneficial. 210
21 parking spaces which seems to be -- it's a good number. And I suppose on the
22 security cameras, I'd imagine, you probably did say it up there, but I would like to
23 see, hopefully it's well secured with cameras and lighting and all in the area. Thank
24 you both very much. It is very welcoming. Thank you. Thank you Cathaoirleach.

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

26 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Thank you. Again just to thank both of you for your
27 presentation here today. We were lucky enough to have a run-down of this at our
28 Municipal District meeting and obviously we have been following it with interest.
29 Some of your colleagues was here two years ago when we discussed it and at that
30 time there was five sites, and I did make the point at the time that it was important to
31 have the option of multiple sites because obviously it is commercial sensitive in
32 terms of the cost of the land then, if you are dealing with one landowner. I did and
33 have said all along that we have to be very conscious in regards to noise and light
34 pollution and everything has been taken on board. I felt that this was the preferred

1 site logistically and otherwise in regards to accessibility for people not just in the
2 urban areas but the rural areas as well. I think it will be well used, and I think it's a
3 fantastic presentation that you presented to us. I did have concerns about other sites
4 in regards streams and the environmental impact that may happen, and I did make
5 my feelings known at the time that without going out on a limb to say, but the reality
6 is that you have done your homework, you have come up with what I believe is the
7 most natural site for this, and without a shadow of doubt I know in the Municipal
8 District everyone was in support of this.

9

10 I just have a few questions just in regards obviously the timescale you've given is,
11 you know, is 10th January, that'll be the close of submissions and we will come back
12 in here. It's a pity we missed the January meeting. I don't know if we do,
13 Cathaoirleach? We could have a look at that. Because obviously we don't meet the
14 first week in January. So I am just wondering the timescale.

15 MS O'GORMAN: 6th January.

16 COUNCILLOR SNELL: Okay. We do miss it. Maybe if there is a special meeting
17 in January it could be put on the agenda. I am only putting out the suggestion. If
18 not, February. My question is really in regard to construction stage and how long
19 will it take from start to finish on construction. Do you envisage any issues with
20 regards to previous sites that you would have built on? And really what I want to
21 know is there anything potentially that could stand in the way of delivering on this?
22 Because this is actually a brilliant project that people of East Wicklow are crying out
23 for. I know you're replicating it up along the N11 and you'll be going further south
24 as well, but for this particular area, for our Municipal District, hugely populated.
25 The amount of new residents into Wicklow, Rathnew, Ashford, Glenealy, Laragh,
26 Glendalough is phenomenal. I would like to see it come to fruition as soon as
27 possible. To give us a sometime scale on that. Because this complements something
28 we had a presentation on similarly on the port access road for the local train station,
29 and if you were here for the presentation earlier you probably witnessed some of our
30 concerns that perhaps if the trains may turn into boats soon enough if we don't do
31 something about the protection. So I think the bus is a great alternative while we
32 wait for all the promises that we heard earlier. Thanks a million for your
33 presentation.

34 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Danny Alvey.

1 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I would like to echo the
2 sentiments of the past two colleagues there that have spoken. This is a brilliant
3 project, one that is really, really welcome, and congratulations to Elaine and Oliver
4 and everyone on John's team. I was knocking on doors in Ashford as it happens and
5 the big question on everyone's lips was public transport and what is being done, and
6 it was great to say to people there are projects coming down the line, there is a
7 fantastic new park and ride facility being developed, and that got a very good
8 reception from people. It is a great project. Well done to all of you.

9

10 Just a question around the bus services strategy. I see there that you were you're
11 talking about reliance on existing bus services which might be a slight bit of a
12 concern as a regular user of the 133 from Newtownmountkennedy, and I struggle to
13 get on it sometimes in the morning. That might just be a slight concern. And I just
14 wonder then in a previous presentation there was talk of a shuttle service that would
15 go between all the park and rides to the city centre. You might speak to us a little bit
16 about that if you could. Thank you.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: There's no other speakers to come on, but this is my
18 Municipal District as well, so I just want to welcome it. We had an excellent
19 briefing at our MD meeting and has been alluded to it gained great support from all
20 the members that were there because we all know the gridlock on the M11 at the
21 moment, and to take 200 plus cars off the M11 in the morning should alleviate it a
22 little bit, and with the news we heard earlier on about the DART coming here it is
23 welcomed as well. Thank you very much for your presentation, and I will let you
24 answer the couple of questions there. Thank you.

25 MS CONLON: So I suppose --

26 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to switch on the mic.

27 MS CONLON: Sorry. I suppose there was a question that came up, Councillor
28 Langrell I believe, on the CCTV and lighting. So that will be provided on-site. And
29 it will be incorporated into our design. Yes, I suppose this is just part of a network
30 of sites. So we do have I suppose three bus-based park and ride -- well, four
31 bus-based park and ride, three strategy and one local, sort of being developed along
32 the corridor. There's also a rail-based park and ride which is I suppose more
33 medium- to long-term project as well on the corridor. But the bus-based ones will be

1 delivered in the shorter term. So I suppose all those sort of sites will work together I
2 suppose to provide for the demand along the corridor.

3

4 In terms of noise pollution and light pollution, we have gone through the
5 multi-criteria analysis, and I suppose there was another site that was sort of south of
6 the site that we ultimately chose as our preferred site but that sort of scored less
7 favourable because of its proximity I suppose to, you know, a watercourse that
8 drained to the Murrough wetlands SAC and SPA, and I suppose also the impact on
9 local housing as well, whereas the site that we have chosen is a bit away from that as
10 well.

11

12 Just in terms of timescales. We're sort of looking at having this park and ride
13 operational by Q4, 2026, and I suppose, you know, we're also trying to streamline
14 the process as well. What we have done for the likes of Fassaroe is we're working
15 with a sole supplier contractor to sort of fast-track the construction of the project.
16 Assuming that process goes well for Fassaroe we will do the same for Ashford Park
17 and Ride as well. And I suppose, even I suppose before this was voted through, we
18 are hoping that it will be voted through, you know we can start work on the detailed
19 design, which is a lengthy process as well.

20

21 So it's not like no work is being done until February; we will be doing work in the
22 background. And we are trying to get these delivered as quickly as well.

23

24 So I suppose Councillor Danny had mentioned about the bus service strategy. Yeah,
25 I mean I suppose the delivery of the Part 8 itself that will sort of fast-track decisions
26 being made on the bus service strategy as well. We might need to look at sort of
27 supplementing existing services, but you know I wouldn't like to say exactly what
28 the frequency and what service we will be providing until that's actually locked in,
29 because I don't think I am in a position to be -- to say it, you know, with any level of
30 confidence, but we are certainly working on it, there's conversations happening all
31 the time with the NTA and we ourselves are pushing it internally as well. But I
32 suppose once we have planning for the site that again gives more force behind those
33 conversations.

1 MR DALTON: Just to add a few points to the discussion. I would like to thank
2 Wicklow County Council and particularly John and his team for supporting the
3 NTA's ambition here to deliver a national programme of park and ride facilities of
4 which you have seen the three facilities that we're proposing here in Wicklow,
5 Ashford, Kilpedder and also Fassaroe will come on-stream over the next couple of
6 years.

7
8 Just to go back to, Cathaoirleach, your question in terms of the capacity and
9 improvements along the M11 corridor. I suppose we have seen over the last number
10 of years the capacity or the congestion along the M11, at Kilpedder, and I suppose
11 some of the TII recorded data would suggest that there's 75,000 vehicles passing a
12 point at Fassaroe and it just reduces down. So these interventions along the corridor,
13 albeit probably not as glamorous as the one we're speaking about prior to our
14 presentation, the bus is doing quite a lot of heavy lifting and transporting people
15 along the network, and it is a very valuable initiative. We are very grateful for your
16 support in terms of that.

17
18 Just to piggyback on Elaine's comments there in relation to the capacity of the
19 service. It is ever-evolving, and I know Hugh Cregan and Anne Graham were here
20 recently giving a presentation to yourselves in relation to bus capacity and the
21 challenges we are facing around that, in terms of the procurement of fleet and
22 drivers, and so forth. It is an ever-evolving position in terms of having enough buses
23 to serve these facilities going forward. It is our intention to run direct services to
24 some of the facilities, some will have to piggyback on existing services and buffer
25 those out with additional buses at a higher frequency in order to deal with the
26 capacity, but there are better problems in our eyes: getting the facility in place in the
27 first instance with your support and then dealing with those challenges as they arise
28 over the next number of years.

29 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay, members. Thank you very much Elaine and Oliver.
30 We very much appreciate it. Thank you for the good news. We look forward on
31 voting getting it through. Thank you very much again.

32
33 What I am going to propose here is a time extension, but I am conscious that there's
34 two motions that have been on the agenda for a long, long time. I am going to try

1 and get to it; I will ask for your cooperation when it comes to the Chief Executive's
2 Report for your three minutes contribution. I have been fairly generous all day
3 because they have been important topics, and I am going to insist on the three
4 minutes for the Chief Executive's Report. I am looking for a proposer and a
5 seconder to go to half five. Councillor O'Brien. And a seconder? Councillor Aoife
6 Flynn Kennedy. Thank you for your cooperation. Chief Executive.

7 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach and members. Just a couple of things
8 to highlight. Maybe first of all, the decarbonisation of Bray Station and the
9 re-opening of such as the first fire station in the country to be fully decarbonised, and
10 that is a very welcome addition. So thanks to the energy team and the cooperation of
11 the fire services in that matter. And also just to mark the opening of the grid in
12 Greystones, our new enterprise and innovation facility was opened last week.

13

14 I am going to address the matter of Bray Head upfront with you all because I know it
15 came up during the ECRIPP conversation, it is something that is very, very topical
16 and sensitive. As you know, we have been working in the background for a long
17 period of time, both the Greystones Municipal District and the Bray Municipal
18 District, and there are a number of landowners and a number of considerations to
19 look at. So we kind of went back to basics on it and we convened a group, including
20 Irish Rail, the OPW and other stakeholders, to look at the Head as a whole, because
21 we have all been doing little pieces in isolation, and to be fair in Irish Rail they have
22 been very generous in sharing data they have on erosion and where they see pinch
23 points into the future. On the foot of that interaction I wrote to Minister O'Brien
24 seeking his support of our parent department Housing and Local Government to fund
25 a route options analysis conditions survey of the head, and he wrote back to me
26 actually only on Friday of this week, of last week to say that they will be very
27 supportive of funding a survey. And then today I got a letter from the Taoiseach
28 informing me of his intention, which has been publicised, of setting up a task force
29 which again will take all these agencies into the room to look at Bray Head in the
30 whole. So I have welcomed that. I have written back to the Taoiseach this afternoon
31 to welcome that. And so, obviously Wicklow County Council will be part of that
32 task force. I don't know when the first meeting will be. But to say that the Council
33 have been working tirelessly in the background up to this point, but we do welcome
34 the intervention at a national level because this is beyond the means of this local

1 authority alone to solve and to have a route that works for the people of the county
2 and the amenity be reopened to full potential. I wanted to address that straight off
3 because I know it has come up in conversation.

4

5 The team are happy to take any questions you have on anything else contained to the
6 report. Thank you members.

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Chief Executive. Councillor Behan.

8 COUNCILLOR BEHAN: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. I will actually start with that
9 particular topic, if I can, just to say that obviously any move that is made to resolve
10 the situation on both sides of the Cliff Walk, Greystones and the Bray side, has to be
11 welcomed. And I certainly welcome the meeting that you have convened, Chief
12 Executive, and also what the Taoiseach has announced in terms of a task force and
13 Minister O'Brien promising money. But it's talk unfortunately. It's all talk. And
14 very little action. And in fact I didn't want to intrude on the previous discussion I
15 just came in late on with regard to Iarnród Eireann. Iarnród Eireann have held up the
16 work that was to be done on the Bray side of the Cliff Walk where there was a rock
17 fall situation because they demanded additional public liability insurance, which has
18 meant that the entire project to fix the Bray side has been held up by another public
19 agency. And that's not good enough. And I think we have not, as a Council, been
20 proactive enough in sorting out the tendering process for the work to be done on the
21 Bray side. I understand there's two sides to this, but we could have done more on the
22 Bray side already. Look into the history of it. Mistakes have been made here. And
23 to my mind, people in Bray and Greystones and the wider area are getting very, very
24 impatient with the lack of progress on this. I will leave it at that.

25

26 With regard to the issue of the -- I see John Bowes is here and I welcome all the
27 work he has done on the parallel road and the noise mitigation measures. Could he
28 please confirm publicly when is that work going to be done? Because at this stage
29 the people who are affected by the noise of that parallel road really they're just very,
30 very sick and tired of the delays that have happened there and they certainly would
31 welcome some indication that work is going to begin very, very soon.

32

33 And again because the NTA people have gone, and I didn't want to intrude, it's a
34 different topic, I have to put it on the record I am very disappointed that a month ago

1 we had the Chief Executive of the NTA here, a number of us put questions to the
2 Chief Executive and her assistant Chief Executive, I presented a petition to them
3 about moving the bus terminus from one side of the N11 to the other side in Kilmac,
4 and I also asked about the proposed changes to the bus routes in North Wicklow.
5 She undertook a month ago to get back to us. We've heard nothing since. And we're
6 now seeing rumours on social media about bus route changes happening in Bray in
7 the next couple of weeks.

8

9 So, you know, the NTA present a great story here, and the park and rides are great,
10 yes, but when the Chief Executive undertakes a month ago to answer our questions
11 and we never hear back from then that is just not good enough from a public agency
12 like that.

13

14 The final point I make with regard to the Circle K, it is the petrol station on the
15 western side of the N11. The Council did a great job of putting in extra bollards
16 there to allow two-way traffic from the garage back to the roundabout up to Kilmac,
17 up to the Roundwood Road. An articulated lorry parked in the middle of that, if you
18 like, return road today. Like people are parking there, even though we have put in
19 some -- we just need to have more -- I suppose maybe we need a camera, we need
20 something there to prevent that happening because it caused huge traffic back-up in
21 the whole Kilmac area today. I don't know, John, if you can comment on that. But
22 thank you.

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

24 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thank you very much. I have two issues I want to bring
25 up. Firstly a number of Councillors from the Baltinglass Municipal District met with
26 residents in Baltinglass and community groups last week in relation to the RRDF.
27 They raised their concerns about the lack of progress. Obviously we have had the
28 money for a number of years now but unfortunately we have had very little progress
29 being made in the works on the town. In fairness to our Municipal District staff they
30 have done as much as they can and I know that they certainly are pushing it as much
31 as they can from their side, but there's a lot of concern within the community.
32 There's a lot of groups that are very disappointed in the progress that has been made,
33 members of the forum and members of the soccer club, and different groups within

1 the town. I am wondering if you can give me an update on where we are with that as
2 well as the bridge in Baltinglass.

3

4 And secondly, I know we bring this up time and time again with regard to public
5 lighting. I am not sure does anybody actually monitor the DeadSure app or has that
6 actually gone to the wayside now. A number of outages have been reported but
7 unfortunately they don't seem to be going anywhere. We have lights out in Donard
8 that have been out for three years now. In my own town of Dunlavin at the moment
9 we have ten lights out. And if you know Dunlavin it is a very small area and to have
10 ten lights out it really is making an awful impact in the town. There's one particular
11 road in Milltown that's completely in darkness and there's a number of elderly people
12 living on that road, and they have brought it to my attention, which I have reported
13 numerous times but we're not getting anywhere unfortunately. So they're my two
14 issues. Thank you very much.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Pat Kennedy.

16 COUNCILLOR KENNEDY: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I won't be long. Thank
17 you for the way you presented this meeting. Two things I will only deal with one of
18 them because Councillor Cronin already dealt with one is lights. There's a lot of
19 lights out in Aughrim. It'll be the same answer, so I won't dwell on that one.

20

21 But this morning the Large-Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund was announced. I have
22 to say while I'm delighted for our neighbouring counties of Wexford, Kildare,
23 Carlow and Dublin who received 61.3 million between the four of them, Wicklow
24 received nothing, which was most disappointing. To see our neighbours receive that
25 funding, I am delighted for them, I am delighted for the communities that receive
26 that community, but to say that Wicklow received nothing out of 173 million, while
27 our neighbouring counties received 61 million I have to say I was a little bit shocked.
28 Nineteen counties received funding, seven county received nothing, and I am sure
29 that management is disappointed with this as much as I am. I want to put on the
30 record that we received nothing out of 173 million. And it is not the first time that
31 Wicklow has received nothing in these large-scale funding applications. I am very
32 disappointed, I have to be honest, to think that that volume of funding is coming into
33 other counties and we're receiving nothing. So there's something wrong somewhere.
34 I would actually like to think that we would -- and I would propose that we write to

1 the Taoiseach to point this out to him, that we're not receiving the funding. There's
2 something wrong, Cathaoirleach. Thank you.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you for that, Councillors, and sticking to the time as
4 well. I will hand you over to the Chief Executive.

5 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thank you, members. Yeah, on
6 the Cliff Walk, it is taking a ridiculous amount of time to get anything done on it. It
7 is complicated, as you know. Requirements of other bodies have not helped in the
8 matter. But it is more than a Municipal District issue. It is much bigger than that
9 and I think the political will seems to be there to have a much broader look at the
10 Head as a whole and not in its constituent parts, and I think that is what is needed. I
11 am very, very anxious to have it reopened as soon as possible, but it does take, it
12 does need a deep look as to what the route is, the potential preferred route is.
13 Because we are in a situation where we have erosion, we have overtopping, we have
14 cliff coastal erosion as well and that has to be considered because otherwise we're
15 going to keep sticking band aids on it for the next ten years and that's not good
16 enough in my view.

17

18 John will come in on the noise litigation measures, and I might ask Leonora to
19 comment on Baltinglass and RRDF, and John again on the public lighting.

20

21 On the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure. Yes, we are exceptionally disappointed.
22 We put in four strong applications from across the county, one in Arklow, one in the
23 west of the county and another two. We haven't received any feedback as yet. I am
24 certainly happy to write to the Taoiseach about it. No problem. Very, very
25 disappointing for a county that has limited recreation facilities for its people, you
26 know. I thought of all counties we should have received some funding on it. But
27 look, we'll make representations on that and just, yeah, I note your comments,
28 Councillor Kennedy.

29

30 So John, to start with you, please.

31 MR BOWES: Just on the noise mitigation in Kilmacanogue. Like, I understand that
32 it has taken a bit of time to get this done, which is unfortunate, and I understand the
33 position that puts the residents in. Just, we did go to tender on that. We actually
34 issued it as a tender package to the maintenance contractor for the N11 and that was

1 in July. We only got a response on that in the last couple of weeks. And at the
2 moment that is sitting with the TII for their approval. Once that's approved on their
3 part, it's issued then to the contractor as a works order, and they will progress it. So
4 it is moving along albeit slowly, but it is progressing, and it is certainly one that I
5 follow up on a regular basis.

6 MS EARLS: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. Councillor Cronin, yes, in relation to the
7 RRDF in Baltinglass. You will be aware our crew did go into derisk the site in
8 relation to public realm works, and they did a fair bit of work, and they actually did
9 find that there was very significant conflicts under the ground. There's different
10 levels. There would need to divert and change some of the services that are under
11 the ground. So it's now become a little bit more specialised. So what we are trying
12 to do at the moment is establish what is the most expedient way to deal with these
13 specialist issues. Now we totally understand the concerns of the people. We're
14 trying to move along as quick as we can. We are also conscious of the time of the
15 year that we are, so we don't want to add to the frustrations of particularly the
16 business owners there. So we are taking that into consideration, and we will happily
17 sit down with the be Elected Members in the west as we progress and find solutions
18 to the issues that are there.

19

20 I suppose just from a good news positive point of view is that works have progressed
21 really, really well in relation to the park. So there is a lot of work gone on there.
22 There's a new inclusive playground going in. Those works will be finished by the
23 end of the year, the equipment there was at end of year life. There's a lot of fencing
24 gone in. We have installed new footpaths and walkways and installed new kerbing
25 on the existing walkways, but we put into other 500 metres of kerb walkway as well.
26 We have done new levels. We have made it, future-proofed it, with regard to
27 ducting, in the event that we get new schemes coming along the way. I suppose we
28 have also put in, there will be 15 age-friendly benches going into the park. There's a
29 new concrete table tennis and a curve ball table going in. So they will be installed in
30 the north end of the park along with new footpaths.

31

32 The other element of the scheme was the courthouse. So what we have looked at is
33 appointing a conservation architect around the -- it needs fairly substantial roof

1 works, but we need to do that in a sensitive manner given the historic nature of the
2 building. We have reached out to a conservation architect in that regard.

3

4 Separately just to say within the library service we are looking at provision of a
5 sensory room. There is space within the existing library for a sensory room, and I
6 know the county librarian is anxious to progress that.

7

8 So there's a lot of positive stuff happening but again we will keep in contact with the
9 members and maybe organise a meeting with regard to how we are progressing the
10 public realm works.

11 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Sorry, just for the lights?

12 CATHAOIRLEACH: Do you want to switch your light on?

13 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: I can't.

14 CATHAOIRLEACH: John, the public lighting.

15 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thanks very much.

16 CATHAOIRLEACH: Go ahead.

17 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: Thanks very much for that, Lenora. Is there any chance
18 we could get that update maybe for our next MD meeting, if possible. I think it is
19 important that members and the public are kept up to date on what is going on. And
20 just if you might just answer about the public light as well, please. Thank you.

21 CATHAOIRLEACH: We have that coming.

22 MR BOWES: Yeah, just on the public lighting, we've just recently changed
23 contractors there. The new contractor was appointed in September. I suppose they
24 were expected to start in October. They have had resourcing issues and new
25 electricians they are hard to come by at the end, and they have to undergo specialist
26 training to work on ESB work poles and ESB infrastructure. That is something that
27 is being worked on at the moment. It is generating a bit of a backlog.

28

29 On the longer-term ones, there are a large number of faults caused by cable
30 breakages and columns tracks by third parties. And I suppose the repairs of those
31 tend to be more complex because they involve the ESB, they involve possibly
32 installing new mini pillars, possibly civil works. So they do tend to be more
33 complicated and possibly explains why you might have more than one light out,
34 why, as you describe, a street might be affected by that. So that does take a bit

1 longer to resolve. But just, you mentioned about DeadSure at the moment. As of the
2 17th October there was 609 faults out of 15 and a half thousand, which is 3.88%. So
3 I suppose I don't know if that is reflective of the backlog that has been generated at
4 the moment, but it is monitored.

5 COUNCILLOR CRONIN: They mustn't have got as far as West Wicklow yet.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Or East Wicklow.

7 MS O'GORMAN: Or North Wicklow.

8 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy.

9 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: Thank you Cathaoirleach. I suppose mine is
10 more of a statement just so we have correct facts on the record. Because I think this
11 is one of the challenges in relation to the Cliff Walk. So I just want to say that any
12 time I have approached the Chief Executive for information on the Cliff Walk it has
13 been forthcoming. I am aware of the extensive work that has been done by the staff
14 and Bray Municipal District on the issue and it is not easy. It does involve a huge
15 amount of people. There is a committee already established with representations
16 from Bray and Greystones who have already met, led by Garvin Hickey, the
17 administrator from Bray, to look at this issue. I think this sort of represents one of
18 the challenges we have the Cliff Walk. There is so much misinformation out there,
19 and sometimes a lack of information and that creates a space where misinformation
20 can be done. So although I absolutely recognise that people in both communities are
21 extremely frustrated that the Cliff Walk is closed, nobody is just going to close
22 something for the sake of closing it. Like, there are lots and lots of reasons why that
23 has happened, and it is very frustrating, and we do want to have it open. I really,
24 really welcome the work that you have done, Chief Executive, on this, and
25 contacting, you know, the Minister and looking for funding and I think that's really
26 where we need to go with this. This is a big, big issue and we need to not just plan
27 for re-opening the Cliff Walk next week but having the Cliff Walk opened for many,
28 many years to come. We have just had the presentation by Irish Rail, it is a big issue
29 there. The Cliff Walk is like the Murrough, Cathaoirleach, to yourself. People are
30 very, very passionate about it. I just wanted to make that statement. And I also think
31 if we increase communications we will be able to support a lot of community groups.
32 We have a group that has been established called Open Our Cliff Walk, another one
33 called Friends of Cliff Walk, and these groups are established. Now we need to find

1 a way to keep them informed with factual, correct information so they can be
2 supported. Thank you, Cathaoirleach.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Stapleton, you are next in go ahead.

4 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: Thank you for restoring my place in the queue
5 there. I have one thing to bring up, but before that a quick comment on public
6 lighting because I know it is a huge element of frustration of members and people of
7 Wicklow generally. The fact we just appointed a new contractor to look after the
8 lights and we're saying that they have a resourcing issue, surely part of that tendering
9 process or giving of the contract was to ensure that they have the resources in place
10 to deliver the service. So I would ask the question of, what is the nature of that
11 contract and are there penalties in place for what is non-performance of that service?
12 So that's my comment and question on lighting.

13

14 Then, secondly, at the last Ordinary Council Meeting on the 7th October I asked or
15 highlighted the issue of the new council housing in Ardarroch in Shillelagh where
16 new tenants were given a move in date of June/July of this year. Many handed in
17 their notice where they're renting and are now living on couches. And I was told at
18 that point that there was no reason why they wouldn't have their keys within four
19 weeks. And we're now four weeks later and the new tenants have heard no word
20 from the Council. So what is the issue there? Is there an issue there? And if it is
21 something that you don't want out in the public domain if you would please let me
22 know or at least have the goodwill to communicate with the tenants, so they know
23 where they stand as they approach Christmas. Thank you.

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

25 COUNCILLOR SCOTT: Yeah, thanks, Cathaoirleach and thanks, Chief Executive,
26 for your very detailed report as usual. A couple of points. One, I was just
27 wondering is there any further update you can give us regarding the further rollout of
28 the e-bike scheme? I know there's reference to it in the report, but just I have had
29 several constituents on to me anxious about seeing this happening in the Greystones
30 area.

31

32 The second question I have is regarding a motion I brought in the previous Council
33 around community gardens. I know an expression of interest was sent out earlier on
34 in the year before the previous Council dissolved. I was wondering if will we be

1 given any information as to information regarding that.

2

3 I am going to mention public lighting again. I suppose the question is really how
4 faults now are being prioritised. And again I have a particular area in Grattan Park
5 where there has been an issue with pole since last April, and an elderly resident
6 living very nearby and is very distressed with the lack of lighting. I said I would
7 raise it again on their behalf. We are coming into dark nights. The rate we are doing
8 this is going to be next April before it is fixed. I would appreciate some input as to
9 how lights are being prioritised when it comes to dealing with the backlog through
10 the contractor.

11

12 And just a final comment on the Bray Greystones Cliff Walk, Councillor Flynn
13 Kennedy referred to statement of facts quite correctly. I was wondering, Chief
14 Executive, if you could give us a sort of factual overview as to the safety issues of
15 the walk and the advisability of people walking the walk even though technically it is
16 closed. One of the barriers is very close to where I live, and I said this at an MD
17 meeting, it is like Piccadilly Circus with people traversing the barrier, going through
18 and going around it. If there were any specific facts from the Council in terms of the
19 safety, dangers and potential risks to people I think that would be very advantageous,
20 because I suppose people see it as being okay apart from the barriers put up. So if
21 there is anything on that that we can pass on to our constituents that would be very
22 welcome. Thank you.

23 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. I am going to take one more speakers, but we
24 really only had two questions. Councillor Leonard.

25 COUNCILLOR LEONARD: Thanks. I just want to bring up the Arklow Harbour.
26 A couple of issues down there. Just in relation to the relation to the beautiful
27 fishermen huts that we have down then now, questions about when will they be
28 allocated and the removal of the containers. There's beautiful toilets there that aren't
29 in use yet and one in particular was supposed to be for public use, so just some
30 clarification on when that will be commissioned.

31

32 The new pontoon that was a joint venture between the SSE and Wicklow County
33 Council, there's still no power or water on that. And maybe we could get an update
34 on that.

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And just earlier this year I put a motion in, there's an old fridge, refrigeration unit on the harbour, I put a motion in on behalf of the fishermen and they wanted to be able to use the container for storing bait and stuff like that. There's a huge issue with rats and, you know, just having to leave the bait on the quayside down there. I know Wicklow County Council put, the harbour team put an ad out to refurbish the unit that was there and looked for expressions of interest, but I believe that there's been no responses to that. I had a serious sponsor lined up for a new one, and I have been told because there's no expressions of interest a bay company approached them to utilise the unit that's there. I think any future use of this unit, or ideally a new unit should be put down there, needs to be in conjunction with the people that use the harbour, the fishermen and the harbour users. And I think there's a real gap in kind of communications between decisions made in Wicklow County Council and the harbour users down there. I think there's a need for a committee with the fishermen and the harbour users sitting on it, even an informal one just to kind of bridge that gap, the line of communications that isn't there. And I am just wondering, is it possible, could we look at that going forward just to have some form of open line of communication? The fishermen are going to be impacted by the wind farms, and you know just in general our recreational areas are kind of increasing, the harbours are being used, and I think there's a real need for some sort of a committee with everybody, a voice for everybody on that to ensure the safety of the harbour and the users of the harbour because the harbours are going to be become very places going forward. Thank you.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Chief Executive.

MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members, and then thank you, Councillor Kennedy, for your comments about the Cliff Walk.

John probably won't have the answer for Councillor Stapleton on Ardarroch or Shillelagh, or do you? You might. The public lighting contract, John will come in on that certainly.

My understanding, Councillor Scott, on the e-bike scheme, it ran into a procurement issue that has gone through our legal side of the house just on it, but we will get -- I

1 will get an update on it and get it out to you. Teresa might give you an update on the
2 community gardens on that.

3

4 The Cliff Head is closed because it is not safe. That's the very simple answer on it.
5 You know, risk of slippage. You have the rock fall, all sorts. I will get a note from
6 the engineer, obviously I am not an engineer, as to what particular risks there are,
7 and we can circulate that to all the members so that the public can be made aware. I
8 do know, and I am very aware, that there are groups that are removing barriers and
9 promoting access but if somebody falls or gets injured on that, you know, it's a
10 difficult space to be in. But we will get a note out so that you can circulate it to your
11 own community.

12

13 I might get Teresa again to comment on Arklow Harbour and the various issues that
14 are raised there.

15

16 I will go to John first on the Shillelagh and lighting.

17 MR BOWES: Just on the public lighting then, on the procurement side of it. That is
18 a national issue, because it's a limited enough marketplace at the moment. And just
19 on the -- we have a priority list and that is what the contractor is working to at the
20 moment. As regards non-performance, I'm not sure, I would have to look into the
21 particulars of the contract to see if there is clauses there on that, but I will look into
22 that.

23 COUNCILLOR STAPLETON: And Ardarroch.

24 MS O'GORMAN: I will have to come back to you. John is standing in for Joe, Joe
25 is ill at the moment, so I will come back to you very quickly on the housing
26 allocation for Shillelagh, okay, and come back to you this evening on it, okay,
27 Councillor Stapleton. Thanks.

28

29 So on e-bikes. We answered that one. Then just, Teresa, please on the harbour.

30 MS O'BRIEN: Just the community gardens first. Yeah, our climate action officer
31 has actually looked at the community gardens, the responses, and he has a report
32 prepared which I have to meet with him during the week. I just haven't been here for
33 a while, so that's that one.

34

1 The Arklow Harbour. Yeah, the refrigeration units. We did go out to the public, we
2 got no responses, as I think Joanne was on earlier, and we have had somebody who
3 has contacted us, but we haven't made any decision. We haven't talked about that as
4 yet. With regard to I suppose information, the Harbour Master is basically -- his
5 office is down there in Arklow, and he is available and accessible there. With regard
6 to a committee I would have to talk to the team about that. I don't know, sometimes
7 the committees works, sometimes they don't. Your other general queries, Councillor
8 Leonard, I will have to come back to you on some of them. I will talk to the team
9 and come back to you on those.

10 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. Councillor Danny Alvey.

11 COUNCILLOR ALVEY: Yeah, I will just be very quick. I put my light on again,
12 also for public lighting. Can I just ask that when you are prioritising that there is
13 focus on areas where there's three or four lights out in a row. There's quite a few
14 areas if you look at the fault system. And I have had residents in areas where there's
15 three lights out in a row, in Bayview Court in Wicklow Town, and three lights out in
16 a row in Killadreenan, which makes it really, really hard for people to walk,
17 especially on the dark early nights. That would be great. Thanks.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: You're all keeping on time today. Councillor Tom Fortune.

19 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I won't disappoint you.

20 CATHAOIRLEACH: That wasn't a hint.

21 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: Someone said that once. Yeah, I have a question
22 around local authority housing. Maybe this wasn't considered or thought about when
23 we sell local authority houses. In the local authority estate where we've sold some of
24 the housing stock, what, if any, does our responsibility lie in regards to the tenants so
25 that should a property within that estate then go on fire and subsequently then be left
26 wide open to antisocial behaviour? It may not be something we have considered
27 when we sell on properties, and I don't know what, if any, our responsibility is, but
28 should we have responsibility. Is it something we should look at? And is it fair just
29 to say, well, it is not our house anymore, you know it is privately owned and
30 therefore, you know, sort it out what may? I would like to get some -- not
31 necessarily just an answer on it, I would like to get maybe some consideration on it.
32 Because I think it is important. It may be something; you wouldn't consider when
33 you say we're going to sell some of our properties, and you look at the angles and it
34 is something you wouldn't think of. But I think it is a real problem and a real matter

1 and there is a situation, a very serious situation which defines what I am talking
2 about happening, as I speak.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: You didn't disappoint.

4 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I could ask a question about the Cliff Walk but I said,
5 leave it go, Tom, leave it go.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Corrigan.

7 COUNCILLOR CORRIGAN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. I have a few queries.
8 There was a recent announcement of funding in the Department of Housing for
9 vacant properties in town that could be regenerated, and I would ask that Curum in
10 Enniskerry be considered for this. It is an old HSE building in the middle of the
11 village that has been vacant for over 20 years. It is just a crying shame that it is lying
12 idle, and we have a housing crisis, and there's multiple uses for that. So if that could
13 be considered for that.

14

15 The other items then. The bye-laws for parking in the county, could they be looked
16 at and revised? I think they're long overdue to be looked at. Parking in small
17 villages, shops are being severely affected by people parking up all day and leaving
18 their cars and getting buses into other villages. I know, for instance, in Enniskerry
19 we have a lovely new car park, it is too far for people to walk so they park in the
20 village blocking up the whole village for shoppers throughout the day, so people
21 can't stop off to go to the doctor or the chemist or anything, whereas if there was an
22 incentive for them to park in the car park and leave it even for two-hour parking in
23 the village I think it would make a big difference. And I don't think Enniskerry is the
24 only village affected by this.

25

26 The other item I want to bring up is about Kilmacanogue Village, the traffic and
27 parking in Kilmacanogue Village at the Circle K garage northbound on the N11. I
28 know I have spoken to John Bowes a number of times about this, and thank you,
29 John, for your help putting the bollards in. The bollards have eased some of the
30 problems there, but I have been sent pictures lately of people parking on the
31 left-hand side as you exit to go towards Roundwood, severely then blocking up the
32 whole village way up the road on the Rocky Valley Road causing cars then to go on
33 the opposite side as you're exiting, coming around a blind corner on the wrong side
34 of the road. Something has to be done there before there's going to be a major

1 accident. I can't understand why people would park on the wrong side of the road,
2 but they are doing it. And I have raised this with the Gardaí several times as well.
3 So could that be looked at as a matter of urgency before there is an accident? Thank
4 you.

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillors. Chief Executive.

6 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. I will start at the end first. Councillor
7 Corrigan, car parking bye-laws, that'll be matter I suppose really to be considered
8 through the SPC, but, look, I can take it away and have a look at it and see. And the
9 vacant home scene, Leonora might give you a comment on that. Michael will come
10 in on your comment, Councillor Fortune, about when we allow houses be purchased
11 and what the repercussions are for those living in an area. Again public lighting, I
12 think you have all the information on that. Councillor Alvey was asking about
13 public lighting, but I think you have that. So I will go to Leonora first and then to
14 Michael.

15 MS EARLS: Thank you. Yeah, Councillor Corrigan, there is funding under the
16 RRDF to purchase buildings that are vacant, so I will raise that with town
17 regeneration. We are already looking at properties in Arklow and Wicklow, so we
18 will just see if there's any further opportunities in relation to that.

19 MR NICHOLSON: I suppose strictly speaking when a person buys a house on a
20 tenant purchase scheme it becomes a private house, in the same way as any of us
21 buys our house, has a private house, and insurance kicks in. However, if the house is
22 in an existing council estate where there are other social houses we would obviously
23 be concerned about that, because obviously antisocial behaviour might affect our
24 existing tenants still within the estate. So if you send me details of that, Tom, I will
25 look at it for you.

26 COUNCILLOR FORTUNE: I will send you details on that.

27 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Michael. Councillor Dermot O'Brien.

28 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach, and thanks to the
29 Chief Executive for the report. Just a shout out to EcoTrail. Again I know it's in the
30 report. Absolutely phenomenal success. I didn't do any running, but I did spend
31 some time at the finish line doing some cheering and clapping. But a phenomenal
32 success of what this county offers to the world. And a very unique cohort of people
33 who do that and come to the county to do that. Big shout out to everyone involved in
34 putting that on.

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A small comment on the Cliff Walk, for me if we -- and this might sound a bit corny, but if we don't bring the people with us on the journey around the Cliff Walk then they will go without us, and I think that's the reality of that scenario.

I think with the sports capital as well, a comment that again we know that, and I'm sure the Chief Executive will be doing this, but I think there was 14 criteria in the scoring matrix, so it'll be really important maybe to reflect on, you know, when they give that feedback what were the deficits there.

And then just looking at the report, and the planning section around strategic housing development, Cathaoirleach. Like, there's four projects there that seem to have been -- like, that the work was done in terms of reports in 2022, but four projects between Greystones and Bray, four developments, that add up to about 1,900 units. And they seem to be in, I don't know whether it is planning purgatory or whether it is some sort of limbo, so I would love to get a sense of why these developments are sitting there. In particular there's one in Fassaroe Monastery that says APB were unable to determine within 16 weeks of the statutory timeframe. And I know in other presentations today we talked about the pace of things and the struggles that are brought. And again, there's something there around people wanting, needing and looking for houses. And then, when we see that the Chief Executive's Report is done and things are forwarded on but they're in limbo, so any kind of sense of the why of that would be appreciated there. Thank you, Councillor.

CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Langrell.

COUNCILLOR LANGRELL: Thank you, John. I suppose, on lights, you don't have to come back to me, and I understand you have a priority list. I did email back into public lighting, and I did get a response thank you, regarding Ashford if we could really push that up to the top of the priority list. There's no lighting at all from Clarke Auctioneers up to the roundabout. I suppose you've got the GAA ground there with children coming in and out and there's a bus stop there, so you can imagine even in an hour's time it'll be pitch dark. And again, up to Nuns Cross School, there's a lot of lights not working there, up towards the school and outside the school.

1 And I would like to echo what Councillor Corrigan was saying there about parking.
2 I have had a business from Newtownmountkennedy that came to me, and one shop
3 owner there he opens up his shop at 6:30 in the morning, and he's seen first-hand
4 where cars are coming and parking outside down along the street, jumping onto the
5 bus and they're gone off for the day. So that's something that I would like to
6 prioritise. It's not just Enniskerry, but that is Newtownmountkennedy. And
7 obviously that's affecting the shops, the cafes, the butchers and what have you.

8

9 And lastly, what -- there's a construction site going on up in Roundwood, Djouce
10 Meadow. So basically Djouce Meadow there's 18, 20 houses, finished many years
11 ago, 20 years ago, but there's a new construction site that has started but obviously
12 they have to go in through Djouce Meadow to get to that site. I have had a lot of
13 residents on to me about damage done to kerbs. I have gone on to look at some of
14 the damage where lorries are turning on green areas. These are green areas that are
15 finished where children play. A light post backed into and damaged. And I would
16 just like to have an update on that please. Thank you.

17 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Gerry O'Neill.

18 COUNCILLOR O'NEILL: Thanks, Cathaoirleach. If I can get a clarification on the
19 situation in Kippure Lodge. I know we as a Council are bringing a High Court
20 injunction there, but at the same time the owners there have looked for retention for
21 the 65 houses that they built without any planning permission. So it's a bit confusing
22 to the people in the area how on the one hand this is going to the High Court and on
23 the other hand the people are looking for planning, for 65 illegal houses. I know you
24 can't talk about the High Court bit, you know, and all that stuff, but we just want to
25 get how can this group look for planning, for retention of the 65 houses if it's in the
26 courts already. Also, the same group run The Avon in Blessington which is causing
27 dreadful hardship for the people as regards the re-letting of 30 houses there. There
28 are 30 evictions in Blessington in the Avon estate, which means that the Council are
29 dealing now with 30 new families for housing.

30

31 Another issue I wanted to talk about was the N81 just, the 31-kilometre stretch from
32 Hollywood to Tallaght. South Dublin County Council have recently taken their part
33 of the County Development Plan, South Dublin County Council have, so that means
34 that the road from Tallaght to Wicklow border is now off the plan. Where does that

1 leave us? You know, we have been told on and off that there would be a review of
2 the N81 of this plan, the carriageway in Blessington in 2027. But at the moment we
3 have, that 31-kilometre stretch the land is frozen on either side of it which leaves that
4 the farmers and the landowners, they're left in limbo. So if we could get clarification
5 sometime, I'm not quite sure whether I'll get it today, but as regards the remainder of
6 that road from the Dublin-Wicklow border to Hollywood, what's the situation there.
7 If South Dublin County Council have scrapped the whole plan from their County
8 Development Plan where does that leave us? Thanks a million.

9 CATHAOIRLEACH: I have just one more Councillor, so I am going to take
10 Councillor Louise Fenelon Gaskin.

11 COUNCILLOR FENELON GASKIN: Thank you, Cathaoirleach. It is just a
12 comment I want to make, and it is about the Cliff Walk. It is just a sincere thanks to
13 Emer O'Gorman and to Marc Devereux, I have to say, for their work on the Cliff
14 Walk and also information that they have given to both at the Municipal District as
15 well, and I know from talking to the Taoiseach the information that they have given
16 with me dealing with the Taoiseach, so it is very much appreciated, and everyone
17 should take that on board as well. Thank you.

18 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you, Councillor. Chief Executive.

19 MS O'GORMAN: Thank you, members. Councillor O'Brien, thank you for the
20 comments on the EcoTrail. It was remiss of me to leave it out. It is a phenomenal
21 race, endurance event. I don't know, they're all mad but kudos to them all, they're
22 fantastic.

23

24 Councillor Langrell, on that issue at Djouce Meadow I might get Leonora to
25 comment on that. Get it checked out. But it will come in under planning
26 enforcement and what they're obliged to do as part of the planning application for the
27 safe access and egress in through the site. Leonora will get you details on that.

28

29 Thank you very much, Councillor Fenelon Gaskin, for your kind words on it. Look,
30 it is something we need to push really, really hard on. As I said, at least it is getting
31 a bit of national attention which can do nothing but help us.

32

33 Councillor O'Neill, regarding Kippure, as you know, you mentioned, there's High
34 Court proceedings ongoing in relation to the enforcement. So we're enforcing the

1 fact that there isn't planning in place. They are still entitled to apply for planning,
2 which they have done. So I don't know what their motivation is behind that. We are
3 going to proceed as we are, because I think it is hugely, hugely important.

4

5 In relation to the impact of eviction notices in the Avon, anybody that is in difficulty
6 there they should contact Michael Nicholson's team on the housing side because
7 there is obviously direction from Government around notices to quit and how to
8 proceed with that, so if there are people in difficulty they should contact Michael's
9 team.

10

11 Then around the N81 from Hollywood to Tallaght. It remains an objective of our
12 development plan to improve that road regardless of what South Dublin have done in
13 their development plan. So it's there. It's an objective. You know, at every Council
14 meeting we get calls for improvements to the road and for road safety measures and
15 that to be done. So it will remain as is for the time being. The fact that South Dublin
16 have taken the line off their plan doesn't really impact on our objectives for it
17 because I suppose from the Tallaght, from the county boundary into Tallaght, the
18 road is wider anyway, you probably have less issues with it from a road safety point
19 of view. Certainly as you move from Hollywood down the county it certainly needs
20 examination in the future and that is why it is preserved in the development plan.
21 Leonora might just comment on Roundwood.

22 MS EARLS: In relation to the Roundwood, I will check that out, Councillor
23 Langrell, and I will come back to you directly in relation to that.

24

25 Councillor O'Brien, yes, the SHDs are in with An Bord Pleanála and they have kind
26 of stalled there for want of a better word. The LRDs kind of came along then. So I
27 suppose at the moment we're waiting to see if the board will proceed to issue a
28 decision on those SHDs or if the applicant themselves pull them and go the LRD
29 route.

30 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you, members. I am going to go to the motions
31 we have. Councillor Dermot O'Brien has a motion here. Now I am conscious that it
32 was seconded by Councillor Erika Doyle, who is not here.

33 COUNCILLOR FLYNN KENNEDY: I will second that.

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: I was just going to say I would have done it. Helen, if you
2 read out the motion. Thank you, Aoife.

3 MS PURCELL: The motion proposed by Councillor Dermot O'Brien, seconded by
4 Councillor Aoife Flynn Kennedy: "That this Council adopt Part 4 of the Public
5 Health Amendment Act 1890 to include all Municipal Districts. Part IV of the
6 Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 is a statutory provision for the local
7 regulation (by licensing) of public Music and Singing events. Where Part IV has
8 been adopted all Music and Singing events are required to be licensed and the
9 District Court has jurisdiction to hear License Applications. An Garda Síochána and
10 the Fire Officer are Notice Parties to such applications.

11

12 While it is believed that Part 4 is in place and functioning as expected across the
13 County there is a potential anomaly in Bray which might represent a legal question
14 mark. The passing of this Motion will confirm, endorse and validate the regular
15 status of the Act as it pertains to Music and Singing license provision and is in the
16 interest of both providers and patrons."

17

18 I can give the response.

19

20 "Legal advice on this matter was received and is as follows:

21

22 In the absence of the evidence required by Section 3(6) of the 1890 Act that Bray
23 Township Commissioners or Bray UDC or Bray Town Council adopted a resolution
24 under Section 3 of the 1890 Act, it cannot be assumed that Part IV of the Public
25 Health Acts Amendment Act of 1890 has been adopted for the Bray Municipal
26 District.

27

28 Part IV is at present partially adopted across the County. There is evidence Part IV
29 was adopted by the Wicklow County Health Board in 1931 and Wicklow and
30 Arklow Urban District Council's in 1932.

31

32 It is proposed to list this item as an agenda item on the December agenda to consider
33 and adopt Part 4 of the Public Health Amendment Act 1890 for the County to
34 include all Municipal Districts."

1 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor O'Brien.

2 COUNCILLOR DERMOT O'BRIEN: Sounds good to me.

3 CATHAOIRLEACH: Thank you. We now have a second motion.

4 MS O'GORMAN: Is that agreed?

5 CATHAOIRLEACH: Agreed? (Agreed.) Sounds good to me as well. Councillor
6 Winstanley has another motion in. Now again, I have a seconder, Councillor Mark
7 Barry -- Councillor Danny Alvey, sorry, yeah, is going to second it.

8 MS PURCELL: So we now have a motion proposed by Councillor Caroline
9 Winstanley and seconded by Councillor Danny Alvey. And the motion is: "That
10 this council will disregard the half-rate Carers Allowance in full, the Disability
11 Allowance received by children aged between 16 and 18 in full, and the Carers
12 Allowance at the basic rate of social welfare when calculating the rent of Council
13 tenants under the Differential Rent Scheme (DRS). The Council notes that there are
14 plans for a national review of the DRS, however, this has yet to be published. The
15 Council will implement changes to its DRS based on this motion, and again when the
16 national differential rent plan has been published."

17

18 There was a link given where you could look at differential rents.

19

20 And: "Table 1 on page 4 that rent differs greatly across the country, and even more
21 so in Wicklow. The case study household is charged €127.50 in Bray, but outside of
22 Bray they are €90.50 per week."

23

24 And the response is a bit longer so bear with me.

25

26 "Section 58 of the Housing Act 1966 authorises local authorities to determine the
27 rent charged on local authority properties. The autonomy of local authorities to set
28 and collect rents is subject to broad principles including that rent levels should be
29 based on income and the tenant's ability to pay the rent. This flexibility allows local
30 governments to use discretion when deciding which sources of income are included
31 or disregarded for rent assessment purposes.

32

33 Each local authority operates and manages its own Differential Rent Schemes and
34 the provision of same is an executive function.

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Local authority rents are calculated as a proportion of the principal earners income together with a contribution from any subsidiary income(s) in the household. There are nuances and multiplicity of circumstances that can apply in each local authority scheme. A fundamental consideration for all local authorities in relation to the Differential Rent Scheme are vulnerable households. The application of the Differential Rent Scheme is a wide-ranging subject and there are many cohorts of vulnerable households, for example, Travellers and disabled people, households on working family payment, households in receipt of social welfare payment only and any geographical variations that may exist do not relate to caring households only.

In the submission by Family Carers Ireland in June 2023 to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the review of the Differential Rent Scheme an example was provided in a hypothetical family to demonstrate the different approaches to the setting of rents and geographic variations. The example provided does not accurately reflect all factors that could impact on the local authority assessment across the country and another scenario may result in a different outcome.

CATHAOIRLEACH: We are nearly there.

MS PURCELL: We are nearly there.

"It is important to note that any change to a Differential Rent Scheme needs to be considered in the totality of its impact and should not be done in isolation as there may be unintended or indirect negative consequences.

It should also be noted that while local authorities assess each individual household in line with their operational Differential Rent Scheme based on the individual circumstances of the household. In exceptional circumstances where payment of a rent calculated in accordance with the scheme would, in the opinion of the local authority, give rise to hardship, the local authority has discretion to accept a lesser sum from a tenant for a specified period.

Outside of the above it is recommended that support for carers would be better

1 addressed at national level where it can be considered in the context of all other more
2 vulnerable cohorts and households. While a standardized, national local authority
3 social housing rent model including the provision of comprehensive guidelines
4 would ensure a consistent approach it would need to provide a mechanism to address
5 on a permanent basis any reduction in income experienced by local authorities."

6

7 CATHAOIRLEACH: Councillor Winstanley, would you like to say anything there?
8 I have your microphone switched on. I know there was a lot to take in.

9 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Yes, I am just trying to process it. I suppose my
10 concern, I get there is a lot to work out and it is a complex system, but I suppose I
11 am concerned that there is that discrepancy between Bray and the rest of the county,
12 and I don't really feel like I have a response.

13 CATHAOIRLEACH: We will get you a copy of it as well.

14 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Yeah, that would be great.

15 CATHAOIRLEACH: You can digest it a little more. Because it is a lot to take in.

16 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: Yeah.

17 MS O'GORMAN: Yeah, I suppose this motion, or similar ones went to every local
18 authority, so the response was a central response, which, as you see, is quite
19 complicated, and the differential rent schemes are quite complicated. Wicklow is
20 unusual in that it has two schemes in operation, and that's going back to the time of
21 the Urban District Council. We are undertaking an exercise looking at the two
22 schemes. Our auditor in his audit report, which hasn't come before you yet, his draft
23 report, has recommended that we do so. So we will do that. Anything that comes of
24 that review will go through the Housing SPC, and then before the members here for
25 adoption if there is to be a change to the scheme. But we are looking at it and we
26 will come back to the members through the SPC as we progress the matter, but we
27 will get you a printed copy of the reply anyway, so you have it, Councillor.

28 COUNCILLOR WINSTANLEY: And I suppose, yeah, that was my priority, was
29 getting that discrepancy addressed. I understand the other things may take a bit more
30 planning. Just to be pernickety, could I have a timeframe on that, please?

31 MR NICHOLSON: We have made significant progress, Councillor. What we have
32 done at the moment is we have ran all the Bray rent applications through the County
33 Council scheme. We are currently analysing the discrepancies because also we don't
34 want to introduce a scheme that is going to adversely affect tenants. At the same

1 time we don't want to bring in a scheme that is going to adversely affect our finances.
2 So we're going to look at the anomalies and see is there any way we can bring in the
3 scheme and address the anomalies one-by-one. So we are nearly there. Brian Walsh
4 has done a lot of work on it, in fairness to him. It would certainly be my intention to
5 resolve this by the 1st of next year, 1st January.

6 CATHAOIRLEACH: Okay. Thank you very much. That brings the meeting to an
7 end. I just have a few quick announcement. Just to remind our members that we
8 have our budget meeting here in the chamber on the 25th of this month, and it kicks
9 off at 10 am. And from a personal point of view, I know there's a couple of
10 Councillors here and not here running in the General Election, and I just want to
11 wish you all the best of luck, and don't take this the wrong way, but I hope I don't see
12 you here next month. Thank you very much members for your patience today.

13

14 (Meeting concluded at 5:05pm)

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