



# Wexford County Council Scrutiny Report

NOAC Report No. 54 – December 2022



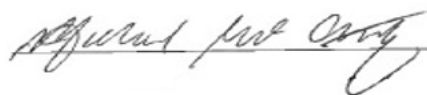
## Chair's Opening remarks

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 introduced significant changes to a wide range of aspects of the local government system, including in relation to matters of accountability and oversight. In that regard, the Act provided for the establishment of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) as the statutory body overseeing the local government sector. NOAC was established in July 2014 under the 2014 Act to provide independent oversight of the local government sector. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically, supporting best practice, overseeing implementation of national local government policy and monitoring and evaluating implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

Since I became Chair of NOAC in September 2018, I have continued the good work that had been started by the previous NOAC Chair in meeting with the Chief Executives of the local authorities and their Management teams. As outlined below, this process has evolved over time and continues to evolve.

The preparation of the profile report also identifies the performance of local authorities in relevant NOAC reports and provides for further examination of the results of these reports. The Scrutiny Process requires time and resources from NOAC and the local authorities in preparation of the profile report and for the Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings. NOAC considers to date that the investment of time and resources has been worthwhile and necessary.

I have been struck by the welcome and sharing of information that has taken place at the meetings. It has provided an opportunity to learn, to listen to how the particular local authority operates, the challenges they face, the plans and ideas that have been developed and gives an opportunity to reflect on what is working well and areas that need to be addressed. It has identified areas of good practice and many of these ideas have been showcased at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars over the years. I look forward to continuing to work closely and collaboratively with all the local authorities and want to use this opportunity to thank all the Chief Executives and their teams for the time and courtesy and welcome extended to NOAC in this process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael McCarthy'.

**Michael McCarthy, Chair**  
**22nd December 2022**

## Background to Profiles and Scrutiny Programme

In February 2017, NOAC, in accordance with its statutory functions, began to review the performance of individual local authorities. The starting point was getting an overall picture derived from the performance indicator report results, the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) audit reports, the financial position and revenue collection performance. Information on private rented sector inspections, housing stock management and maintenance data and Customer Satisfaction was all considered by using the relevant data contained in the NOAC reports published to date.

At the outset, the importance of the meetings was emphasised over and above the data which NOAC had regarding local authorities. There was also an objective to broaden the NOAC members' understanding of the work of the local authorities and the individual priorities and pressures they faced and to put the information in context. Therefore, NOAC wanted to get the background perspective from the authorities and any other datasets that the Councils consider should be taken into account. Significant work is required to bring this part together and the work of the NOAC Secretariat and the local authority NOAC Coordinators must be acknowledged.

Following an initial face to face meeting, which is called a Stage 1 meeting, local authorities were invited to a Stage 2 meeting where more detailed questions would be carried out in the areas of interest to NOAC, including customer service and IT investment, collection rates, the quality of information provision to the public, etc. These meetings would take place after or latterly before the main NOAC board meeting with all the board members present.

## The purpose

The process gives NOAC the opportunity to have oversight of all the local authorities and considers the factors that facilitates them in performing well, along with the barriers that may exist relevant to the individual local authority. The meetings enable the local authorities to outline their strong and weak performing areas. It allows for further examination of the results of the performance indicators and shows the results in context. It must be emphasised that these meetings differ from the Performance Indicator (PI) Validation meetings which are carried out by the Performance Indicator Working Group to interrogate the results reported in relation to selected performance indicators. These meetings, while very informative, are specific to the performance indicator process and do not consider other areas of performance that NOAC have oversight of, including Customer Service, Internal Audit, Corporate Plans, etc.

During the meeting NOAC can see areas where consistent under-performance is highlighted and which can be examined further. It also allows for exemplars of best practice to be identified and used to share with other local authorities. The process as outlined, is not a follow up to the PI reports, but does enable consideration of issues that may warrant further clarification or investigation in the PI process. Local authorities have all indicated in the meetings thus far that they compare their performance and results in relation to what they deem as similar local authorities. This grouping could be reviewed further by NOAC and adopted for the results of some of its reports. Groupings are not only on size but, on levels of finances, urban and rural, staff numbers and other factors.

# The Scrutiny Process

The process has evolved over time, allowing it to become more structured, formal and documented. Given the importance of the work, it is led by the Chair of NOAC (or a delegated alternate, if required) with support from NOAC members and the Executive. The formal process agreed by the Board is termed as a constructive dialogue and is laid out below.

**1**

## Stage 1 (NOAC Scrutiny Visit)

Meeting held with NOAC Chair (or alternate) and/or one additional NOAC member and member(s) of the NOAC Executive. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 1 notice issued to Chief Executive of the local authority.
- Profile report prepared by NOAC Executive with input from the local authority. This is circulated along with an agenda to the local authority and NOAC attendees in advance of the visit. The report is based on general and specific information from NOAC reports relating to the local authority in question.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from attending NOAC members.
- Meeting minutes prepared and issued for comment.

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## Stage 2 (NOAC Scrutiny Meeting)

Appearance at full NOAC meeting. The Chief Executive and members of the management team, as invited by the Chief Executive shall attend.

- Stage 2 notice to attend NOAC meeting issued to Chief Executive of local authority.
- Profile report updated as required and circulated along with an agenda to local authority and NOAC members in advance of the meeting.
- Local authority to present on issues arising and take questions from the NOAC board.
- Meeting minutes prepared for circulation to local authority for its comment.

**3**

## Stage 3 (NOAC Sign off and Publication)

Following completion of Stages 1 and 2 the Executive shall collate the material and present it to the NOAC Board as follows:

- Final sign off on minutes / documents / reports.
- Comments / Findings / Recommendations to be made as required.
- Approval for completed records to be published.



## Progress to date

### 2017

To commence the process, profiles were prepared in respect of Cork City Council, Louth and Offaly County Councils and these were forwarded to the Chief Executives of the authorities concerned. The then NOAC Chair, Pat McLoughlin, began this process with a meeting with the Chief Executive of Louth County Council for a general discussion on the profile in August 2017. This Stage 1 meeting was followed by a similar meeting with the Chief Executive of Cork City Council in September 2017. The final Stage 1 meeting to take place in 2017 was held with the Chief Executive of Offaly County Council in October 2017. In December 2017, Louth County Council attended a meeting with NOAC after the main NOAC Board meeting. This was the first Stage 2 meeting, which formed an important part of the overall process. These meetings served a particularly important function which allowed the Council to give an overview of their work and also gave an opportunity to the NOAC Board to put questions to the Council and understand their situation in more depth.

### 2018

In 2018, the schedule consisted of eight meetings with local authorities, four each for Stage 1 and Stage 2. A Stage 2 meeting was held with Offaly County Council in January 2018. This was followed by another Stage 2 meeting with Cork City Council in March 2018.

A new Chair, Michael McCarthy, was appointed on 24 September 2018. The process continued with Westmeath County Council in October 2018 and Kerry County Council in December 2018. These were Stage 2 meetings with the NOAC board as in these cases, the 2018 Performance Indicator validation meetings for these authorities were deemed sufficient as Stage 1 meetings. Further Stage 1 meetings were held with Roscommon County Council and Tipperary County Council.

### 2019

The format continued with 8 meetings with local authorities during the year. Five Stage 1 meetings and three Stage 2 meetings. The Stage 1 meetings were with Donegal County Council, Laois County Council, Clare County Council, Waterford City and County Council and Carlow County Council. Stage 2 meetings took place with Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council and Donegal County Council.

### 2020

A meetings list was scheduled for 2020 to cover 6 additional local authorities. The year commenced with a Stage 1 meeting with Monaghan County Council in February, along with two Stage 2 meetings with Laois County Council and Waterford City and County Council. Further meetings were scheduled for April, however, due to the COVID crisis these meetings were deferred.

The COVID restrictions presented challenges to the meetings but it was decided to continue the Stage 2 meetings virtually and meetings were held with Clare, Monaghan, Waterford City and County, Carlow and Sligo. These were carried out via the WebEx platform.

A socially distanced Stage 1 meeting was held in person with Limerick City and County Council in August and with Sligo County Council in September 2020.

### 2021

COVID had a significant impact on local authorities, and in particular, for NOAC on the Scrutiny process. The Stage 1 meetings were all held in person, but restrictions curtailed their activities in 2021. Stage 1 meetings were held with Meath and South Dublin in July 2021 and Fingal in October 2021. The Stage 2 meetings progressed, as these were capable of being held remotely, with one held in January 2021 with Limerick City and County Council, another with Meath in September 2021 and a further meeting with South Dublin in December 2021.

## Future meetings and reports

This report outlines the purpose and the procedures of such reports and, while the process may continue to evolve, it is not currently expected to produce another master report, similar to the master report produced in [May 2021](#). It is intended that once all stages in the scrutiny process have been completed with the relevant other local authorities that the report would be published on that basis and would form part of the suite of reports under the umbrella of the Scrutiny Report Process. It is anticipated that progress will continue to be made with further Stage 1 and Stage 2 meetings so that each local authority will have participated in the process. It must be outlined that significant changes and delays have been experienced due to the restrictions imposed by COVID in 2020 and 2021. However, in 2022, 3 Stage 2 and 6 Stage 1 meetings were held.

## Conclusion

The process thus far allowed for the NOAC Chair and members to get a greater understanding and insight into the challenges that face each of the local authorities. Also, issues such as collection rates, staff numbers, inspection rates, finances that are included in reports in some cases benefit from the explanation and discussion as to the reason behind these figures. The meetings also enabled NOAC to see the various priorities that each local authority considered relevant to their citizens and how they overcame various challenges and how they work collaboratively with other local authorities, state bodies and stakeholders. Areas of Good Practice have been identified along the way and these have contributed to presentations of these projects at the NOAC Good Practice Seminars in 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Wexford County Council had their Stage 1 meeting in September 2022 and their Stage 2 meeting in October 2022. It is important to note that the material in this report is reflective of the position at that time. Therefore, any changes to the profile from later NOAC reports are not included in this report. In addition, it should be noted that the relevant information from Performance Indicator Report 2020 is included in this report, as is information from the Review of Local Authority and Regional Assembly Corporate Plans 2019–2024. The NOAC highlights the following points arising out of these meetings with Wexford County Council:

- NOAC was interested to hear that in Wexford over 2,000 acres of land has been granted towards usage of solar energy and that projects in this area will commence in the future.
- NOAC was impressed to hear about the Council's economic investments, particularly in Gorey, where the Hatch Lab has been established to support technology companies, business concepts and start-ups.
- NOAC was concerned to hear that some of the roads within the County are in a significant state of disrepair. The Council explained that it finds it difficult to maintain local roads with its current level of funding.



# Wexford County Council Scrutiny Process

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# NOAC Profile Wexford County Council

May 2022

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# Wexford County Council

## General Information

<b>Local authority</b>	Wexford County Council
<b>Population:</b>	149,722 (2016 Census)
<b>Area:</b>	2,365 KM <sup>2</sup> / 913 SQ.MI.
<b>Municipal Districts:</b>	5 (Borough District of Wexford and Municipal Districts of Gorey-Kilmuckridge, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Rosslare)
<b>2021 Budget</b>	€131,005,176
<b>Number employed @ 31/12/2021</b>	Headcount = 841 (plus 59 retained firefighters) WTE = 803.0386 (excludes 59 retained firefighters)
<b>WTE Staff per 1,000 population</b>	0.1864 (based on population of 149,722)
<b>% of paid working days lost to medically certified sick leave</b>	2.55% (2021)
<b>Housing Information @ 31/12/21</b>	
<b>Local Authority Stock number</b>	4,660 (WCC owned stock as per NOAC return)
<b>Number currently on waiting list</b>	1,488 excluding transfer applicants (an additional 1,750 on transfer list) as at 31/12/2021
<b>HAP Tenancies</b>	1,518 as at 31/12/2021
<b>Homeless presentations</b>	866 calls were received by the Homeless Services & Support Unit (HSSU) in 2021
<b>Any specific housing issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting the demand for supply of 1 bed units across the County</li> <li>Delivery of social housing in rural areas where water services are at capacity and require significant investment by Irish Water</li> </ul>
<b>Short Information Paragraph</b>	
<b>Council Mission Statement</b>	To be passionate and ambitious in working for Wexford, delivering a vibrant model county.
<b>Economic Forum (CEF)</b>	<p>Wexford County Council continues to actively promote Wexford as a great place to live and do business, working to strengthen and grow the economic capacity of the county.</p> <p>The Council is directly undertaking economic development and public realm improvement projects such as Trinity Wharf, The Hatch Lab IT Incubation Centre, Enniscorthy Business and Technology Park, Templeshannon Regeneration Project, and New Ross Advance Factory.</p> <p>The Economic Development Section was established to support both new and existing business and enterprise throughout County Wexford. The section acts as a conduit and an enabler to get help and supports in all areas from existing bodies and institutions located in the County and further afield, and it strives to make Wexford a Business friendly County for all industries.</p>

	<p>The functions of the section include (click on links for more information):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Economic Promotion of the County such as <a href="http://www.investwexford.ie">www.investwexford.ie</a></li> <li>■ Enterprise Infrastructure in the County</li> <li>■ Tourism Development</li> <li>■ Business Networking and support for initiatives such as ConnectIreland</li> <li>■ Research &amp; Innovation</li> <li>■ Local Enterprise Office</li> </ul>
<b>The Local Enterprise Office</b>	<p>The Local Enterprise Office Wexford (LEO) offers support to start ups and small businesses in a number of ways. These supports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Training programmes</li> <li>■ Advice and information through mentoring programmes</li> <li>■ Selective financial assistance.</li> </ul>
<b>Retail Incentives</b>	<p>Wexford County Council provides assistance and incentives for business and the retail sector in the county.</p> <p>These include a range of business supports and grants including Shop Front Improvement Schemes, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020 and the Vacant Property Grant Incentive Scheme which was introduced to encourage the use of vacant commercial and industrial property across the County. By encouraging the occupation of vacant properties, the Council is supporting the appearance and attraction of an area, thereby contributing indirectly to increased footfall for existing business. The grant is offered as a contribution towards fit out costs.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here for more information</a></p>
<b>Community Facilities and Amenities</b>	<p>Wexford County Council has a comprehensive approach to enhancing community infrastructure and public amenities. This includes the development of new facilities incl. Min Ryan Park, Cahore Coastal Trail and Carrigfoyle Outdoor Amenities. Rejuvenation projects supported include Gorey District Park Re-development, High Hill in New Ross and the Wexford Arts Centre Extension.</p>
<b>The Corporate Plan</b>	<p>Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024</p> <p><a href="#">Click here to view</a></p>
<b>Shared services</b>	<p>Proposed Payroll Shared Service</p>
<b>Regional Issues including new developments and initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ University for South East</li> <li>■ Development of Rosslare Europort</li> <li>■ Wexford to Dublin Railway Line</li> <li>■ M11 Oylgate to Rosslare Harbour road project</li> <li>■ South East Greenway (Wexford, Kilkenny, Waterford)</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Strategies</b>	<p><a href="https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/sites/default/files/content/Flipbooks/Economic-brochure-2018/mobile/index.html#p=4">https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/sites/default/files/content/Flipbooks/Economic-brochure-2018/mobile/index.html#p=4</a></p>
<b>Any other relevant information</b>	<p>Wexford County Council's Mission Statement is 'To be passionate and ambitious in working for Wexford, delivering a vibrant model county'.</p>

### Collection Rates

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Rate collection rates	84%	89.9%	88%	82.4%	79.1%	75%	71%
Rent collection rates	93%	90.7%	92%	91.7%	89.9%	92%	90%
Housing loan collection rates	104%	102.7%	98%	92.1%	85.7%	80%	75%

From records, it is clear that there has been steady growth in rate collections over the years, going from 71% in 2014 to 89.9% in 2019. This dropped back to 84% in 2020, which is ahead of the national average of 76%.

Rent collections have increased over the years, going from 90% in 2014 to 93% in 2020. This is above the national average of 88.3% for 2020.

Housing loans collection rates have greatly increased since 2014, when it was at 75% and now stands at over 100%. This is far beyond the national average collection rate of 79.4% for 2020.

## NOAC Reports Overview

NOAC was established in July 2014 as an independent statutory body to provide oversight of the local government sector in Ireland. NOAC's functions are wide ranging, involving the scrutiny of performance generally and financial performance specifically. NOAC also supports best practice, oversees the implementation of national local government policy, monitors and evaluates implementation of corporate plans, adherence to service level agreements and public service reform by local government bodies.

The annual Performance Indicator Report published by NOAC is one of its key reports every year. NOAC has the function of scrutinising local authority performance against relevant indicators. NOAC believes that monitoring performance over time and against comparable authorities has the potential to encourage continuous improvement in local authority service provision. From the reports published to date matters relevant to Wexford County Council are outlined in the points below.

### NOAC REPORT NOS 44 AND 26

## Performance Indicator Reports 2020 and 2019

In November 2021, NOAC published its review of the corporate plans of local authorities and regional assemblies for the period 2019 - 2024. The purpose of the report is to review the adequacy of the plans and to assist with the further development of good practice in corporate planning.

Under the process, areas considered for review included:

- **Housing.** Wexford owned 4,586 social housing dwellings at the end of 2020 with 1.35% vacant, compared to a national average of 3.18%. In 2019 Wexford owned 4,574 social houses and had a vacancy rate of 1.97% compared to a national average of 3.15%. Re-letting time and vacancy rates have declined from the 2019 position. In 2020 the average time for rehousing in vacant properties in Wexford was 35.14 weeks, which is higher than the national average of 32.69 weeks.
- **Environment.** 9% of the County is unpolluted or litter-free (10% in 2019). 69% of the area is slightly polluted (68% in 2019) and 19% is moderately polluted (also 19% in 2019). The national average figures for being unpolluted or litter-free in 2020 was 22% and was 17% for being moderately polluted.
- **Roads.** With regards to local primary roads, Wexford had the highest national percentage of local primary roads classified as structurally distressed in 2020 (31.3%), which is an improvement on 2019 (37.01%). Regarding local secondary roads, Wexford had the highest national percentage of local secondary roads classified as structurally distressed in 2020 (44.7%). This is however, an improvement on 2019 (49.27%). Wexford also had the highest national percentage of tertiary roads classified as structurally distressed in 2020 (39.5%), again an improvement on the 2019 figures (45.33%).
- **Green Flag status.** At the end of 2020, 51% of schools in the county held a Green Flag, a decrease from the 53.6% in 2019. The national average in 2020 was 41.83% and was 47.96% in 2019.
- **Fire service.** It took an average of 6:21 minutes to mobilise fire brigades for calls to fires, a dis-improvement over the 6:04 minutes of 2019.
- **Libraries.** There were an average of 0.88 visits per head of population and 482,119 items issued to library borrowers in 2020. For 2019 the figures were 3.68 visits and 581,141 items borrowed. The lower figures for 2020 reflects the library closures during that year, owing to COVID.
- **Staff total.** Whole-time equivalent staff employed by Wexford County Council at the end of 2020 was 794.11. This compares to 794.67 for the end of 2019.

## NOAC REPORT NO 21

### Customer Satisfaction Survey July 2019

- **Sick leave.** Wexford's medically certified sick leave rate was 2.73% in 2020 (compared to 3.42% in 2019), making it one of the local authorities which met the public sector sick leave target of 3.5%. Wexford's self-certified sick leave rate was 0.22% in 2020. The national average is 0.20%.
- **Technology & Social media.** In the 2020 Performance indicators this heading was amended to represent the results as per capita. Previously this indicator was represented as the total visitors to the local authority website and followers on social media. The per capita total page views of Wexford's websites in 2020 was 17.7, which compares to an average of 15.56 across all local authorities. The per capita total number of followers at the end 2020 of its social media accounts was 0.17, as opposed to an average of 0.81 across all local authorities.
- In 2018, Ipsos MRBI was commissioned by NOAC to conduct a survey among the general public to establish their satisfaction with their local authority. A face-to-face in-home CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing) methodology is utilised and quota controls ensured that participants are representative of the local authority population by age, gender and social class.
- The first survey, conducted in 2018, surveyed the 10 largest local authorities. The second survey, completed in March 2019, was conducted with the 10 medium sized local authorities and Galway City. The remaining 10 local authorities were surveyed in 2020. Wexford was included in the 2019 survey.
- 52% of respondents were satisfied with Wexford County Council, which was slightly below the average level of satisfaction with all Councils, which was 56%.
- 36% believed that Wexford promotes economic activity compared to the average of 52%.
- 22% of people felt that Wexford provides good value for money, where the average was 28% across all local authorities.
- 46% of people believe that Wexford is doing a good job, compared to the overall satisfaction rating of 51%.

## NOAC REPORT NO 22

### Performance Indicator Report 2018

- **New House building inspections** rose from 16.92% in 2014 to 33.42% in 2018 (42.11% in 2019, which increased greatly to accomplish 100% in 2020).
- **Cost per capita of the planning** service dropped marginally from €26.97 in 2014 to €26.87 in 2018 (€28.36 in 2019 and €30.42 in 2020).
- **The cost of the library service** rose from €26.45 in 2014 to €33.20 in 2018 (€34.89 in 2019 and €37.23 in 2020). This compares to a national average cost of €35.95 across all local authorities in 2020.
- **The % of households availing of the 3 bin service** increased from 11.66% in 2014 to 21.16% in 2018 (and continues to increase, to 26.36% in 2019 and 89.50% in 2020).

Full figures for all Performance Indicator reports are included in a table on page 14.

## NOAC REPORT NO 17

### Internal Audit in Local Authorities - July 2018

- Local authorities were asked whether the audit committee had conducted an assessment of the adequacy of Internal Audit resources, including staff skills, within the last 2 years. Wexford was not one of 17 authorities which had done so.
- The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Director of Finance in four authorities - Clare, Mayo, Roscommon and Wexford.



- In response to the question as to whether any External Quality Assurance review of Internal Audit has been undertaken, only six local authorities, excluding Wexford, confirmed that this was the case.
- Internal audit functions need to possess or obtain the knowledge, skills or competencies needed to deliver their audit plans. A broad range of qualifications was reported and in the case of Laois, South Dublin and Wexford professional internal audit qualifications were specifically outlined as holding profession qualifications as Chartered Internal Auditor, Certified Internal Auditor and Diploma in Internal Audit Practice.

#### NOAC REPORT NO 12

### A Review of the Management and Maintenance of Local Authority Housing – May 2017

#### New Management Systems and Structures

Wexford ranked tenth with respect to the number of housing estates managed by a local authority, at 256 dwelling units.

#### Establishing the condition of local authority stock

Only 15 local authorities have ever carried out condition surveys and, of these, five, including Wexford, reported conducting such surveys at regular intervals.

#### Energy Efficiency of Units

Local authorities were asked what percentage of units had been retrofitted with energy efficiency measures. Figures ranged from 5% in South Dublin County Council to 95% in Wexford County Council.

#### NOAC REPORT NO 10

### Rented Houses Inspections – A Review of Local Authority Performance of Private Rented Houses Regulations Functions – October 2016

	2014	2020
<b>Number of Registered Tenancies</b>	7,894	8,571
<b>% Units inspected</b>	10.5	3.85
<b>Inspected Failed %</b>	83.1	99.14

Data from report relates to 2014, data for 2020 taken from Performance Indicator Report.

Performance Indicators	2020		2019		2018		2017		2016		2015		2014	
	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average	Data	Median/ Average
H1 Social Housing provided in year per 1,000 population	0.39	0.64	0.80	1.15	1.02	0.84	0.88	0.53	n/a	3.43	0.76	1.91	0.82	0.80
H2 % of directly provided dwellings vacant at 31/12	1.35	3.18	1.97	3.15	3.03	2.77	2.13	2.73	1.31	3.02	0.92	3.5	1.02	3.8
H3a Average time from vacation date to PI year re-letting date (weeks)	35.14	32.69	26.04	28.17	30.13	27.75	22.19	28.9	20.21	32.99	13.70	28.43	12.78	31.43
H3b Average cost expended on getting re-tenanted units ready for re-letting	€6,316.24	€19,065.30	€9,204.83	€18,336.85	€8,961.52	€18,590.28	€6,871.53	€17,160.60	6,535.53	€15,877	7,298.08	€13,378.40	2,950.00	€11,534.91
H4 Average repair and maintenance cost per unit	€782.01	€1,119.82	€1,160.42	€1,168.99	€1,215.56	€841.83	€1,119.16	€1,311.82	1,101.49	€1,500.23	732.00	€1,292.57	955.45	€1,272.30
H5 Inspections (Dwellings inspected in 2020) carried out in year as % of registrations	3.85	6.73	12.37	9.93	10.08	7.39	4.70	4.96	2.38	4.36	2.94	5.64	10.46	6.51
R1a % Regional Road KM that ever received a PSCI rating	87.1	77	99.72	99	100	99.36	100	96	99.00	99	58.00	68	51.80	47.9
R1b % Total Regional Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	25.8	31.19	40.06	38.28	30	37.58	20	28	14.00	30	20.00	20	33.00	11.15
R1c % Total Primary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	21.6	24.00	15.54	23.08	15	23.39	10	20	16.00	13	13.00	11	23.00	6.4
R1d % Total Secondary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	13.8	17.66	9.34	17.67	10	15.19	6	14	10.00	10	8.00	8	18.00	4.61
R1e % Total Tertiary Road KM with a PSCI rating of 9-10	11.4	13.93	8.28	14.23	8	12.42	7	8	5.00	7	4.00	5	12.00	3.63



	Performance Indicators	2020		2019		2018		2017		2016		2015		2014	
R2a	KM Regional Road strengthened using road improvement grants	15.9	14.7	13.50	13.17	18.1	13.4	12.70	10.3	18.80	10.8	10.20	10.2		
R2b	KM Regional road resealed using road maintenance grants	29.9	19.4	40.60	14.27	27.2	15.3	21.50	11.9	14.50	12.2	20.70	8.3		
R2/3	% Motor tax transactions performed online	83.47	81.52	74.70	70.21	72.04	69.15	69.05	65.95	66.23	64.05	58.44	56.6	53.39	54.7
W1	% private schemes with water quality in compliance	No data available	No data available	94.50	97.50	94.53	97.1	93.26	98.46	92.34	97.77	94.07	99.07	95.40	97.9
E1	% households availing of a 3-bin service	89.50	89.73	26.36	48.36	21.16	43.91	16.61	39.53	14.83	37.7	17.83	34.87	11.66	31.66
E2	Pollution cases on hand at year end as % of the cases that arose that year	40.35	10.38	20.47	9.28	16.24	11.00	12.99	9.79	4.53	9.91	12.40	8.49		
E3	% area unpolluted or litter free	9	22	10.00	15.00	10	19.00	18	10	12.00	13	11.00	14	37.00	9.5
P1	New buildings inspected as % of new buildings notified	100	15.28	42.11	23.90	33.42	16.75	32.03	17	27.76	19.42	31.21	24	10.46	17.71
P2	% of determinations that confirmed the decision made by LA	62.16	73.17	63.64	73.07	70.69	75.92	55.26	79	71.43	77.78	85.19	71.88	62.50	71.7
P3	Ratio of planning cases being investigated at year end as to cases closed	1.69	3.74	1.20	2.74	1.42	3.03	1.18	2.41	0.59	2.87	1.17	2.61	3.44	2.88
P4	Cost per capita of the Planning Service	30.42	31.47	28.36	€30.27	26.87	29.24	€25.49	28.31	22.78	€26.96	24.26	€26.76	26.97	€25.27
F1	Cost per capita of Fire Service (based on 2016 Census)	37.48	79.93	36.71	€60.79	43.04	53.85	€33.40	57.74	31.12	€56.07	31.63	€57.88	29.00	€55.9



Performance Indicators	2020		2019		2018		2017		2016		2015		2014	
	N/A	1:28	N/A	1:24	N/A	1:42	N/A	1:45	n/a	1.5	N/A	1.6	N/A	1.66
F2														
F3		29.58	55.30	55.14	30.4	52.92	40.03	40.45	36.44	57.79	34.51	56.98	36.16	58.6
L1a		0.88	1.05	3.57	3.6	3.50	3.82	3.56	3.89	3.61	4.12	3.68	4.83	3.71
L1b		3.22	2.19	3.14	3.11	3.00	3.08	2.92	4.00	3.82	4.09	3.82		
L2		37.23	35.95	€34.94	€33.2	30.52	28.82	31.00	24.80	€30.05	25.87	€30.02	26.45	€29.41
Y1		77.27	63.29	68.30	90.91	80.00	86.36	69.04	86.36	68.07	68.18	67.59	72.97	51.86
C1		5.30	6.06	5.95	5.04	5.99	4.87	5.75	4.84	5.64	4.77	5.58	5.13	5.63
C2a		2.73	3.01	3.71	3.72	3.74	3.79	3.74	3.15	3.76	3.12	3.52	2.84	3.34
C2b		0.22	0.20	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.36	0.33	0.39	0.38	0.38	0.39	0.35	0.4
C3		N/A	N/A	16,572	14,696.92	16,210.00	13062	14,632	14,785.99	12,422	14,225.19	11,666	12,510.90	9,651
C4		3,006.42	3,457.02	3,060.84	2,450.22	2,894.57	€2,537.85	€3,048.41	2,476.88	€2,675.69	2,622.89	€2,680.15	3,148.00	€2,646.8
M2a		84	76	87	88	86.00	82.4	83	79.10	82.3	75.00	83	71.00	77
M2b		93	88.3	89.80	92	89.00	91.7	89	89.90	88.0	92.00	85	90.00	84
M2c		104	79.4	78	98	75.00	92.1	74	85.70	70	80.00	68	75.00	67
J1		0.10	-0.30	0.64	0.22	0.77	0.84	0.68	0.54	0.7	1.03	0.66	1.18	0.73



# Stage 1 meeting

## National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Scrutiny Meeting with Wexford County Council

Date:	29th September at 11:30 a.m., WebEx online meeting	
In attendance:	<b>Wexford County Council</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tom Enright, Chief Executive</li> <li>■ Michael Drea, County Secretary</li> </ul>	<b>NOAC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Michael McCarthy, NOAC Chair</li> <li>■ John Goldrick, NOAC Executive</li> </ul>

NOAC's profile for Wexford County Council was issued in advance of the meeting and formed the basis for the discussion on the day. A second meeting between Wexford County Council and the NOAC Board will take place on 11th October. The NOAC Chair invited the Chief Executive (CE) to give an overview of the Council and the issues facing it. The CE gave a presentation, which is included at the end of these minutes. Matters discussed in detail were:

### Background to Wexford County Council

Wexford has experienced the fastest population growth (9.2%) between Census 2016 and Census 2022, with a current population of 163,500. This creates a corresponding demand on services within the County. Wexford has also seen improved roads connectivity, particularly with the motorway network extending to Belfast. Funding has also recently been secured for the Oylegate to Rosslare Harbour motorway bypass extension.

### Public Services

The Council has adapted how it provides services to its citizens. It established a Customer Services Unit three years ago and trained employees for their roles within the Unit. It has also increased the rollout of the use of e-services and e-planning. The Council undertakes regular surveys of how satisfied its customers are with the services which are provided within the County.

### Economic Development

The Wexford Socio-Economic Baseline Report, which was published in 2015, highlighted that Wexford was the third most disadvantaged County in Ireland. This finding came as a surprise to many people. Only 21% of people in Wexford have a degree, which points to the fact that younger people are leaving the County with many moving or commuting to Dublin for employment. Wexford itself does not have many large employers and the Council has stepped into the market in this sphere, developing an economic and investment programme. The Council has also raised the LPT by 10% to increase its revenue base.



## Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Council outlined how it came in under expectations on some headings, including on its satisfaction rating, the perceived value for money and the promotion of economic activity. The Council felt that it needed to use social media to outline where it is performing well. The results in question pertain to 2019 and the Council felt that it has improved since that period. NOAC agreed that the results could be a communications issue and felt that there are a huge amount of services which are successfully delivered by local authorities, which was demonstrated during the Covid era.

## Renewable energy

Over 2,000 acres of land has been granted towards usage of solar energy and projects in this area will commence in the future. With regard to wind energy, Belfast port is the only port on the island which can service offshore wind projects. Pembrokeshire, Wales is an example where offshore wind farms are to be developed 45 km out to sea in 2026. It was noted that Ireland needs to invest further in this type of technology, but time will be required to develop ports for this. Rosslare is one port which may have the potential to be developed and it was highlighted that there is significant interest in such developments from wind energy companies.

## Brexit

Wexford has had some benefits from Brexit, such as an increase in traffic in Rosslare port. Pre-Brexit, there had been six sailings per week to ports in France. That has increased to thirty two sailings per week post-Brexit. This has put Rosslare port on the map, and subsequently many companies have re-located to Wexford.

## Homelessness

Wexford has recorded a fall in the number of adults in emergency accommodation over recent years. This was achieved through numerous measures. The homeless list consisted of a considerable number of homeless males, and with the construction of one and two bed houses, this situation has been improved. Wexford believes that emergency accommodation is not the ideal solution to this issue.

In keeping with best practice, as outlined by the Department, Wexford has moved away from collective hostels to own-door solutions, of which there are approximately 40 in the County.

The Council also employs two social care workers to assist applicants in moving into full-tenancy local authority units. The Council has two private providers of homes and has also developed a relationship with the McVerry Trust.

## Local Enterprise Offices

The LEO in Wexford continued to create jobs in 2020, despite the effects of Covid. This situation has improved into 2021, thanks to a well-performing LEO team, the establishment of remote hubs in which people may work remotely and small and medium sized companies re-locating to Wexford due to Brexit.

## Greenways

Wexford County Council is the lead authority of the South East Greenway, undertaken with Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City & County Council, whereby 24km of a cycling and walking route linking New Ross, County Wexford with Ferrybank, County Waterford through South Kilkenny, is being developed. A further Greenway is planned to link Wexford town to Rosslare, which will be 56km long. There are also plans to have a Blueway between New Ross to St Mullins. The overall aim is to have a network of Greenways so that tourists can use them from Rosslare, along the south coast to Dublin. This vision will take time and significant investment.

## Wexford Rail Service

The Council has made a submission to the Public Consultation on the Rail Review 2016 Report. One of the requests was that the Wexford to Dublin line would be truncated, with passengers alighting the DART system in the Greystones or Bray area. At present, there are only four trains running from Wexford to Dublin, which is felt to be inadequate. The above proposal would create much greater capacity if implemented.

## Councils Forum

The Council is one of several local authorities which is part of a regional forum. This forum has the advantage of the combined voice of the region when channelling its decisions through to central government.

## Collection rates

The growth in rates collections from 2014 to 2019 has been impressive. In 2014, the Council had a deficit of €11.8 million and had capital balances of €25 million, all of which presented a real challenge. The Council needed an increase in its income and therefore had to increase its collection rates. A team was set up to tackle debt collection in a much more efficient manner. Introducing XRS software as a credit management tool was of great assistance in this endeavour. It allowed customers to have control over their own repayment plans. The Council, meanwhile, was able to focus on customers who had not been making repayments. There is now a surplus in the Council's accounts and with it comes the ability to make investments. Rent collections are also at a very high level, reaching 93% in 2020.

## Performance Indicator Report

Wexford County Council has performed well with respect to its re-letting and vacancy rates. The Council emphasises a prompt turnaround times for re-tenanting vacant units. It looks to have pre-vacation inspections undertaken, before a unit reverts to the Council. This ensures that there is less work to be carried out on a unit when it is eventually given back to the Council.

The minutes of this meeting and the future NOAC meeting will be circulated by the NOAC Executive to Wexford County. Once approved, these, along with the Stage 2 minutes and any presentations will be published on the NOAC website.



# Stage 1 Presentation

## NOAC Scrutiny Process Stage 1

### Important Issues and Challenges

*Tom Enright*  
*Chief Executive*  
*Wexford County Council*

29<sup>th</sup> September 2022



## Profile – County Wexford



- Population 163,500 (up 9.2%)
- Part of South East Region
- 4 Large Towns
- Improved Connectivity
- Heritage County
- Mix of Urban, Rural and Coastal
- International Port - Rosslare



## Wexford County Council



**Mission:** “To be passionate and ambitious in working for Wexford, delivering a vibrant model county”

- 34 Elected Members
- 5 Municipal Districts
- 900 Staff
- €200M Annual Expenditure
- Diverse Range of Unique and Important Public Services



## Important Issues and Challenges



1. Delivering new Housing
2. Delivering Quality Public Services
3. Developing a Vibrant Local Economy
4. Climate Change
5. Developing Communities

### 1.0 Delivering New Housing



1. Social Housing – WCC Housing Action Plan
  - 1,155 New Units by 2026

2. Private Housing
  - Efficient Planning System
  - Water Services Infrastructure



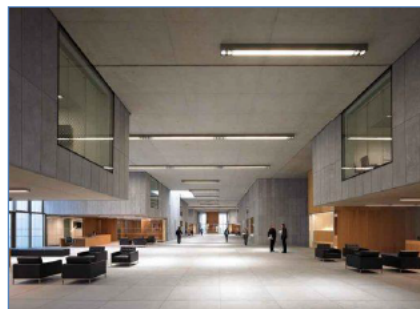
3. Affordable Housing
  - “Squeezed Middle”
  - Local Authority Home Loan
  - Local Authority to address market failure



## 2.0 Delivering Quality Public Services



- Adjust Priorities
- Customer Services Unit
- e-Services
- Councillors' Portal
- Regular Surveys
- Improving KPI's
- Comparisons with Other Similar LA's
- More Effective Communication



## 3.0 Economic Development



1. Research – AIRO NUI Maynooth Report  
- Lisneys Property Solutions Report
2. Need to Attract Higher-Order Employment
3. Delivery of Commercial Property Solutions
4. Development of New Business Parks in 4 Key Towns
5. Corporate Plan 2019-2024

*... Imaginatively develop strategic sites, locations and incubation units that will create and support sustainable employment within the county.*

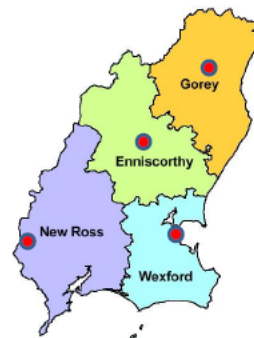
## Economic and Community Investment Programme



### 30 Projects - €50M Over 5 Years

- **Economic Investments**

- Gorey - New Offices and 'Hatch Lab'
- Enniscorthy - New Technology Park
- New Ross - New Large Manufacturing Building (ATB)
- Wexford – Trinity Wharf major development, etc.



- **Community Investments**

- New Town Parks in Wexford and Gorey
- Greenways
- Forth Mountain Activity Centre
- Wexford Arts Centre Extension
- Georgia Southern University – Learning Centre, etc.

## Gorey - New Offices

### M11 Business Campus Gorey



- €4M Private Investment
- 36,000 sqft
- New IDA - FDI companies
- 30 Small Start-Up Companies

## Enniscorthy Technology Park



- 38 Acre site purchased by WCC
- 100,000 sqft Office Space
- New FDI Company *Opus Fund Services*– 100 jobs
- United Nations MOU for NZEB Centre of Excellence
- Private Investment €8M
- Completed Nov 2022
- 70% Committed

## New Ross – Advanced Factory

- Council Owned Site
- Planning Permission granted for 2 Advanced Factories
- 75,000 Sq Ft
- IDA Design
- Construction 2023



## Trinity Wharf Wexford



- €120 Million Development
- URDF Funding
- Large-Scale Office Developments
- Hotel, Marina, Apartments
- Public-Private Partnership
- Planning Approval April 2020
- Construction October 2022

## Economic Development



1. South East Technological University
2. Offshore Renewable Energy Projects
3. Data Centres
4. Tourism
5. Agri-Food





## 4.0 Climate Change



1. WCC Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024
2. Lead by Example
3. Public Awareness
4. Council Housing Stock – NZEB (new) and Retrofit (old)
5. Public Lighting
6. Biodiversity
7. Solar Farms
8. Offshore Wind Projects

## 5.0 Developing Communities



1. Community Infrastructure
2. Building Capacity
3. Age Friendly Programme
4. Volunteering – New VC
5. Promoting the Arts

Min Ryan  
Park



Walking  
Trails



Wexford Arts Centre



Ferndale Boxing Club



New Ross  
Greenway





## NOAC Customer Satisfaction Survey Results (2019)



	Wexford	All
Satisfaction Level	52%	56%
Promotion of Economic Activity	36%	56%
VFM	22%	28%
Doing a Good Job	46%	51%

- Need for more promotion of improvements and successes
- Better use of Social Media
- Significant Improvements since 2019

Q and A

Thank You



# Stage 2 meeting

## Minutes of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) Meeting with Wexford County Council

Date:	Tuesday 11th October 2022 at 10:40 a.m.	
Venue:	Virtual meeting using the WebEx platform	
Attended by:	<b>Chair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Brian Cawley (alternate chair)</li> </ul> <b>Members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Niall Quinn</li> <li>■ Ciarán Hayes</li> <li>■ Fiona Quinn</li> <li>■ Margaret Lane</li> <li>■ Noel Harrington</li> </ul> <b>Apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Michael McCarthy</li> <li>■ Philomena Poole</li> <li>■ Declan Breathnach</li> </ul> <b>Secretariat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Alan McDermott</li> <li>■ John Goldrick</li> <li>■ Valerie Longmore</li> </ul>	<b>By Invite:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tom Enright, Chief Executive</li> <li>■ Liz Hore, Director of Services, Economic Development &amp; Planning</li> <li>■ Carolyn Godkin, Director of Services, Housing, Community, Libraries, Arts, Emergency Services, Environment &amp; Climate Change</li> <li>■ Amanda Byrne, A/Director of Services, Ukraine Response, Human Resources and Corporate Affairs</li> <li>■ Michael Drea, County Secretary</li> </ul>

### Meeting with Wexford County Council

NOAC's profile for Wexford County Council was issued in advance of the meeting. The Chair welcomed the officials from Wexford County and invited the Chief Executive (CE) to give an overview of the Council and the issues facing it. Matters discussed in detail were:

### Overview

With 163,500 inhabitants, Wexford has seen a population growth of 9.2% since census 2016 and is a Heritage county. Its four large towns are Enniscorthy, New Ross, Wexford and Gorey. With its motorway and New Ross bypass, the county is well connected with the rest of the country.

There are 34 elected members over five municipal districts and the Council has 900 staff and an annual budget in the region of €200 million. There are five Strategic Policy Committees, along with a Ukrainian Community Response Forum. There are also five directors of services, with a temporary director of service on the Ukrainian response side.

## Challenges

The major challenges facing Wexford consist of developing a vibrant local economy, delivering new housing and public services, developing services with infrastructure, tackling climate change and developing communities.

## Economy

On the local economy, 27% of workers in some sectors commute out of the county and it is hoped that the use of remote hubs will help to address this issue. There is a lack of supply of offices and factories in the county which does not encourage investment into the area. Therefore, the Council recognised the need to develop a policy on new business parks and to establish the South East technological university.

## Economic and Community Development programme

The Council is investing €50 million in 50 projects over a period of five years. In Gorey, the Hatch Lab has been established, which is a tech incubator space designed for technology companies, supporting business concepts and start-ups. In Enniscorthy, a new business and technology park is being developed at present and will help facilitate small and medium enterprises with the objective of attracting businesses from the science and technology sectors.

In New Ross, a new large manufacturing building is being constructed to attract business to the area. Additionally, in Wexford Town Trinity Wharf is a site which is expected to facilitate a new urban quarter with a public realm, office spaces, hotel accommodation, residential units and a multi-storey car park. Planning approval for this has been granted by An Bord Pleanála and it is hoped that this development will be commenced in October/November 2022. Up to 2,000 employees may be working there over the next ten to fifteen years.

## Tourism

Tourism is of great importance to Wexford. Highlights in this area include Hook Lighthouse, which is the oldest operational lighthouse in the world. Some of the other major tourist attractions are The Irish National Heritage Park, the Norman visitor centre in New Ross and Enniscorthy Castle. All of these sites will be receiving considerable investment over the coming years. Additionally, the South East Greenway will be completed in 2024 which will run from New Ross to Waterford and connect with the Waterford Greenway.

## Housing

Wexford plans to construct 1,155 new social housing units by 2026. With regards to affordable housing, a pilot project is taking place in Gorey, whereby the Council is purchasing and designing land for housing units and providing home loans of €225,000 over a thirty year period.

## Climate

From a climate perspective, Wexford is the first local authority to have zero energy social housing, is one of the first local authorities to move to LED public lighting, has numerous solar and offshore wind farms and has a Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024 in place.

## Staffing

The Council finds it difficult to recruit and retain staff, particularly on the technical side. There is a considerable amount of staff turnover, which is a challenge to manage. There will also be a corporate knowledge loss over the next few years, due to retirements and measures have been put in place on staffing, particularly in the investment of staff welfare and the implementation of remote working. An exit interview process has begun with staff over the last six months in order to identify the particular reasons for them moving employment.

## Local Property Tax (LPT)

Recently the Council increased the LPT by 5%, bringing the total increase to 15%, with strong support among councillors. It is felt there is a very good understanding of the benefits of the increase where all parts of the county can benefit from the projects which are funded by these increases.

These projects also tend to attract government grants, which is another benefit in undertaking them. It is important for the Council to point to the actual projects delivered by the LPT increases to its citizens.

## Business

It is vital to demonstrate to businesses that there is adequate commercial property solutions, as this is crucial to attracting investment to the county. The 2014 Local Government Reform Act moved the economic development remit to local authorities, which is felt by the Council to benefit local authorities. With regards to employment, Wexford recently received 300 new IDA jobs and also attained the highest number of jobs created nationally through the LEOs (local employment offices) last year. Additionally in the last three years, the Council has had eight to ten IDA announcements.

## Roads

The Council's budget for its road maintenance has been cut significantly since 2008. There have been some increases to its budget over recent years, but it is still felt to be substantially below what is required. The Council finds it difficult to maintain local roads with this level of funding and it is concentrating its funding on repairing the roads in the most serious state of disrepair. However, there are substantial sections of roads which are continuing to degrade, which will require increased funding in the long run. The relatively poor condition of roads in the county may be contributing to a lower satisfaction rating amongst people in the Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

## Internal audit

The Head of Internal Audit reports to the Director of Finance in four authorities, including Wexford. The Council feels that this continues to work well for it and it is intended for this structure to continue into the future. The Council feels that the necessary accountability is provided with this reporting structure. Regarding an internal quality assessment, the Local Government Audit Service (LGAS) undertakes external reviews of the audit function.

## Conclusion

The Chair thanked the local authority officials for their attendance at the meeting and outlined that the minutes will be published on the NOAC website at a future date.



# 5

## Stage 2 Presentation

### Contents



#### Introductions

1. Profile of County Wexford
2. Important Issues and Challenges
3. Customer Satisfaction Surveys
4. Q and A

## 1. Profile – County Wexford



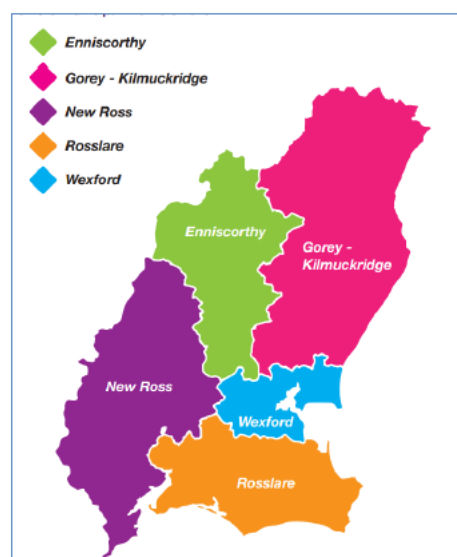
- Population 163,500 (up 9.2%)
- Part of South East Region
- 4 Large Towns
- Improved Connectivity
- Heritage County
- Mix of Urban, Rural and Coastal
- International Port - Rosslare

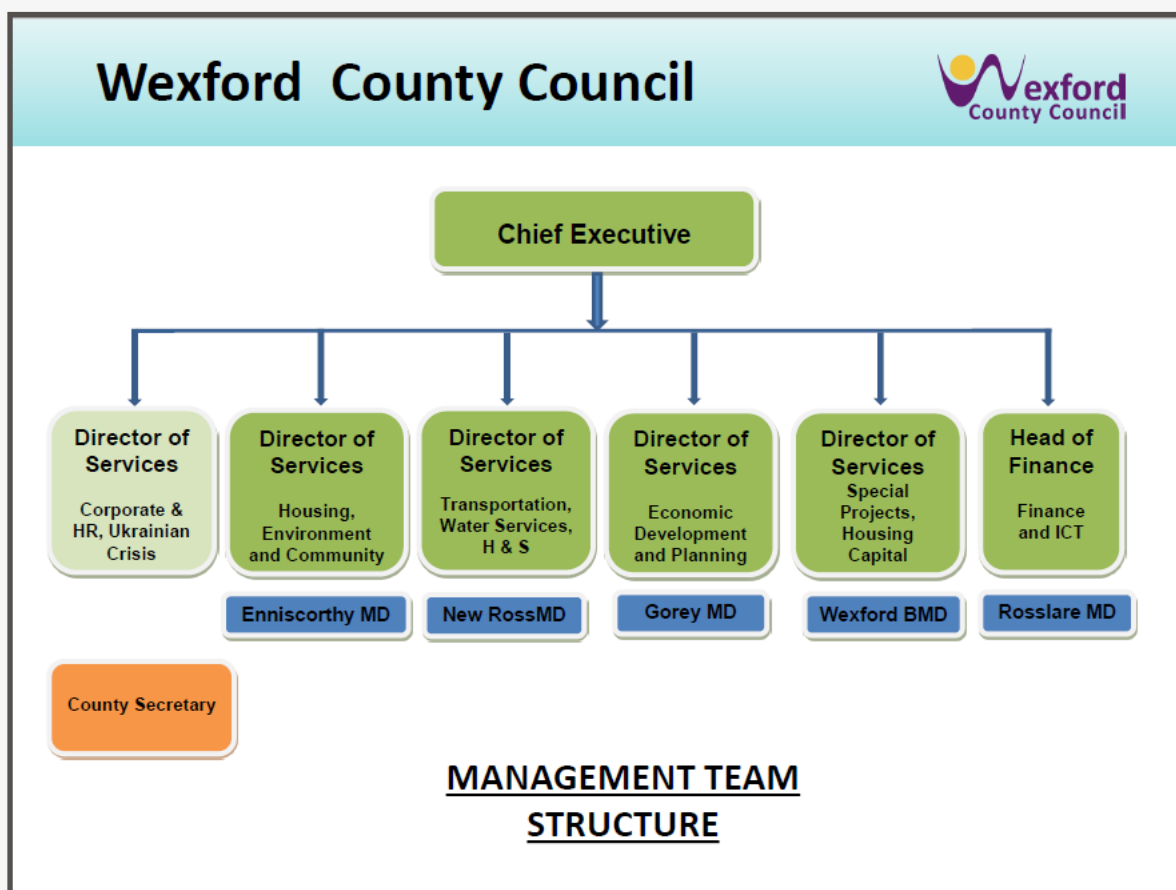
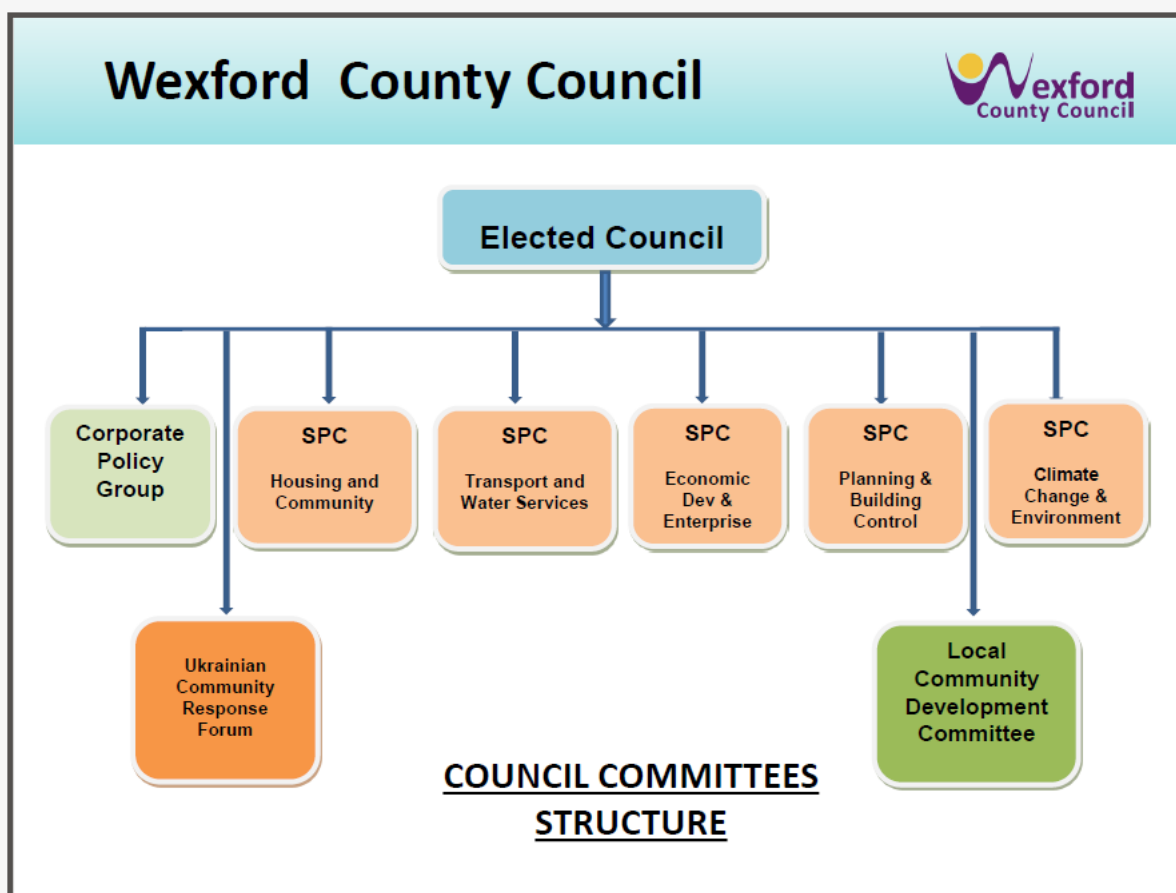


## Wexford County Council



- 34 Elected Members
- 5 Municipal Districts
- 900 Staff
- €200M Annual Expenditure
- Diverse Range of Unique and Important Public Services







## Corporate Plan 2019-2024



**Mission:** “To be passionate and ambitious in working for Wexford, delivering a vibrant model county”

### Pillars



**A Better  
Wexford**



**Clean and  
Green Wexford**



**Enrich Life in  
Wexford**



**Excellence for a  
Model County**

## 2.0 Important Issues and Challenges



- A. Developing a Vibrant Local Economy
- B. Delivering new Housing
- C. Delivering Quality Public Services
- D. Major Infrastructure
- E. Climate Change
- F. Developing Communities

## Developing the Local Economy



1. Research
2. Policy
3. Funding
4. Progress

## Developing the Local Economy - Research



### 3 Reports:-

1. AIRO Report – Socio-Economic Profile of Co. Wexford
  - Detailed Analysis based upon 2016 Census
  - Mapped Information
2. Lisney and Future Analytics Consulting
  - Detailed Analysis of Commercial Property Availability and Market Leasing Rates
2. NOAC Performance Indicators Reports

## Research - Socio-Economic Profile



### NUI Maynooth AIRO Report – Detailed Analysis

Community	Economic
Population	Labour Market
Age Cohorts	Industry of Employment
Family Cycle	Commuting and Jobs Profile
Ethnicity/Nationality	FDI
Carers/Disability/Health	Business Demography
Education	Housing
Crime	Transport
Affluence and Disadvantage	Tourism

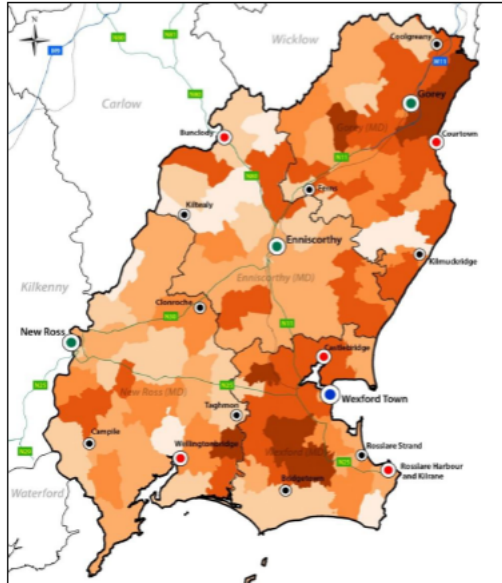
## Research - Local Economy



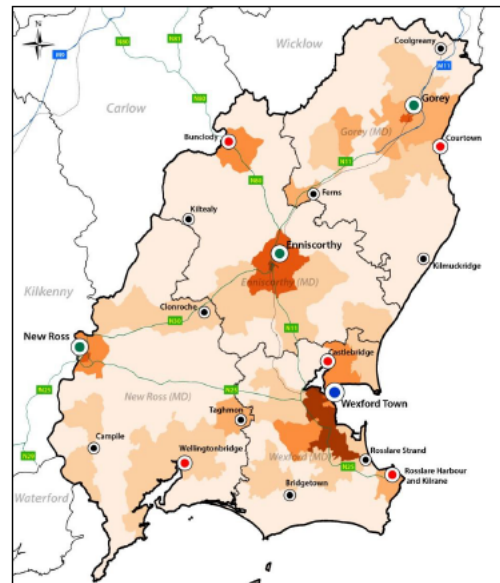
### AIRO (NUI Maynooth) Report Findings:-

- Wexford is the 3rd most disadvantaged County in the State
- Higher than average levels of unemployment within the county
- Historically high dependence on construction sector
- Higher dependence on lower paid professions and industries (agriculture, construction, hospitality, wholesale and retail trade)
- Wexford has a lower than average level of large employers in the county
- Lower 3<sup>rd</sup> Level attainment rate (29% Nationally vs. 21% Wexford)
- Growing dependence on the Greater Dublin Area for employment

## Location of People employed in IT & Professional Services



Where they LIVE



Where they WORK

## Research – Commercial Property



### Commercial Property Report Findings:-

- Little/No Quality Commercial Office Space or Manufacturing Facilities Available in County
- Lease Rates depressed and deter private speculative investment

# Policy



## Corporate Plan

- **Aims and Objectives: CP 2019-2024**

*... Imaginatively develop strategic sites, locations and incubation units that will create and support sustainable employment within the county.*

*... Deliver new destination recreation projects Gorey District Park, Min Ryan Park, Carrigfoyle Activity Centre, New Ross-Waterford Greenway, Rosslare-Waterford Greenway and Curracloe-Wexford Greenways.*



## Policy - Corporate Plan



As part of review process members adopted corporate objectives under 3 themes:-

1. Economic and Community Development
2. Business Operations of Wexford County Council
3. Promoting Local Democracy

Supported by a series of business improvements within the organisation, including establishing:-

- New dedicated Customer Service Centre (CSU)
- Special Projects Team to deliver infrastructure
- Procurement Unit
- Property Management Unit



## Policy

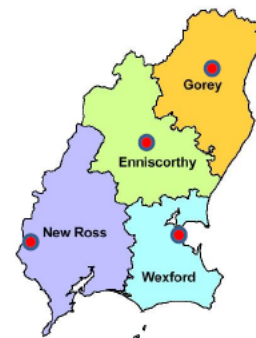
### Economic and Community Dev. Programme



## 50 Projects - €50M Over 5 Years

### • Economic Investments

- Gorey - New Offices and 'Hatch Lab'
- Enniscorthy - New Technology Park
- New Ross - New Large Manufacturing Building (ATB)
- Wexford – Trinity Wharf , etc.



### • Community Investments

- New Town Parks in Wexford and Gorey
- Greenways
- Forth Mountain Activity Centre
- Wexford Arts Centre Extension
- Georgia Southern University – Learning Centre, etc.

## Economic and Community Development Programme



### Funding:-

#### 1. Government Grants

#### 2. Own Resources:-

- Commercial Rates Increase
- LPT Increase
- Revenue Collection Increase

## Key Performance Indicators



Performance Indicators targeted:-

- Use of the on-line Motor Tax System
- Number of organisations on the PPN
- Provision of Social Housing
- Number of Schools participating in Comhairle na nÓg
- Transparency – availability of information on [www.wexfordcoco.ie](http://www.wexfordcoco.ie)
- Development of an online Member Support System
- **Revenue Collection Performance**

## KPI's Results



Sustained Improvements across most areas including:-

- Currently 83% customers use on-line Motor Tax System
- Significant increase in number of organisations on the PPN
- The provision of Social Housing - ahead of target in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
- All Secondary Schools participating in Comhairle na nÓg
- Transparency – availability of information on [www.wexfordcoco.ie](http://www.wexfordcoco.ie)
- Elected Members Support System – GDPR compliant system in place to efficiently answer Members' queries



## Results – Revenue Collection



Improvements in debt collection of significance to Wexford County Councils Finances

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change
Commercial Rates	71%	75%	79%	82%	88%	90%	84%	+ 14%
Rent & Annuities	90%	92%	90%	92%	92%	91%	93%	+ 3%
Housing Loans	75%	80%	86%	92%	98%	103%	104%	+ 29%

Focus on Efficiencies, Productivity and Value for Money have led to elimination in operational deficit from €10.8M since 2014  
 Operating Surplus for past 4 years

## Economic and Community Investment Programme



### Progress

## Gorey - New Offices

### M11 Business Campus Gorey



- €4M Private Investment
- 36,000 sqft
- New IDA - FDI companies
- 30 Small Start-Up Companies

## Enniscorthy Technology Park



- 38 Acre site purchased by WCC
- 100,000 sqft Office Space
- New FDI Company **Opus Fund Services**– 100 jobs
- United Nations MOU for NZEB Centre of Excellence
- Private Investment €8M
- Completed Nov 2022
- 70% Committed

## New Ross – Advanced Factory

- Council Owned Site
- Planning Permission granted for 2 Advanced Factories
- 75,000 Sq Ft
- IDA Design
- Construction 2023





## Trinity Wharf Wexford



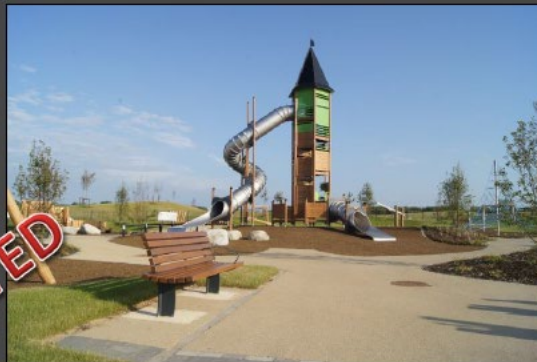
- €120 Million Development
- €20.5M URDF Funding
- Large-Scale Office Developments
- Hotel, Marina, Apartments
- Public-Private Partnership
- Planning Approval April 2020
- Construction October 2022

## Forth Mountain Activity Centre



- Disused Quarry
- Stunning location, overlooking Wexford Harbour
- 6Ha Site owned by County Council and adjacent to 370Ha state-owned Forestry
- Trails, Canoeing, Zip lines, Wall Climbing, Mountain Biking
- Partnership with WW ETB

## **“Min Ryan” Public Park Wexford Town**



- €4M
- Wexford town location
- Large – 18 acres
- Park Opened June 2020
- Won Best Public Park 2021

## **Gorey Town Park**

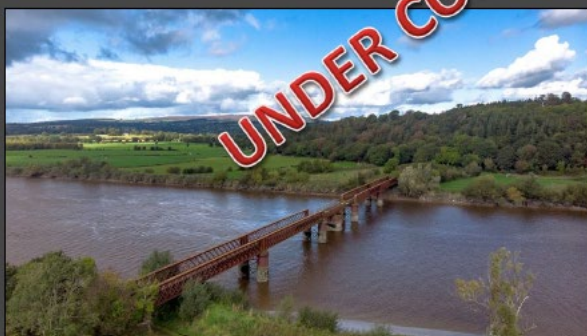
- €2.5M
- Refurbishment





## SE Greenways - New Ross to Waterford

- €15 M
- 24 KM
- River Ferry



**UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

## GSU Learning Centre Wexford



GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
GLOBAL HUB – IRELAND  
Wexford, Ireland



**COMPLETED**



**COMPLETED – OCT 2022**

## Wexford Art Centre

€3M Extension

## Major Tourism Projects



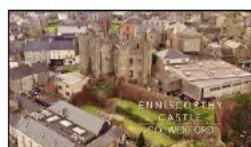
Hook  
Lighthouse  
€6m

National  
Heritage  
Park €7m



New Ross  
Norman  
Exp. €6m

Enniscorthy Castle €10m



## Tell The People!

- 16-page Booklet delivered to over 50,000 homes in County
- Outlines Projects Planned, Under Construction and Completed
- Shows Public where their Local Property Tax and Rates are Going





## B. Delivering New Housing



### 1. Social Housing – WCC Housing Action Plan

- 1,155 New Units by 2026

### 2. Private Housing

- Efficient Planning System
- Water Services Infrastructure



### 3. Affordable Housing

- “Squeezed Middle”
- Local Authority Home Loan
- Local Authority to address market failure

### 4. Ukrainian Crisis

## Affordable Housing



- Working people locked out of housing market
- Government and Local Authority intervention

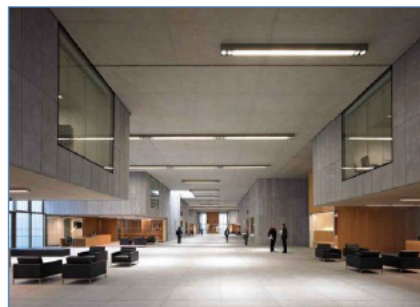
- Pilot Project - Gorey
- Purchase suitable sites
- Prepare design and planning
- Identify suitable Purchasers
- Procure Contractor
- Provide Loan Finance where applicable
- LA Home Loan €225,000 over 30 years, 2.945% Fixed = €942 pm



## C. Delivering Quality Public Services



- Adjust Priorities
- Customer Services Unit
- e-Services
- Councillors' Portal
- Regular Surveys
- Improving KPI's
- Comparisons with Other Similar LA's
- More Effective Communication



## D. Infrastructure Development



1. South East Technological University
2. Offshore Renewable Energy Projects
3. Data Centres
4. M11 Olygate to Rosslare Motorway
5. Broadband - NBI



## E. Climate Change



1. WCC Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2019-2024
2. Lead by Example
3. Public Awareness
4. Council Housing Stock – NZEB (new) and Retrofit (old)
5. Public Lighting
6. Biodiversity
7. Solar Farms
8. Offshore Wind Projects

## F. Developing Communities



1. Community Infrastructure
2. Building Capacity - LCDC
3. Age Friendly Programme - Telehealth
4. Volunteering – New VC
5. Integrating New Arrivals

Min Ryan  
Park



Walking  
Trails



Wexford Arts Centre



Ferndale Boxing Club



New Ross  
Greenway



## NOAC Customer Satisfaction Survey Results (2019)



	Wexford	All
Satisfaction Level	52%	56%
Promotion of Economic Activity	36%	56%
VFM	22%	28%
Doing a Good Job	46%	51%

- Need for more promotion of improvements and successes
- Better use of Social Media
- Significant Improvements since 2019

## Wexford County Council – Customer Satisfaction Survey Dec 2021

- In the main, customers who engage with WCC either face to face or over the phone will do only approximately 1-2 times a year
- In contrast, customers who use the WCC website tend to use it more often
- Rating of the overall experience with WCC is positive across all channels but is highest for **face to face interactions (84%)** followed by **phone (77%)** and lastly the **website (71%)**
- On a positive note, all 3 measures in 2021 are higher than the 2017 general satisfaction score (64%) **which suggests an improvement in the overall customer experience**



## Wexford County Council – Customer Satisfaction Survey Dec 2021

- Customers who engage with WCC either face to face or by phone, younger customers (<50 years) were less positive about their experience than those aged 50yrs +
- For WCC website users, rating of the experience was broadly consistent across all age cohorts

	Overall Very good/ good experience	18-34	35-49	50-64	65 yrs+
Face to Face	84%	77%	78%	92%	86%
Telephone	77%	77%	72%	81%	83%
Website	71%	73%	69%	74%	70%



Q and A

Thank You



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