



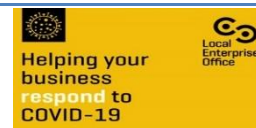
# **Chief Executive's Report**

**July 2020**

## 1. Economic Development & Planning:

# Economic Development

### Covid 19 Business Supports €6.12 million grant aid allocated



The Economic Department implemented a range of covid 19 business supports to assist SME's impacted by the pandemic. To date **2,197 grant applications** have been received from enterprises across the range of covid 19 supports in the Economic business support unit. Currently **1,858** micro enterprises have been approved **€6.12 million** in grant aid under Covid 19 in County Wexford.

#### Business Continuity Voucher (BCV) Local Enterprise Office Wexford:

The **Business Continuity Voucher** closed on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with 395 applications received and **339 approvals with half a million** allocated in grant aid. The BCV Covid 19 support measure extended the remit of the LEO's from 10 employees to micro enterprise employing 50 people. The majority of applications approved were for financial planning, digital marketing and HR.

#### Expansion of Trading Online Voucher Scheme (TOV's) under Covid 19

From the 7<sup>th</sup> April the Trading Online Voucher Scheme has been expanded to increase the level of support from 50% funding to 90% funding to a maximum of €2,500. The scheme is supported under the government's digital strategy and LEO is supporting SME's to look at alternative ways of doing business by applying technology. Funding can be towards eligible costs such as digital marketing strategies, e-commerce websites or app development. Wexford has had its increased allocation trebled last week due to demand for the scheme. Last year Wexford received 30 allocations but this year LEO Wexford have been approved **278 TOV's** and with 265 applications we have submitted for a further increase. To date a **quarter of a million** has been approved to businesses to move online In Co. Wexford. In June the scheme changed some of the eligibility criteria to facilitate the tourism and hospitality sector to apply for the trading online voucher scheme which is an important contributor to the local economy in Co. Wexford with 12% employment.

#### Restart Grant

The most recent grant announcement to support business was the Restart grant announced at the end of May. With the fast tracking of the government roadmap the reopening of the economy has seen the majority of businesses reopen. The economic Department has established a project team to fast track applications as soon as possible to provide cash flow to business in County Wexford. The scheme is for rate payers who have experienced a decrease in turnover by 25% or more with less than €5 million turnover and less than 50 employees. To date WCC has received 1,537 applications with 1,470 applications processed and **95% approved** for payment to the value of **€5.27 million** in grant aid to businesses. Nationally Wexford County Council has the third highest approval rate of Local Authorities after Limerick and Mayo. The scheme is due to close on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

DATE 10 July 2020	22-May-2020 to 10-July-2020	
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL	
<b>RESTART SCHEME STATISTICS GRANT</b>		
	<b>NUMBER:</b>	<b>VALUE:</b>
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BUT NOT APPROVED	67	€239,184.23
APPLICATIONS APPROVED BUT NOT PAID	150	€549,726.78
APPLICATIONS PAID	1,213	€4,722,382.67
APPLICATIONS REJECTED	107	€316,777.92
<b>Total Number of Applications</b>	<b>1,537</b>	<b>€5,828,071.60</b>

### Micro Finance Ireland Covid 19 Loans

The Covid-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland is a Government-funded initiative to support small businesses through the current period of uncertainty, aimed at protecting jobs and allowing businesses to continue to trade. Due to the demand for funding the microfinance loan is currently paused with effect from the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 while the new Microenterprise Loan Fund Amendment Bill awaits approval of legislation for additional funds.

Where applications are with the Local Enterprise office there is a 1% discount on the interest rate which has been reduced by 2.3% from 6.8% to 4.5%. Under Covid 19 the first 6 months are interest free and a moratorium on repayments for 6 months.

### Training

With covid 19 the local enterprise office moved all training and mentoring online and provided all supports free of charge. There has been an excellent response to the virtual training as business owners utilise the time to upgrade their skills and information on their business with **784** people trained to date over covid 19 and **101** businesses availing of our mentoring support . Training to date includes:

- Tourism & hospitality sector training in partnership with Visit Wexford Booked out
- Food starter Programme for food sector
- Webinar for Hair & beauty sector –business plan pathways to new standards Booked Out
- E-commerce for owner/managers
- Restart a hotel and Food Service operation
- Start Your Own Business Booked Out
- Web UX Audit

## Food



Co. Wexford has a number of artisan food producers who have won National awards, cementing the County's reputation for quality produce. Some of the great food producers supported by LEO Wexford include O'Neills Foods; Wexford Home Preserves; Wild About Foods; Natural Icecream Foods, Reagan's Organic Produce, Meylers Fish Merchants and Ballyhack Smokehouse.

The recent food starter programme aims to support producers with the business tools to establish an enterprise before progressing to the food academy start initiative.

This summer the LEO network launched the **Digital School of Food** an innovative online food programme. The programme will give food entrepreneurs an education in planning a product journey and route to market, through thinking about finance and how to grow sales, right up to expanding the business. The programme includes contributions from trade buyers in Supervalu, Musgraves and Spar along with food champions Domini Kemp of ITSA Food Group and food producers who have been through the system.

**Further details and bookings available online at [www.localenterprise.ie/wexford](http://www.localenterprise.ie/wexford) or Email [info@leo.wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:info@leo.wexfordcoco.ie); Phone 053 9196620**

## Ballast Office, Wexford

The Ballast office has been submitted for part 8 planning to renovate the strategic cultural building overlooking the quay of Wexford town. The historical building has potential for use for an enterprise or economic activity that can maximise its footfall within the heart of the towns quay front to support local employment.

## Advance Factory New Ross

Following on from the opening of the New Ross Bypass providing improved transport connectivity, the first new business infrastructure was announced with the plans to build the new advance factory in New Ross . The first phase of the project will see a 35,000 sqft. modern manufacturing unit built with an option to extend the unit if required. The economic department will be working closely with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to market the property solution to support job creation in New Ross.



*Members of New Ross Municipal District at the signing of Heads of Agreement for new Factory for New Ross*

## Reopening Wexford

Following on from the Reviving Wexford report the economic department is working with the Municipal Districts, and business forums to identify actions to support the reopening of the local economy this summer. This year the Town and Village Scheme has a new accelerated measures funding programme to support economic measures for towns and villages impacted by covid 19 with a population of less than 10,000. The first round of funding has a closing date of 3<sup>rd</sup> July for 5 projects and the second round of funding currently advertised has a closing date of the 16<sup>th</sup> July for 5 projects with €25,000 available for each successful initiative and one project €40,000. The scheme provides 90% of funding and must be completed within a timeframe of 6 months. The standard Town and Village scheme managed by the community department has a closing date at the end of August.

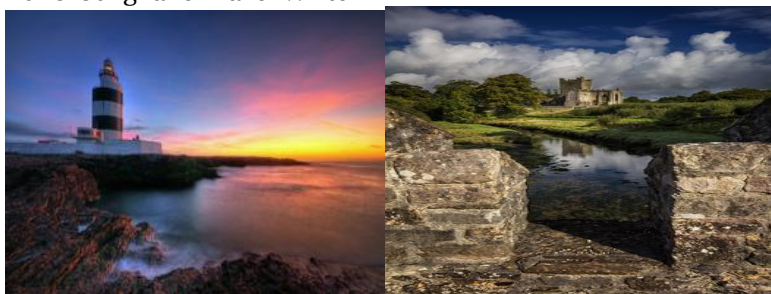
## Tourism

Visit Wexford has appointed a new marketing contract to support the tourism marketing campaign in the county supported by Wexford County Council. The focus of this years campaign is on the domestic market and staycations with a key theme of sunshine, amazing beaches and nostalgia for childhood memories. The campaign promotion began on the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> June with a national campaign for the end of June including a feature in the Independent weekend magazine, and social digital marketing.

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**Ireland Unlocks: 10 great things to do in Wexford this summer Saturday Independent Digital 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Pól Ó Conghaile Travel Writer



*"It's strawberries and south eastern sun. Its opera and hurling with heart; a storied lighthouse and sandy beaches stretching as far as the eye can see. It's rolling farmland, ghost stories on the Hook Peninsula, and wolfing down chips at Kilmore Quay. Does any county blend nostalgia with the here-and-now quite like Wexford? This is a country within a county. Generations recall summer holidays here, and continue to flock to its campsites, hotels and underrated beaches today".*

The official launch of the Wexford Tourism Marketing Campaign was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> June at Curraclloe Beach voted best beach in Ireland on the 30<sup>th</sup> June and featured on the RTE news that day. Many of the tourism attractions and accommodation providers are now open and Wexford County Council will continue to work closely with the tourism industry who are a vital component to the Wexford economy in partnership with Visit Wexford.



**Launch by Cllr. Ger Carty Chairman of Wexford County Council and Colm Neville, Chairman Visit Wexford – Curracloe Beach**

## Planning

### **COVID 19 Response – Planning Department**

The Planning Department is open and operational but there is restricted, by appointment public access to the Department. Most contact continues to be managed through post, email or phone

**Forward Planning** – the FP team are all working remotely. Work continues on the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan. The timeframes have recommenced and the pre-draft plan will be completed shortly.

**Development Management** – the DM team are now fully engaged in processing applications since the recommencement of the planning system on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The consultation processes for applications received during the shutdown also commenced on the 25<sup>th</sup> May and will run for 5 weeks from that date. During the period 133 applications were received and these all fall due by 18<sup>th</sup> July. The planning authority has arranged for additional advertisements to be placed in the local press, this will continue for as long as the travel restrictions apply.

**Planning Enforcement** – Enforcement inspections have now resumed.

**Building Control** continues to operate remotely as the BCMS system is a cloud based platform and access is available on laptop, tablet or phone. Inspections on building sites have recommenced.

**The Access Team** continues to operate remotely and process any DAC applications pending.

### **Planning Applications**

Numbers are those received up until the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

No. of valid applications	122
No. of invalid applications	18
Extension of Duration	2

## ***Forward Planning***

**Wexford County Development Plan 2021-2027:** The Forward Planning section are currently completing work on the County Development Plan which will be submitted to the Members in the near future.

### **Derelict Sites, Dangerous Structures and Vacant Sites**

Figures for Derelict Sites, Dangerous Structures & Vacant Sites Notices:

Recent activity within the last 3 months on the derelict site register are as follows:

Demolition orders placed on 4 properties.

- Westgate B&B, Welford Town
- The Old Bake House, Carne
- Bay View Hotel, Courtown
- Coill na Guise, Grey

3 properties have been removed from the Derelict Site register.

- Main Street, Ballycanew
- 51 Mount Prospect, Clonard
- Old Parish Hall, Broadway

1 property has completed remedial works as requested.

- Corrigans Supermarket, Kilmuckridge.

1 property owner has agreed to complete remedial works within the next 2 weeks. I hope to have it removed from the register after that time.

- 16 Carrigeen St. Wexford

5 properties on the Derelict Site list are currently undergoing CPO procedures.

2 properties have been submitted to Housing for appraisal.

Camolin and Ferns have been investigated for Derelict properties with reports to follow.

## **Heritage**

### **Heritage Grant Schemes**

The Planning Department has been successful in obtaining additional grant aid funding for Tellerought Castle to repair the remaining sections of the castle. Major Works to stabilise the castle where completed on March to enable the road to reopen. The additional €50,000 funding plus funding from the Planning Sections Heritage budget should enable the completion of the repair works to safeguard the castle for future generations.

### ***Planning Enforcement***

The number of planning enforcement cases as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 is as follows:

Enforcement cases opened	30
Enforcement cases closed	11
Active enforcement cases	279

## **Disability Access**

**Disability Access Certificates (DACs):** The number of DAC applications, validated for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 up to and including 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, totals **51**

### **Disability Access Certificates (DAC):**

The total number of Disability Access Certificate applications, validated to date totals, **51** as follows:

<b>Applications Districts</b>	<b>Total for Districts</b>	<b>Await Assessment</b>	<b>Further Info.</b>	<b>Granted</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Enniscorthy	7	0	0	7	0
Gorey	8	0	0	8	0
New Ross	5	0	0	5	0
Wexford	25	1	2	22	0
Rosslare	6	1	0	5	0
<b>2020 Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>

The Number of DAC Applications validated from 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2020 up to and including the 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 totals **4**. (2 of which have been granted, 1 further information request and 1 awaiting assessment)

### **Disability Proofing carried out as part of WCC Access activity**

<b>Referrals</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>LAC /PLAC &amp; General Planning Applications</b>	<b>52</b>



## 2. Special Projects:

**Min Ryan Park, Wexford:** Works on the park are substantially completed and the Park was opened to the public on 15/06/2020. Works on the lighting contract will commence in July and tenders have been received and are currently being assessed for a skate park to be located on the site. WCC secured €500,000 in grant aid for the project from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

**Trinity Wharf:** Planning approval for the Trinity Wharf masterplan was granted by An Bord Pleanála on 30/04/2020 and a decision on the related foreshore application is due in the coming months. The detailed design of the access road and new automated railway level crossing is expected to be completed by August with works to commence on site in September / October 2020. Grant aid of €2.028m has been secured to date for the scheme under the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for URDF projects and a further application; in response to a 2<sup>nd</sup> URDF Call for Applications; was submitted at the end of May, 2020.

**Crescent Quay:** Works are substantially completed with minor snagging items to be closed out in the coming month.

These works were part funded from a grant from the ERDF.

**Templeshannon Regeneration, Enniscorthy:** The Templeshannon regeneration strategy identifies a number of enabling projects required to achieve regeneration, including:

- Improving the public realm and streetscape in Templeshannon area;
- Establishing a new link to the town centre by construction of new pedestrian bridge;
- The management and progressive transformation of the Leisure Centre Car park;
- The creation of new urban blocks for infill development.

The delivery of these enabling works can best be achieved by the development of a master plan for Templeshannon that will co-ordinate the public realm works and the development of the proposed new urban blocks within Templeshannon. This approach aligns with the objective for urban regeneration set out in the National Planning Framework.

The preliminary designs, environmental studies and planning documents for the proposed pedestrian bridge have been delayed by the Covid 19 emergency restrictions. A completed preliminary design and bridge options report is now expected in August. A site investigation contractor has been selected and is expected to commence works on site in August / September.

An application for URDF funding was submitted for the project under the 2<sup>nd</sup> call for funding in May 2020.

**Enniscorthy Technology Park, Killagoley:** The phase 1 works to open up the 3 roadside sites for development has been substantially completed. The site was closed in response to the CoVid 19 restriction in April/May and the outstanding minor snagging and maintenance works will be completed over the coming months.

**Gorey Market House:** A Part VIII planning application for re-development of the Market House into a multi-purpose performance / exhibition / retail space was approved in May 2018.

A call for Expressions of Interest / Tender Proposals from private sector investors was advertised in January 2020 and 2 submissions were received by the closing date of 13/02/2020. The tender assessment process has been delayed by the CoVid 19 restrictions. The recent lifting of restrictions will allow this procurement process to advance. This tender is a competitive procedure with negotiation. It is envisaged that it will take circa. 3 months to fully conclude the tender process and finalise the tender report.

**Wexford Arts Centre:** Funding has been approved by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for an extension and renovation of the Wexford Arts Centre. A design team was appointed in April 2019, the preliminary design has been completed and Part VIII approval was obtained on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Detailed designs and tender documents for the works contract are progressing. The tender date for works has been impacted by CoVid 19 and tender notices will now be advertised in August. Works are expected to commence on site in November 2020.

**John Street Building Regeneration Project:** WCC was successful in securing RRDF funding to design a redevelopment of the old grain stores at John Street, New Ross. It is planned to convert these buildings into a high quality enterprise hub. A design team was appointed in April 2019 and initial surveys and investigative works have been completed. A CPO drawing and schedule, for the acquisition of the necessary lands, is currently being prepared and is to issue in coming months.

**High Hill, New Ross:** The High Hill site is a strategic urban site, that is currently derelict, that connects John Street and the town centre with the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Mary's Church and Cemetery. A plan for the development of a new amenity/public space at High Hill, in keeping with the Norman history of the town, was developed by New Ross MDC. A Part VIII application was approved for the preliminary design in July 2019 and the detailed design and works tender documents are progressing. Tenders for works will be advertised in August and works are expected to commence in October /November 2020.

An application for RRDF funding for this project, as part of the New Ross tourism project application, was successful.

**Esmonde Street:** RPS consulting engineers have been appointed to provide design, planning, tendering and construction management services for public realm improvement works at Esmonde Street.

Initial design work commenced in mid Feb 2020 and a Part VIII planning consent process is expected to be advertised in August/September. Tender documents are due to be completed by Q1 2021 with works commencing on site in Q2 2021.

WCC received initial RRDF funding of €95,224.00 for this project.

**Carrigfoyle Activity Centre:** Works have commenced on Phase 1 (access road, car park, trails and services) and are now scheduled to be completed by Q3 2020 following closure of the site in April/May due to CoVid19.

The draft design drawings for the development of an Activity Centre building on the site (Phase 2) have been prepared by the WCC's Architect Department. The drawings are currently being reviewed by the Special Projects Office with a view to making a Part VIII application in Q3 2020.

**Enniscorthy Tourism Project:** Alan Sherwood and Associates were appointed to develop a plan that will significantly enhance the tourism experience in Enniscorthy, increase visitor numbers and enhance the town's profile as part of Ireland's Ancient East.

The Enniscorthy Tourism Plan report will set out the detailed, phased development of a new tourism project of scale centred on the Castle that will have the capacity to significantly improve tourism visitor numbers to the town and link with associated tourism projects to be developed at the Irish National Heritage Park, Hook Lighthouse and the JFK / Dunbrody in New Ross.

**Kilmore Quay Link Road:** Part 8 approval was obtained in February 2019. Tenders for construction works have been received and a preferred tenderer identified. Works on site are expected to commence in August 2020 following delays related to CoVid19 and land acquisition.

**Gorey Town Park:** Niall Barry & Co. Ltd was appointed for the construction of the re-development works at Gorey Town Park in March 2019. Works commenced on site in May 2019 and has been impacted by the CoVid19 restrictions. Work re-commenced on site in mid-May. It is now expected

that the external works will be completed in August with the building, landscaping and planting works to be completed in November 2020.

Tenders have been received for the playground equipment with the installation to commence on site in September 2020.

**Monck Street Enhancement Scheme:** Tenders were invited for design services for improving the streetscape on Monck St. in late March 2020 and tenders were received on 27<sup>th</sup> April. A design services team will be appointment in July with works planned to commence on site in early 2021.

### **WEXFORDIA – Irish National Heritage Park (INHP), Hook Lighthouse and New Ross Tourism Projects**

WCC has secured RRDF category 2 funding for the development of a cluster of tourism projects within the county.

Design services are currently being procured to develop new visitor experiences at the INHP and the Hook Lighthouse and to bring the projects to 'shovel ready' status. This will include preliminary design, environmental assessment, preparing applications for planning and related development consents, detailed design and tendering for works contracts. The appointment of design services teams for both projects have been impacted by the CoVid 19 restrictions and these contracts are now expected to be put place in Q3 2020.

Tenders for the preliminary interpretative design services for the Norman centre in New Ross have been received and an appointment will be completed later this month.

The procurement documents for detailed design services for the Dunbrody Ship enhancement works are currently being prepared and will be advertised in July.

### **New Ross Public Realm – Phase 1: Removal of Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks**

Fehily Timoney & Co has been appointed to provide engineering services to Wexford County Council for the removal of the oil tank structures on the quay and the development of public realm works on the site.

Site investigation works and inspections of the site and tanks have commenced with reports due in mid-July.

The detailed design will commence on completion of the investigative works and tender documents for works will be advertised in September / October 2020.

**Courtown Coastal Protection & Beach Nourishment Scheme:** Following the completion of a Coastal Engineering Feasibility Study to investigate the development and provision of major infrastructural coastal works in Courtown to reinstate the north beach, tenders are being invited for the preliminary design of coastal protection structures and beach nourishment to restore the natural amenity and tourism asset to Courtown and Co Wexford.

The appointment of an engineering consultancy to undertake this preliminary design is expected in Q3 2020.

**Wexford Flood Relief Scheme:** The project brief for design services for the Flood Relief Project has been advertised on Etenders. The closing date for tender proposals was 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020. A total of 7 tenders were received and are currently undergoing assessment.

RPS Ltd was appointed in March 2020 to undertake a wave and water level modelling study to support the main Flood scheme. The draft report is expected to be completed by week ending 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

**Enniscorthy Flood Defence Scheme:** The Enniscorthy Scheme requires formal confirmation from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (MPER) in order to proceed to construction. This is a statutory requirement under the Arterial Drainage Acts. The confirmation process will involve a formal

review of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) by the MPER. The confirmation documents which include the EIAR & NIS were submitted by WCC to the OPW in December 2019. The documents were signed off by the OPW and submitted to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in March 2020.

The current position on the confirmation process is that a request for tender of services for environmental consultants to assist MPER with the formal review of the EIAR & NIS is currently being progressed by the DPER.

While confirmation of the scheme from the Minister is awaited, WCC will progress the detailed design and the shortlisting of contractors for the main construction works. Some advance works will also be carried out, including archaeological excavations, diversion of services and treatment of invasive species.

The detailed design of the flood defences is continuing. The detailed design of the new River Slaney Road Bridge is complete. Tender submissions for short listing contractors for the bridgeworks contract were received in June 2020 and are currently being assessed. The design of the Promenade Sewer diversions has been agreed with Irish Water and tender documents for these works have been prepared. Treatment of invasive species was carried out in June.

#### **GREENWAYS:**

**Rosslare Europort to Waterford City Greenway:** Draft feasibility, route options and environmental screening documents were completed in Q1 2019 and public information events were held in Wellingtonbridge & Rosslare Strand in May 2019.

The EIAR & NATURA Impact reports were delayed due to CoVId19 and are now scheduled to be substantially completed by mid-July 2020 with the CPO drawings and schedules to follow. It is now planned to make an application for consents to An Bord Pleanála for the project in August 2020.

An application for funding was submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 28/11/2018 but was not successful.

**South East Greenway:** Part VIII planning for the project is complete and a Section 85 agreement has been signed by Wexford County Council, Kilkenny County Council, and Waterford City and County Council, to enable Wexford County Council to act as the lead authority on behalf of the other Councils.

An application for funding for the project, submitted to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on the 28/11/2018 was successful and €8.0m in grant funding was approved by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in June 2019.

Tenders were received for detailed design, tendering and construction management services and a contract for design services was signed in February 2019. Site investigation, vegetation clearance works & the topographical surveys have been completed and detailed design is currently underway. It is planned to tender for a works contractor in July 2020.

Tendering for the pre-construction rail and sleeper lifting contract is closed and tenders have been assessed. The Works Access Licence was received from CIE on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, and the tender was accepted on the same day. Works are due to commence on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 2020 when the additional insurance policies have been put in place.

A Leader funding application is currently being prepared for the interpretation and animation of the entire route.

**Curracloe to Wexford Greenway:** Permission for the development was refused by An Bord Pleanála in a decision issued on 17/10/2018 citing, in particular, concerns in relation to the potential impact of the development on the Raven Point Nature Reserve Special Area of Conservation and the Wexford Harbour and Slobbs Special Protection Area.

The Council has reviewed the ABP decision and met with the NPWS to review issues raised in the Planners report. A decision on proceeding with a further application will be deferred until the environmental studies and planning for Wexford to Rosslare greenway are completed.

**Wexford to Rosslare Greenway:** Tenders have been received for consultancy services for a feasibility study, route selection, preliminary design and environmental assessments for the development of this project. It is planned to make an appointment by the end of July 2020.

### 3. Housing, Community, Libraries, Arts, Emergency Services & Community:

#### HOUSING

#### Housing Section and Covid 19

As the restrictions continue to be eased, the Housing Section continue to expand its operations. We have now commenced face to face appointments in compliance with guidelines. Housing clinics have not yet resumed face to face appointments, with work carried out mainly by phone. Housing Allocations have recommenced.

#### Housing Supply

##### Capital Projects

The Technical staff continued to progress and monitor all of our Capital Projects. Working with consultant teams from home has allowed many projects to proceed with funding stages and applications as can be seen in the updated Capital Schedule below. All of our live sites are back in action since Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the sites have been inspected and revised programs for delivery have been or are in the process of agreement. New sites have been surveyed in the last week because we had procured consultancy services, confirmed funding approval and we had put all of the paperwork and permissions in place during the shutdown.

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Current Position	Comment
Ross Road	1	Enniscorthy	Under construction	Due to complete Sept 2020
The Ballagh	7	Enniscorthy	Under construction	Due to complete Oct 2020
Taghmon	18	Rosslare	Under construction	Due to complete Sept 2020
Carley's Bridge	17	Enniscorthy	Stage 4	Stage 4 to DHPLG 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 with recommendation.
Ballynaboola	1	New Ross	Stage 3	Boundary & Environmental issues unresolved (no activity)
Whiterock Hill	44	Wexford	Stage 3 approved	Open eTender June 2020 Fire Certificates complete, DACs complete
Rosetown, Rosslare	23	Rosslare	Stage 3	Stage 3 to DHPLG June 2020
Ballywish, Castlebridge	11	Wexford	Stage 2	Propose CPO of land for access (no activity) Discussion with landowner scheduled for June 2020
Maudlintown	12	Wexford	Stage 2	Women's refuge Stage 2 to DHPLG April 2020. Further information to DHPLG complete
Rosemary Heights, Ferns	8	Enniscorthy	Stage 2	Stage 2 to DHPLG Q2 2020 consultants appointed. Surveys complete, awaiting drawings from Consultants July 2020
Kileens	40	Wexford	Stage 2	Stage 2 – Higher densities. Design alternatives to be discussed prior to Stage 2 submission. Design discussion

				June 2020
Creagh East	4	Gorey	Stage 2	Consultants appointed, ESB cables – Stage 2 Q2 2020. Consultants appointed. Surveys complete except for ESB line
Ballyhine, Barntown	7	Wexford	Stage 2	Stage 2 – Q2 2020 Design team appointed. Knotweed cordoned off. Management plan in place. Site cleared and topo surveys complete July 2020
Rosbercon	28	New Ross	Stage 2	Q2 2020 - reviewing Knotweed. Knotweed Management Plan in place. Architects selected, going through procurement process. Appoint Architects July 2020.
Wexford Street	20	Gorey	Stage 2	Demolitions complete, Appoint Design Team Q3 2020 through OGP. Topo Surveys scheduled for June 2020.
Creagh West	8	Gorey	Stage 1	Stage 2 Q2 2020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>249</b>			

#### Pre-development Stage

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Marconi Park	1	Enniscorthy	Single stage – Tender out to contractors in June 2020
5 Francis Street	1	Wexford	Sketch Design commenced Structural Survey booked for Q3 2020
Bullawn	2	New Ross	Archaeology investigations under way and initial site surveys approved. Consultants appointed. Awaiting Archaeology License before we can survey or disturb ground.
Marley	1	Enniscorthy	Stage 1 – not approved by DHPLG (submitted 23/05/19) not approved – on hold, no funding stream (no activity)
Castlebridge	1	Wexford (single stage)	TAP house, site ownership to WCC – Land transfer complete. Part VIII approved. Tender July 2020
Ballycullane	1	New Ross	Fire damaged house – Funding approved from WCC. Tenders due in 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2020. Contract to proceed in Sept. 2020.
Newtown	1	Ferns	Awaiting PEP to appoint contractor to clear off site.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>		

## Longer Term Projects

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Clonard	26	Wexford	Site cleared March 2019 – inner relief road in design by others, awaiting road Once road levels are known we will re-design a scheme for the site.
Adamstown	16	New Ross	No services capacity presently, discussion with Irish Water (no activity)
Tagoat	9	Rosslare	Site cleared, addressing boundaries (Stage 1 Q4 2020)
Daphney View	24	Enniscorthy	Access issues – discussion with Focus (no activity)
Thomastown Road, Rosbercon	10	New Ross	Feasibility for suitability of the site will follow once Rosbercon is progressed.
Bride Street	2	Wexford	Demolition and enabling works Q2 2020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87</b>		

## Other Projects (early feasibility)

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Newtown, Ferns	1	Enniscorthy	Site Clearance awaiting PEP to proceed with site clean up in preparation for demolitions. Assess then for HSE build or site sale. Demolitions Q3 2020. Site clean-up tendered
Adamstown	2	New Ross	Demolition of old house required, demolition Q2 2020. CPO commenced, in newspaper. Single stage Q2 2020 awaiting CPO action.
Monomolin	4	Gorey	Services and enabling works 2020.
Lacken (TAP)	1	New Ross	Single stage approved, Partial funding required from WCC. Tender Q3 2020
Belvedere	6	Wexford	To go to next Municipal District meeting July 2020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>		

## Part V Acquisitions

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Millquarter, Knockmullen	18	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	Due to be delivered Q3 2020
Roxborough Manor, Mulgannon	22	Wexford	14 units to be delivered Q3 2020, 8 units to be delivered Q2 2021.
Hunters Hill, Gorey	3	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	To be delivered Q3 2020



Clonard	6	Wexford	To deliver by end Q4 2020
Clonhaston, Enniscorthy	18	Enniscorthy	To deliver 2021/2022
An Glasan, Enniscorthy	5	Enniscorthy	4 units to deliver 2020, 1 unit to deliver 2021
Gleann an Ghairdin Ph 3	6	Gorey/Kilmuckridge	6 units to deliver by Q4 2020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>		

#### Turnkeys

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
Belvedere Road	7	Wexford	To deliver Q4 2020
Michael St, New Ross	3	New Ross	Delayed on site.
Ard Uisce, Whiterock Hill	19	Wexford	1 unit delivered. 18 units to deliver Q1 2021
Whitewater Estuary, Ballyhack	3	New Ross	To deliver Q3 2020
Clonhaston, Enniscorthy	50	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis from 2021
Clonattin Upper, Goreybridge	8	Gorey Kilmuckridge	To deliver Q4 2020
Ballynaglogh, Blackwater	16	Enniscorthy	DHPLG approval received Mar 2020. To deliver 2021.
Bridgetown	12	Rosslare	DHPLG approval received Apr 2020. Expected to deliver Q4 2021
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118</b>		

Turnkey proposals received by Wexford County Council are assessed by the Internal Housing Committee.

#### Approved Housing Bodies

Project Address	No of Units	Municipal District Area	Comment
<b>Cooperative Housing Ireland</b>			
Fort Road, Gorey	11	Gorey	To be delivered Q3 2020
<b>Cluid</b>			
Greenville Lane	52	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis in 2020 and 2021
Pairc an Aird, Coolcotts	67	Wexford	DHPLG approval received May 2020.
<b>Tuath</b>			
Rocksborough, Drinagh	85	Wexford	20 units approx. to be occupied by Q1 2021

Old Forge Road, Milehouse	59	Enniscorthy	To deliver on phased basis in 2020/2021
Gleann an Ghairdin	9	Gorey	To deliver Q1 2021
Gleann an Ghairdin	24	Gorey	To deliver 2020
<b>Peter McVerry Trust</b>			
Tuskar House , John's Gate St Wexford Town	12	Wexford	CAS Funding. To deliver Q4 2020
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>319</b>		

## HOMELESS SERVICES AND SUPPORT UNIT (HSSU) REPORT

Wexford county councils HSSU was set up in October 2019 and as part of the south east regional in terms of providing services and supports to vulnerable people. The region is the biggest region in the country comprising of 5 councils, namely, Waterford (Lead Authority), Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary.

The south east region operates a regional **Homeless Prevention & Support Project**. The project prioritises homeless preventions by way of applying early interventions, mediation and prevention measures to those presenting seeking homeless services/emergency accommodation.

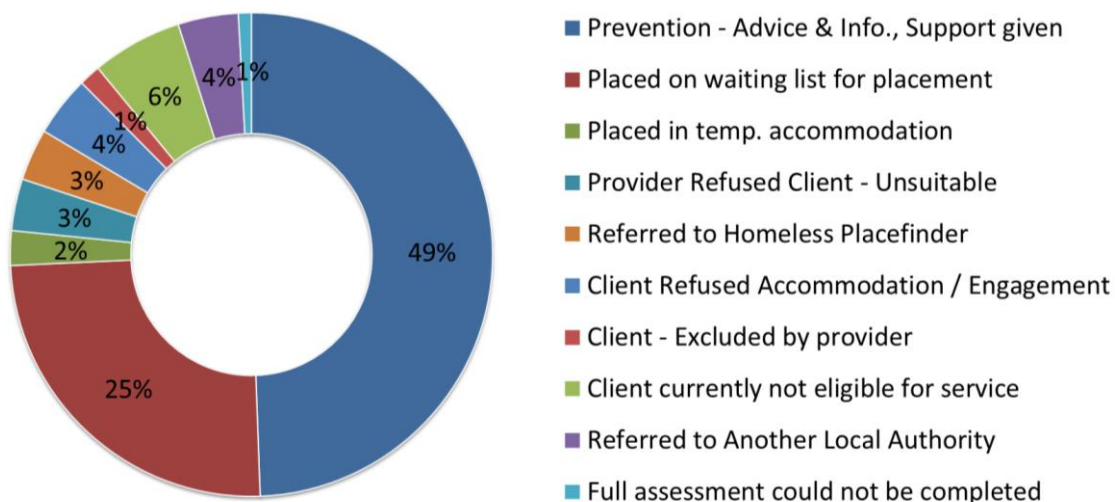
The HSSU operates between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm Monday to Friday and provides a range of services and supports to persons who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The Unit is headed up by the Homeless Co-ordinator along with a team of 4 Social Workers and a designated Homeless HAP Placefinder.

A key support worker is assigned by the Homeless Coordinator to each case with responsibility for carrying out the homeless assessment and providing a care and case management model of support to people who present. by working with them on a client specific support plan which identifies the services or supports that the clients need to help them deal with issues and improve their chances of sustaining future tenancies by bringing these supports with them.

The graph below provides a breakdown of the total number of presentations, 349, to end June 2020, categorised by the outcome following the initial assessment by the HSSU team. **It is important to point out that the graph represents the total number of presentations to HSSU - it is not reflective of the number of individuals/families as quite often the same client may have multiple presentations.**

Of the 349 presentations to date this year, 294 have now been closed (84%) with the remaining 55 presentations (16%) open and being supported. These 55 open presentations represent individual cases.

**Total presentations (349) to Wexford HSSU, categorised by initial outcome (Jan-June '20)**



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### *INTERREG – Celtic Routes*

#### **LEADER**

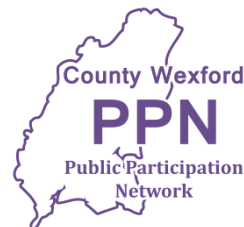
There were no claims received for Article 48 pre-payment check for the month of June. The focus for June was mainly project assessment. A total of 1 claim to the value of €11,353.12 was paid out to projects. A total of 18 projects have been received and are currently at stage 4 & stage 7 of the process. All 18 have been manually checked and once received at Art 48 checking stage (stage 8) will be updated on the system.

#### **PLAYGROUNDS**

Playgrounds re-opened on the week of the 14.06.2020 following closure re Covid 19.

1. Raithinn Cuilinn – A new see saw installed.
2. Gorey Town Park - Repairs to skate park completed.
3. Gorey Town Park - Multiplay slide and surface repaired.
4. Clonattin Village - Swings and posts repaired.
5. Windmill Heights - Installation of new swing.
6. Fethard - Surface repairs.
7. Rosslare Harbour - Cleaning and painting

## WEXFORD PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)



The PPN continue to have an active role in the Covid-19 response and the focus now has moved towards supporting our members as they move to reopening their facilities. A number of initiatives are being worked on at present to assist our members.

The PPN 2019 Annual Report submission for the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) has been completed and submitted. The 2020 MOU has been agreed and will be submitted to DRCD shortly. The PPN Secretariat continues to meet monthly by teleconference and this is working well. Engagement with PPN members has been strong throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and has shown the effectiveness of the PPN network in the county.

## HEALTHY IRELAND



### July Monthly Report (20th May – 19<sup>th</sup> June)

The Healthy County Coordinator and our **Healthy Ireland Fund** action partners continue to work together to review fund activity in response to Covid 19 and also to review and revise activity for the remainder of the fund term, to June 2021, in light of Covid 19.

The Carebox Response Activity, providing care packs to support those who may be self-isolating or cocooning, or otherwise most likely to be severely affected by the effects of COVID- 19, came to completion with the final packs being delivered by our colleagues in Civil Defence. This activity saw 80 careboxes, funded through Healthy Ireland and HSE, delivered to vulnerable people across Wexford.



Healthy  
Wexford

Healthy Wexford, in partnership with the HSE and Wexford County Council provided care packs to support those who may be self-isolating or cocooning, or otherwise most likely to be severely affected by the effects of COVID-19. Packs prepared and delivered with the support of Wexford Civil Defence.



Photo Credit: Wexford Civil Defence

Additional activity now approved for funding is some additional **Infection Control Supports** to Traveller & Roma Communities and a **Roma Youth Initiative**. Outside of these additions most actions have pivoted funded activity in light of Covid 19 to continue to reach the key targets of the funding.

With the release of our Healthy Wexford County Plan 2020-2022, available on Wexford County Council website here <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/healthy-wexford>, Wexford has now achieved all the WHO criteria to become a member of the WHO accredited **Healthy Ireland Healthy Cities and Counties Network**.

The Healthy Cities project is a global WHO movement, set up in 1986. It involves local authorities working to improve health and wellbeing through political commitment, working in partnership with local stakeholders and supporting innovative projects.

A healthy city or a healthy county works to:

- improve health and wellbeing by creating and continually improving its physical and social environments
- develop community resources that help people to support each other and achieve their potential

Accredited to the World Health Organisation, the National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network was launched in November 2016. The **Healthy Ireland Healthy Cities and Counties Network** aims to:

- promote lifelong health and wellbeing,
- provide a means where local issues can influence national policy, and
- provide a voice for Ireland in the WHO Network of European National Healthy Cities Networks.

Find out more about the network here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d4fa22-healthy-counties-and-cities/>

Part of the Network Support during the Covid 19 period is a two weekly **Coordinator Network Zoom Meeting** with Healthy County Coordinator counterparts across the county, the National Healthy Cities & Counties Coordinator and representatives of the Department of Health.

The Healthy County Coordinator attended the **24th Annual Health Promotion Conference** on 18th June 2020 which was entitled '**Promoting Health and Wellbeing: Creating a More Equitable and Sustainable Environment**'. This informative conference provided a range of papers and presentations from local actions to international activity.

### **COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME**

The Department for Rural and Community Development recently announced details on the 2020 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP)

The CEP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and will provide €2 million of grant funding towards enhancing the facilities available to communities. A total fund of approximately €68,000 has been made available by Wexford LCDC to support small-scale capital projects. Priority will be given to voluntary groups who incur capital costs in order to comply with COVID-19 re-opening protocols.

### **Sports Active Wexford**

Staff are continuing to support programmes remotely and working with National Agencies and Wexford County Council to improve in communications.

The National LSP Network Annual report was launched by Minister Brendan Griffin and John Treacy on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June. They thanked the Local Sports Partnerships for the work they have been carrying out and the support of our partners.

### **Physical Activity Promotion Scheme 2020**

Letters have been sent to all applicants regarding their grant application and they have been given a deadline of November to spend this money. Development work is continuing with some clubs following these applications.

#### **District breakdown of money offered:**

<b>Enniscorthy:</b>	<b>€3589</b>
<b>Gorey:</b>	<b>€2900</b>
<b>New Ross:</b>	<b>€7475</b>
<b>Rosslare:</b>	<b>€2000</b>
<b>Wexford:</b>	<b>€5350</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>€21314</b>

### **Couch to 3K**

A six week programme has been delivered virtually with 150 people signing up online to complete a couch to 3K programme. Videos and plans were emailed to these participants every Sunday and plans were also posted on social media each week so more people could also join in.

### **National BeActive Day**

National BeActive Day is a sports day throughout the country organised by Sport Ireland and the local sports partnership and will take place on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> of June. Families are invited to create their own sports day at home and send us pictures of it. We also have a booklet of ideas as a resource for families.

### **Summer Sports Days**

As fun in the sun has been cancelled this year due to COVID-19 SAW will be running four sports days in four communities around Wexford in August. We will be linking in closely with Wexford Local Development for these camps to target children who may have had very limited access to play and recreation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Men's Health Week 2020**

Men's Health Week took place from the 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> of June. Unfortunately, due to Covid19 we were unable to run any programmes or events this year but promoted the week on our social media platforms and worked with our partners to ensure our groups like the Men's Sheds and Wexford COPD Peer and Exercise Support group received all the resources to ensure they could take part in activities at home.

## **Farmer Focus – Yielding for You**

The first meeting of the Farmer Focus group took place on 9<sup>th</sup> June. We have been asked to come on board with this Healthy Ireland project and lead the exercise classes for the six week programme in October. We are working closely with the HSE, IFA, Macra Na Feirme and our colleagues in Roscommon on this project.

## **Waterford Wexford HSE Mental Health Services Announce launch of first Integrated Exercise Practitioner for Mental Health**



As part of the “Sláintecare” 10 year programme to transform Ireland's health and social care services and as an addition to existing funding commitments towards its implementation, a €20 million Sláintecare Integration Fund was launched in March of this year. The Integration Fund focused on supporting the development of existing and new best practice projects that are capable of being scaled nationally. 477 proposals were received and 122 were successful.

Among successful submissions nationally was “**The Exercise Effect**”, providing professionally led and community-based physical activity interventions for people with mental health difficulties in Co. Wexford.

## **Return to the Water programme**

Swim Ireland have a list of Tier 1 Training Facilities – these will be considered “Education Hubs” with status to deliver Swim Ireland Education as part of the return to water roadmap for Swim Ireland Education. These Education Hubs will have practical elements education and training available from September 2020, as per government guidance. We have been delighted to support the Apex New Ross in their selection as a Tier 1 Training facility (one of nine in the Ireland) to support the return and delivery of their Learn to Swim Programme.

We have supported Bunclody Community Swimming Pool To reopen on July 8<sup>th</sup>, and plan to support activity and learn to swim programmes for the community in August. With the support of the Get Ireland swimming Programme, link with their Open Water initiative.

# ENVIRONMENT

## A. COVID-19 RESPONSE

At the start of the lockdown, a meeting of the Management Team in the Environment Section determined the following priorities as being essential works:

- The operation of the Holmestown Household Recycling Centre and the Civic Amenity Centres
- Operation of the Rapid Response Crews and Environment Warden Service
- Operation of the Dog Warden Service
- Limited operation of the Harbours and Piers (Support of fishing industry and marine emergency services, monitoring of vessels, extended Declaration of Health to all vessels).
- Payment of Creditors Invoices
- Payment of Outdoor Staff Wages
- Enforcement work – this has resumed following concerns over the reported increase in illegal dumping. (All pending court cases are adjourned until the end of May).

All tasks were performed while respecting social distancing and following HSE guidance.

With the easing of restrictions under the Government's "Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business" measures have been put in place for the safe return of staff to the working environment. Services are returning to normal. The following activities which had been suspended are being resumed:

- Routine inspections carried out under the various acts
- Educational and community initiatives
- Use of harbours and piers for leisure activities (some facilities such as showers remain closed to the public)
- Reopening of Public conveniences.

Where timeframes apply for complying with the requirements of statutory notices, these will be reviewed and extensions may be applied.

All beaches are now fully accessible with car parks open and local traffic management in place.

## B. WATER, AIR & NOISE

### 1. Water Framework Directive:

Under the Water Framework Directive every catchment in the county must be assessed to identify required actions to maintain and improve water quality. This is being overseen by the Sub-Catchment Unit of the EPA.

### 2. Water Sampling:

85 sampling sites in the county have been identified by the EPA for sampling 5 times per year with the subsequent analysis carried out by the EPA. 11 surveillance sites are being sampled 12 times per year.



### 3. Septic Tank Inspections:

A total of 156 sewage treatment systems were inspected throughout 2019. 66% of the systems failed the first inspection. This rate is likely to decrease as householders carry out necessary remedial works. Inspections will recommence in the late summer / early autumn when it is judged safe to do so. 66 new inspections remain from this year's programme.

23 grants for remedial works for septic tanks were paid in 2019 amounting to €72,164. There have been 4 applications received to date this year which are being processed.

A significant case under the Water Services Act 2007 & 2012 for non-compliance with an Advisory Notice was won at Gorey District Court in 2018. The defendant was found guilty of two offences as fined €4,000 for each offence and fixed with the Council's legal costs totaling €4,110. Currently there are 3 cases before the district court for offences relating to discharge from septic tanks.

### 4. Section 4 Discharge Licences:

The Council currently has 104 active Discharge Licences. In October a case was heard relating to serious water pollution in Gorey. The defendant was fined €700 and a contribution towards the Council's costs and legal fees were met. Two further cases of non-compliance with Section 4 are currently in progress.

Fees for the 2020 charge for discharge licences will be invoiced in the coming month.

### 5. Air & Noise:

Air quality monitoring is carried out at a number of locations in the county. Noise complaints are dealt with on an ongoing basis. Two complaints of persistent noise pollution are currently under investigation.

## C. WASTE MANAGEMENT

### 1. Landfills:

Holmestown Landfill remains temporarily closed. Environmental monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure continues at both Killurin and Holmestown in accordance with the conditions of our waste licences.

The Household Recycling Centre at Holmestown continues to provide recycling services to members of the public as well as a disposal service for other waste streams such as residual waste, bulky waste, segregated food waste, garden waste and waste paint.

### 2. Recycling Services:

#### Bring Bank Network –

WASTE CATEGORY	No. of Sites May 2020	Recycling out (End May) 2019 (t)	Recycling out (End May)2020 (t)
Glass bottles		1327	1648
Aluminium Cans		34	41
Total	106	1361	1689

## Household Recycling Centres –

Summary of Activities								
WASTE CATEGORY	Enniscorthy		New Ross		Holmestown		Gorey	
	Recycling out Jan-May 2019 (t)	Recycling out Jan-May 2020 (t)	Recycling out Jan-May 2019 (t)	Recycling out Jan-May 2020(t)	Recycling out Jan –May 2019	Recycling out Jan - May 2020)	Recycling out Jan-May 2019	Recycling out Jan-MAY 2020
<b>Total Recycling out</b>	208	<b>244</b>	287	<b>290</b>	256	<b>356</b>	189	<b>226</b>
Total Domestic Waste in	N/A	<b>N/A</b>	N/A	<b>N/A</b>	859	<b>889</b>	N/A	<b>N/A</b>
Daily Average Customers	2019	<b>2020</b>	2019	<b>2020</b>	2019	<b>2020</b>	2019	<b>2020</b>
Jan-May	59	<b>61</b>	110	<b>112</b>	93	<b>124</b>	73	<b>85</b>

Due to net operating costs increases, an entry charge of €2 was introduced to all household recycling centres on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

### 3. Rapid Response Crew

Our Rapid Response Crew operates out of Holmestown, with one two-man crew servicing Enniscorthy and Gorey Municipal Districts and a second servicing Wexford and New Ross Municipal Districts. Their headline activities for year to date are summarised below:

Activity	To end May 2019	May 2020	To end May 2020	% +/-
<b>Total Illegal Dumping/ Clean Ups</b>	<b>1568</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1542</b>	<b>- 1.6%</b>
<i>Gorey *</i>		32		
<i>Enniscorthy *</i>		99		
<i>Wexford *</i>		82		
<i>New Ross*</i>		53		
<b>Total Bring Site Inspections</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>1915</b>	<b>+97%</b>
<i>Gorey</i>		49		
<i>Enniscorthy</i>		37		
<i>Wexford</i>		131		
<i>New Ross</i>		33		
<b>Total Ringbuoy Inspections</b>	<b>2584</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>6690</b>	<b>+159%</b>
<i>Gorey</i>	<i>North</i>	398		
<i>Enniscorthy *</i>				
<i>Wexford*</i>	<i>South</i>	940		
<i>New Ross*</i>				

<b>Other Works</b>	<i>1488</i>	<b>678</b>	<b>2350</b>	<b>+58%</b>
<i>Gorey</i>		<i>82</i>		
<i>Enniscorthy</i>		<i>186</i>		
<i>Wexford</i>		<i>203</i>		
<i>New Ross</i>		<i>207</i>		

*\*Including Towns*

#### **4. Food Waste**

The Food Waste Regulations 2013 are in force in all towns with >500 population. They impose obligations on Waste Collectors and householders. Collectors must provide separate bins for collection of food waste and householders must segregate their waste by either using “brown bins” provided by their waste collection company; composting at home, bearing in mind that certain food wastes cannot be composted, or bringing it to an authorised facility. Householders in all towns and villages to whom the regulations apply were visited by Council staff as part of our ongoing information campaign. Food waste is now accepted at all four household recycling centres. The locations where the food waste regulations apply are outlined on map which shall be uploaded to the council’s website shortly.

#### **5. Waste Facility Permits:**

We currently have twenty seven Clean Soil and Stone sites in operation; seven construction and demolition sites, eight End of Life Vehicles and twelve Pay to Use Waste Compactor Unit. The full list of Waste Facility Permits and Certificates of Registration can be viewed on the Council’s website.

Altogether there are 69 registered operational Waste Facility Permits and Certificates of Registration for premises involved in waste management activities in the County.

#### **6. Enforcement:**

The Waste Enforcement Team carries out routine and non-routine inspections of Waste Facilities and problem sites in accordance with the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) as required by the EPA. The 2020 inspection plan and 2019 return were submitted to the EPA on 15 February 2020. The RMCEI Plan allocates 1,578 route inspections by 25 Full Time Equivalent staff member. The inspection types cover the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations; ELV (End of Life Vehicles) Regulations; Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations; Household and Commercial Food Waste Regulations; Batteries, Tyres, etc.

The national waste priorities for 2020 are;

1. Illegal Dumping/ unaccounted for waste, which includes scrap cars sites, unauthorised Man in Van collectors, etc,.
2. Construction & Demolition activities, includes management of waste on construction sites.
3. Use the waste presentation bye-laws to check household are dealing with their waste, including ensure collectors are continuing to roll out of the household brown bins.
4. Tracking the flow of waste data submitted on AER returns by collectors and facilities.

## 7. Mattress / Furniture Amnesty

This year's initiative was a huge success. All four of the civic amenity centres were utilized to service the entire County and a total of 2064 vehicles passed through availing of the opportunity to dispose of disused furniture. A total of 2715 mattresses and 2118 1/2/3 piece suites of furniture were received at the centres.

### D. LITTER MANAGEMENT

The Wexford County Council (Segregation, Storage and Presentation of Household and Commercial Waste) Bye-laws, 2018 came into effect from the 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2019. From this date, anyone contravening the bye-laws will be liable to a fixed penalty of €75.

Complaints regarding litter are now being handled through the Customer Service Unit. Environment is the first section to use this central system.

Any evidence collected from littering incidents is used in bringing action under the Litter Pollution legislation. The continuing use of CCTV and the dedicated Litter Warden for North Co. Wexford has enhanced enforcement. A significant number of offences captured on CCTV have been through the Courts and more are pending. The local press regularly reports on such cases. We will continue to target illegal dumping black-spots and the county's roads throughout the year.

LITTER FINES	TOTAL FOR 2019	TOTAL FOR 2020 (to May 2020)
Fines Issued	341	124
Fines Paid in Full●	143	28
Fines Cancelled/Proceedings Discontinued/Struck Out*	140	12
Successful Prosecutions**	13	12
Legal Proceedings In Progress	28	30
Amount Collected in Fines (directly/following proceedings)	€26,728	€6,980

\* Other fines may be paid prior to the hearing or withdrawn for evidential or legal reasons.

● A large number of fines are paid in instalments and these are not reflected in the statistics.

Most Court cases are successful, but it can take up to a year or more for a case to be heard in the District Court. There is currently a backlog of cases before the courts at the moment due to the number of adjournments over the last few months.

In January, a single bag of rubbish attracted a fine of €1,000 plus costs. In his deliberation the judge noted the lack of engagement by the individual (including their non-attendance at court) and the extra workload placed on the Council in dealing with such dumping.

**It was a marathon week at court in mid February 2020, the Council secured 11 good convictions (10 litter & 1 waste). Fines ranged from €150 to €1,000 depending on the severity of the offence with all claims for costs being granted.**

## Litter Enforcement Activity 2009-2018

	Fines Issued	Court	Reports
2018	324	22	3050 (up 15%)
2017	218	27	2651 (Up 12%)
2016	274	17	2,354 (up 22%)
2015	242	17	1,927 (up 11%)
2014	154	17	1,732 (up 10%)
2013	140	15	1,571 (up 21%)
2012	182	16	1,292 (down 3%)
2011	209	17	1,329
2010	370	27	1,338
2009	345	15	1,906

## F.GENERAL

All environmental complaints originally logged on the Environmental Incident Management System for further investigation was taken over by a new system called DASH on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and the EIS system is now closed

The total figures for complaints received are as follows:

	Jan – Dec 2017	Jan – Dec 2018	Jan to Dec 2019	1 Jan to 26 Jun
<b>Incidents</b>	<b>3600</b>	<b>4609</b>	<b>4749</b>	<b>2724</b>
<b>Closed</b>	<b>3526</b>	<b>4563</b>	<b>3679</b>	<b>1833</b>
<b>Closure Rate</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>67%</b>

### Control of Dogs & Horses:

The Council employs one Dog Warden and an acting Dog Warden for holidays and relief. More dogs were collected by the County Wexford Dog Warden than in any other county in Ireland from January 2010 to the end of 2015. The main pound is Pets First Kennels, Ballycarney, Co Wexford.

Control of dogs	2018	2019
Dogs collected	788	776
Dogs reclaimed	129	152
Dogs re-homed/transferred	558	544
Dogs put to sleep	100	77
Dog Fines	18	19

There are now 29 Dog Breeding Establishments registered in total with a number of applications on hand awaiting inspection. To 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019, 36 equine were impounded (as against 50 in

total for 2018). Most of the equine impounded in 2019 have been re-homed. No horses were put to sleep in 2019.

### **Environment Education and Awareness:**

Our aim is to promote awareness and active participation in a range of environmental initiatives.

**Green Schools:** 35 schools have been awarded their green flag by An Taisce this year. Kilanerin National School and St Mary's CBS, Enniscorthy have both been awarded their first green flag. 33 schools have renewed their green flag. Scoil Mhuire Horeswood have also been awarded Global citizenship Energy School of the Year. 108 schools are now flying the prestigious green flag which equates to 86%.

**Holmestown Household Recycling Centre:** Ballythomas National School visited Holmestown in March 2020 but due to school closures all other visits were postponed. We will facilitate these 10 schools when schools reopen in September. The tour outlines the energy saving technologies used, how landfills are managed, a birds of prey display and a tour of the recycling site.



**School Workshops:** 5 schools participated in biodiversity workshops and workshops in marine environment, climate action and recycling workshops will be organised when schools are back.

**Annual Environment Artwork Competition:** Details of the annual artwork biodiversity competition was to be circulated to all schools in early March. The theme this year is 'Wildflowers'. The competition is open to both primary and secondary schools and includes a colouring sheet for junior and senior infants. Due to Covid 19 we hope to run the competition in September.

**Trees for Wexford Campaign:** 154 applications were received under the 2019 'Trees for Wexford Campaign'. In total 7,857 trees were distributed (trees and saplings). On average 6 trees / hedging or saplings was given to each approved group. Trees were collected by groups on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> February.

**National Spring Clean/ Community Clean Ups:** Registrations for National Spring Clean Campaign and community clean ups will commence on onday 8<sup>th</sup> June. Registrations will be accepted from family group/ individuals/ small groups according to current government guidelines. Materials for clean ups can be collected the civic amenity sites ( once 20 KM travel restriction rule is adhered to) 781 community clean ups were supported in 2019.

**Planting Grant:** The 2020 Planting Grant Scheme is being prepared and will be advertised in early June. The 2019 scheme received 211 applications. Due to the unprecedented number of applications, the allocated budget and to ensure all approved applicants received grant funding each applicant received a grant of €130 in 2019.

**Marram Grass Planting Community Workshop:** Clean Coasts and Wexford County Council hosted a workshop to complete marram grass planting with local community groups on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March. The aim was to upskill volunteers in the region on how to replant sand dunes and come up with a coordinated plan for the area going forward. The event was a huge success with over 40

volunteers in attendance.



**Local Waste Prevention Grant:** The 2020 scheme will be announced in early June. 15 applications were approved under the 2019 scheme. Projects funded included prevention of single use items, upcycling, food waste prevention workshops. €8,000 was funded across all projects in 2019.

**Community Engagement:** Community talks are postponed during Covid 19. The last talk was to the ICA Federation meeting in late February.

**Dog Fouling Awareness Campaign:** A series of images and messages have been put out on twitter to encourage all dog owners to pick up after their dog and dispose of the poop bag responsibly.



**Green Dog Walker:** Promotion of the Green Dog Walker is ongoing. The campaign has been highlighted on social media and individuals can apply online.



## Piers and Harbours



1. Kilmore Quay channel dredging contract has been completed
2. New Ross Port-  
Plans are under way to upgrade buoyage and to carry out other essential works to facilitate resumption of pilotage services

## Waste Statistics January to May 2020

Bring Bank Network		Holmestown Recycling		Environmental Clean Up Crew	
Tonnage Jan to May 2020	% increase on 2019	Tonnage Jan to May 2020	% increase on 2019	Clean ups to May 20	% increase on 2019
1689	24	356	39	1542	- 1.6%

## LIBRARIES, ARTS & ARCHIVES

### Libraries, Archives and Arts Report to Wexford County Council, June/July 2020

#### LIBRARY SERVICE

### Response to Covid-19

All libraries in the county re-opened in Phase 2 offering a “Click and Collect” service from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June in line with national guidelines. Local library members had the option to contact their local library and request up to six books/DVDs/CDs in their chosen genre/subject area. Library staff selected the books and contacted the member to arrange a suitable time for collection. Libraries issued almost 4,500 items during phase two.

A significant programme of buildings works, re-organisation and risk assessment took place in libraries throughout June to prepare for re-opening for visitors. In Phase 3 from 28<sup>th</sup> June all libraries in the county opened their doors to the public offering a “Browse & Borrow” service. This service offers the public a library visit of short duration to browse/return/borrow stock. Visitors can also briefly use a computer/wifi or printing facilities. Services are available by appointment which allows for socially distanced use of library buildings.



Library staff are pleased to welcome back familiar faces as well as new users who had joined online during the period of restrictions. There was also a steady return of family groups to the library, restoring an important service to children and young people who were heavily impacted by restrictions.

While the physical library event programmes remain suspended, the library service continues to provide public information using various online platforms and a host of online activities for adults and children.

### **Book Call Delivery Service**

Wexford Library Service continues to provide the Book Call delivery service. In an extension to our homebound service, and in order to mitigate social isolation, members of the public who are elderly or vulnerable and who are cocooning at home can request a delivery of library books, audiobooks and DVDs.

This is a countywide delivery service and has proven very popular since its inception in April. As of 8<sup>th</sup> July more than 500 members of the public have benefited from this service.

### **Library Services to Children**

#### **Summer Stars**

Summer Stars is the national reading programme for children taking place in all libraries in Co. Wexford and online from the 1<sup>st</sup> July until the end of August. Summer Stars is non-competitive and every child who reads even one book is regarded as having completed the programme – and it's all completely free! Children are encouraged to read over the summer in order to prevent a “summer dip” in their reading ability which is even more important this year due to the restrictions of the past few months.

A ‘mystery/lucky dip’ book bag initiative has been introduced in Wexford which encourages children to take broaden their reading interests. Wexford Library Service has developed an original animated short film to promote Summer Stars. We have commissioned Summer Stars 2020 online art tutorials for children, together with an associated video gallery to showcase children’s art work. Library staff are recording chapter readings of various books to promote Summer Stars reading with accompanying activities to engage all the children. Summer Stars creative writing story competition has also been launched and promoted in all branches.

#### **Parenting Today 2020 Talks**

The third online talk on ‘Managing Anxiety in Children & Adolescents’ with Carina McEvoy was posted on all library branch Facebook pages and on the newly established YouTube channel on Thursday June 25<sup>th</sup>. Viewing figures and feedback have been very good. Our July online talk, ‘Literacy for Little Learners’ with Dr Rebecca Long is scheduled to arrive online on Thursday July 16<sup>th</sup>. It will offer advice and support on supporting reluctant and struggling young readers, with reading based games and activities and an opportunity for parents and carers to submit questions to be answered during the workshop.

#### **Rhymetime and Storytime recordings**

Library staff continue to engage with and support families with regular rhymetime and storytime sessions where active reading is modelled to promote early literacy and language development. Attention is also given to children with additional needs including the hosting of discussion and online book recommendations for a young dyslexic supported reading group.

## Adult Reader Events

As face-to-face book clubs for adults have been suspended in the libraries at the moment, August will see the launch of a new Wexford Libraries' Online Book Club. This will be run as a closed Facebook Group moderated by library staff. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/278963496612690/> Online bookclubs have become increasingly popular in the current climate and are a good way to encourage adults to engage with books and reading and to increase social interaction, albeit online.

## 2020 Decade of Centenaries programme

Funding of €10,000 has been received from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for the provision of activity to mark events in County Wexford one hundred years ago.

Taking into consideration feedback received from a Public Consultative Workshop, held in Enniscorthy in October 2019 (seeking suggestions from local community groups, commemorative committees, local history societies etc. in developing commemorative plans for 1920-1923), and the guidance issued by the Expert Advisory Group on Commemoration, the following activities and projects have been identified for the year 2020, as part of the next phase of commemoration from 2020-2023.

The proposed project plan has been adapted due to the constraints imposed this year by Covid-19, to enable online delivery and to increase public access to the digital collection for the period of the War of Independence and the Civil War in County Wexford.

1. In order to increase local access to research materials we will continue the programme of Micro filming and Digitisation of Local Newspapers and historical sources from the period.

- a. New Ross Standard 1910 – 1930
- b. Wexford People 1910 – 1930

2. Conservation & digitisation of a number of historical documents – relating to the War of Independence and Civil War in Co. Wexford.

3. Catalogue notable private collection of TD Sinnott held by Wexford County Archive. Digitise and make available on Archives website and for Digital Exhibitions in libraries.

To enhance public awareness of historical events a lecture programme on the following themes has been designed:

1. Explore the Role of Cumann na mBan in Co. Wexford and the effects of conflict on women and children in the County.
2. Short video on the *Burning of the Big Houses: Wexford 1920-1923* with local historian Dan Walsh, for upload to Libraries YouTube channel.
3. Illustrated talk on *The intriguing tale of Capt. Percival Lea Wilson of Gorey* with Des Kiely for upload to Libraries YouTube channel in July.
4. Sport and the Irish Revolution.
5. Geo-Mapping Project of War of Independence with Barry Lacey, archaeologist / social historian. Survey and record the surviving physical evidence of the conflict i.e. safe houses, ambush and attack sites etc. RIC barracks and House burnings.

As part of an educational and interpretative programme for children and young people we propose to develop, over a two year period,:

A fold out leaflet to be researched compiled and edited with a brief profile of Wexford Participants and Timeline of the revolutionary period in County Wexford. (For printing & distribution to all schools in 2021.)

#### Archive Service

### Acquisition

Although the county archive was closed to the public, two private collections were handed in to the Archive during the course of the month –

- Invoices, bill heads, provisions books, creditors' and debtors' ledgers from the long-established Sinnott's Pub, Duncormick which closed down earlier this year. The collection includes documentation related to the War of Independence and Civil War periods in the area, in addition to some RIC correspondence in relation to the burning of the RIC barracks in the village in May 1920. An accompanying collection of handwritten family letters adds an important social element to the collection (c. 1860-80).
- Second consignment of minute books from the Wexford branch of An Taisce (National Trust for Ireland), 2006-16

#### Creative Ireland

### Cruinniú na NÓg Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Ireland is the first, and only, country in the world to have a national day of free creativity for children and young people under 18, which took place on Saturday 13th June 2020. Cruinniú na nÓg is a flagship initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme's to enable the creative potential of children and young people. On Sat 13th June children took part in some wonderful and creative online events which were accessible online through the Wexford Public Libraries YouTube Channel and via Zoom. A total of 17 individual events covering all ages and a variety of creative activities included dance, song, music, heritage, science, video editing and recording, painting, creative thinking, printmaking, zine making and origami. **Music Generation** actively took part in Cruinniú na nÓg this year albeit online. They presented:

- [Mini Maestros Early Years Music Workshop](#) for parents and toddlers
- [Zoom to Record Workshop](#) for teenagers interested in audio recording and music production
- [High Street Opera Zoom](#) for children who love to sing between the ages of 8-14 years

At the end of the day 538 people had taken part in the 17 events with 1000 people having viewed the content by Monday 15th. County Wexford audiences also had the opportunity to participate in the many other virtual events that were available on the day or in the run up to Cruinniú na nÓg.

Credit is due to the Cruinniú coordinator, the many partners, artists and creative practitioners who rose to the challenge of moving this day of creativity online in a short space of time while still retaining a sense of active exploration and imagination for children and young people.

### **‘Ancient Connections’ - Public Art Programme Wexford & Wales**

Wexford County Council is partnering with Wales on the EU funded Ancient Connections programme in Pembrokeshire in Wales. Two artists residencies will take place - one in Wexford (Ferns) and one in Wales (St David’s Pembrokeshire). During the 2 year residency period (2020 – 2022) both artists will connect around the residency themes of ‘Exploring a Shared Past’ working with local communities in both countries. There will be awards of €20,000 each. Final outcomes will be new public artworks presented in Wexford and Wales in 2022. The selection panel from Wexford & Wales convened by videoconference on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June and selected the following artists:

- **David Begley (Wexford)**
- **Fern Thomas (Wales)**

**Public Art- New Ross** Due to COVID-19, the installation of the Per cent for art sculpture by Artist, Caomihe Kilfeather, has been delayed. Work commenced on the installation in June of this 4.5 metres in height artwork which comprises of two coloured glass and steel structures which will be a significant and striking element within the landscape when completed.

**Art Ability/ Arts & Health programme with HSE CENTRES** This ongoing programme supporting people with mental health / intellectual and physical disabilities across 9 HSE centres countywide continues to adapt , due to COVID 19. They are currently, in addition to their creative writing, visual art and music online workshops/tutorials, commencing to plan an **in-reach** programme. This will involve smaller groups, co-facilitation from nursing to ensure social distancing, facilitating outdoors and travelling between venues. New outdoor Music Groups have been created at various residential units and it is envisaged to have this programme up and running across all art forms in the near future.

**Creative Hub Update** The Creative Hub Studios re-opened on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June in keeping with government Phase 2 and HSE guidelines around social distancing etc. Over thirty artists are currently in residence in the Creative Hub across nine studio/ units combining individual group’s studios and retails units as well as a dance studio which is managed by Wexford Arts Centre on behalf of Wexford County Council.

**Wexford Literary Festival 2020** aimed to attract national and international writers, readers and lovers of literature to gather and enjoy its eclectic programme of readings, workshops and awards events. This year took an unexpected turn but it proved to be advantageous as the festival could be enjoyed by a wider audience through the broadcasting on Zoom.

Some of the line-up of the literary personnel who participated this year included: Sinead Crowley, Felicity Hayes-McCoy, Eamonn Wall, Niamh Devereux, Peter Murphy, Helena Mulkerns, Manchán Mangan, Emer Martin, Ruadh Butler, Paula Campbell, June Caldwell, Margaret Galvin, Zena O’Brien, Imelda O’Reilly, Nick Roche, Joe Brennan, Felispeaks, Dominic Palmer, John Cummins, Mary Cotter, John D Yates, Johnny Lappin and many others

The festival highlights included for the younger audience ‘Create a Comic Book’ with Nick Roche, ‘The WLF Awards Night’ with guest speaker Billy Keane followed by ‘Conversation & Cocktails’ with Carmel Harrington and Sheila Forsey hosted by Maria Nolan. ‘Cursed Murphy’ made a return along with the ever popular ‘WexLit Cáca Millis Cabaret’.

**The Wexford Playwrights Studio** Wexford County Council Arts Office and Wexford Arts Centre are delighted to announce the eight applicants selected from recent open call to participate in the first Wexford Playwrights Studio initiative. The selected applicants are **Joe Brennan, Imelda Carroll, Sheila Forsey, Jack Matthews, Hannah McNivan, Megan O'Malley, Dominic Palmer** and **Eoghan Rua Finn**.

The group participants will receive mentorship during the year from leading award winning and acclaimed playwrights, dramaturges and directors including: Billy Roche, Deirdre Kinahan, Ben Barnes, and Thomas Conway. Staged reading and short play production events options will also be considered for production at Wexford Arts Centre. Participants will be advised on script development, dramaturgy, direction and production of work. Staged readings and play production/work in progress will also be considered for presentation along with additional production support in Wexford Arts Centre in 2021. The Wexford Playwrights Studio is limited to eight members to ensure adequate individual attention is exclusively dedicated to support, development and promotion of playwrights in the group.

## **CIVIL DEFENCE**

### **Civil Defence – Operations / Training Report May - June 2020**

#### **Civic Duties**

All community event cover is suspended due to COVID-19 since the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

#### **Weekly Training**

All Weekly training classes have been stopped since week 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020. We have only held training to allow volunteers to work during Covid calls.

We have completed a roadmap for Civil Defence to return to training, we are currently working on Standard Operation Guideline to ensure volunteer safety on returning to training and community events cover in August 2020.

#### **Training Courses**

We have completed a roadmap for Civil Defence to return to training, we are currently working on Standard Operation Guideline to ensure volunteer safety on returning to training and community events cover in August 2020.

We hope to return to training in August with reduced numbers to endure social distancing.

#### **Covid 19 – Response**

Wexford Civil Defence has being tasked to provide support to the Community Forum helpline in County Hall, HSE and Department of Defence since week 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

Each week we have approximately 40 – 50 volunteers available to help with tasking.

We have completed 92 tasks to date, most of these would be transport of people to hospital appointments. Transport has been to Wexford General Hospital, Waterford Regional Hospital, Whitfield Clinic Waterford, St. James Hospital Dublin and St, Vincent's Hospital Dublin.

## Tasks Breakdown

IBTS	21
LA Support	1
Logistics / Vehicles	10
Patient Equipment Transport	2
Patient Transport	54
PPE Delivery	4

## FIRE SERVICE

### Fire Station Priorities for 2020.

Wexford County continues to update the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with the appointment of the successful building contractor for New Ross fire station following the completion of the tendering process. The period in which the tender will remain valid has been extended until 8<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

### COVID-19

COVID-19 recovery Plans have been updated to bring all services back on line as soon as practicable.

### Fire Operations

There were 84 incident responses in June as detailed below.

### Fire calls by brigade for June

Incident Type	Calls June 2020	Calls to date 2020	Calls to this period 2019
Chimney fire (WCC / Private)	2 / 0 (2)	87	79
Domestic fire (WCC / Private)	0 / 5 (5)	29	35
Road Traffic Accident	8	32	53
Industrial fire	0	6	5
Commercial fire	1	6	4
Assembly fire	0	2	0
Agricultural fire	0	2	1
Motor Vehicles	2	28	20
Forest/bog/grass etc	15	65	36
Rubbish	10	50	40
Non-fire rescues	6	26	11
False alarms – good intent	30	135	120
Malicious false alarms	0	1	0
Miscellaneous	5	24	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>447</b>

### Fire calls by brigade to date

INCIDENT TYPE	WEXFORD	GOREY	ENNISCORTHY	NEW ROSS	BUNCLODY	TOTAL
CHIMNEY FIRE	31	12	17	19	8	87
DOMESTIC FIRE	3	6	11	8	1	29
ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT	10	6	8	6	2	32
INDUSTRIAL FIRE	2	1	2	1	0	6
COMMERCIAL FIRE	1	1	2	1	1	6

<b>ASSEMBLY FIRE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>AGRICULTURAL FIRE</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MOTOR VEHICLES</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>FOREST/BOG/GRASS ETC</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>RUBBISH</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>NON-FIRE RESCUES</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>FALSE ALARMS - GOOD INTENT</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>MALICIOUS FALSE ALARMS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>493</b>

### **Fire Safety**

The number of applications for fire safety certificates and Fire Services Acts inspections for the month of June were as follows:-

#### **June 2020**

<b>Applications Received</b>	<b>Year to date</b>	<b>June</b>
Fire Safety Certificates	59	7

<b>Number of Inspections</b>	<b>Year to date</b>	<b>June</b>
FSA Inspections	52	1



*1. Irish Water  
Asset Delivery*

*2. Minor Capital*

*3. Rural Water  
Programme*

*4. Water  
Conservation*



## **COVID -19**

- Water Services has returned to normal service following the lifting of restrictions on non-essential construction work due to Covid - 19. Irish Water is back to business as usual.
- Water Services is carrying out its activity in line with COVID-19 Local Authority Standard Operating Procedures issued by the LGMA.
- Staff are back in the office on a split grouped basis and are also continuing to work from home. General queries still go through Irish Water 1850 278 278.



# 1. Irish Water - Asset Delivery



## Capital Schemes

<b>Enniscorthy Network Upgrade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Surveying work continuing in Enniscorthy to enable hydraulic model of the sewer network be completed. Surveying works are now complete and design on the new hydraulic model has started.</li> <li>➤ Design work for rehabilitation/upgrade works will follow in Q3, 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Enniscorthy Intake Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ New water intake and pumping station at Clonhasten.</li> <li>➤ Planning permission was granted in September 2019.</li> <li>➤ Tender documents are now complete and with Irish Water to issue a tender.</li> <li>➤ New infrastructure is expected to be operational in 2022.</li> </ul>
<b>Wexford Drainage Area Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete drainage model of the Wexford Town foul drainage system.</li> <li>➤ A full detailed hydraulic model identifying all pipelines and infrastructure and deficiencies in the network.</li> <li>➤ Consultants Nicholas O'Dwyer appointed by IW.</li> <li>➤ Drainage infrastructure survey works commenced in Wexford Town and Castlebridge.</li> <li>➤ Deferred survey works due for completion Summer 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Fethard-on-Sea Sewerage Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Preliminary Design for the project now complete for issue to contractor for design and build.</li> <li>➤ Irish water has advised that due to budget constraints, this project has been re prioritised and will not go to construction in the near future. A new delivery date is yet to be decided.</li> </ul>
<b>Gorey Regional Water Supply</b>	<p>Gorey RWSS - To be upgraded and new 8 ml/day WTP and 7,500m<sup>3</sup> reservoir provided at Ballyminaun.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Planning granted to upgrade borehole sites and build new WTP at Ballyminaun.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CPO completed</li> <li>○ Contract awarded to Glan Agua</li> <li>○ Operational date early 2022</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ New Treatment plant and storage site at Ballyminaun             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction began October 2019.</li> <li>○ Both reservoirs completed with work now beginning on the treatment plant</li> <li>○ Borehole work ready to proceed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>Untreated Agglomeration Study (UTAS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Arthurstown, Ballyhack and Duncannon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contractor selected.</li> <li>○ Planning permission granted.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Irish water has advised that due to financial constraints, this project will not be awarded until November 2020 at the earliest which will impact on delivery of the scheme</li> <li>➤ <b>Kilmore Quay</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Scheme design complete and ready to tender. Tender documents are being finalised and we expect to issue shortly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Land acquisition finalised</li> <li>○ Planning permission granted</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Irish water has advised that due to financial constraints, this project will not be awarded in 2020 and a new delivery date is yet to be advised.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wexford Town Water Main Rehab and Gas Network</b></p>	<p>Irish Water has advised it is no longer funding this project.</p>
<p><b>Direct Labour Pipe Laying Crew</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The direct labour crew have commenced the find and fix programme. This is designed to target specific areas of leakage within the County and is designed by our Water Conservation office. Fixes to identified leaks have been completed in the South Regional and works are currently on going in Enniscorthy Town.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ferns Sewerage Upgrade</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ At detailed design stage</li> </ul>

## 2. Minor Capital



<p><b>IW Minor Water Schemes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Disinfection Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Disinfection upgrade project at 95% complete county wide excluding snagging.</li> <li>○ Works completed at Creagh WTP. Works at Glynn WTP will be commissioned w/e July 17<sup>th</sup>. Newtown WTP restarted week commencing June 15<sup>th</sup>. Snagging has recommenced at various sites.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Treated Water storage programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 sites in Wexford – Kilmallock bridge, Camolin and Kiltlealy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Kilmallock Bridge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To be submitted for planning by summer 2020</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>IW Minor Wastewater Schemes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Trinity Street</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Generator Upgrade works expected to take place Q4 2020.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Fairgreen Pumping Station, Ballycullane</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Works to decommission WWTP, construct PS and rising main to connect to Ballycullane WWTP have commenced on site, and will continue during Q3.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Sinnottstown Lane Pumping Station</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upgrade works practically complete, with telemetry connection to be done during July to complete the project.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Iona Pumping Station, Rosslare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upgrade works taking on place on site, with expected completion August 2020.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Rosetown Village Pumping Station, Rosslare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Civil, mechanical and safety upgrade works scheduled to take place during Q3 2020.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Pumping Station Rationalisation</b> <p>Several proposals for rationalisation and decommissioning of pumping stations located close together have been submitted to Irish Water for review.</p> </li> </ul>
<p><b>New Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>June</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 17 applications received for Water Connections</li> <li>○ 7 applications received for Wastewater Connections</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Non Irish Water Small Capital Schemes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Somer's Way Pumping Station, Ballycullane</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decommission WWTP, construct PS and rising main to connect to Ballycullane WWTP.</li> <li>○ Delayed due to COVID 19. Expected completion now Q4 2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rising main works have begun on site.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>O'Rahilly View WWTP (TIC), Gusserane</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Site improvement works completed during Q1 2020, more to follow in Q3.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Ballinamorrhagh WWTP (TIC), Curracloe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Site improvement works completed during Q1 2020, more to follow in Q3.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Operations

- All works resumed as of 18<sup>th</sup> May with COVID-19 precautions in place.
- Standard operating guidelines rolled out to water services staff.
- Some Water Services staff continue to work from home where possible
- Key Water services staff have been trained for entry through properties during COVID-19 by fire services.

## 3. Rural Water Programme



### Measure 2 - Public Health Compliance

- Mullawn GWS
  - Turbidity Meter was installed by EPS on the 26<sup>th</sup> May. Works have been completed and require inspection.
- Killaneran GWS
  - Awaiting quotations for the engagement of a Hydrogeologist.

### Measure 3 - Enhancement of Existing Schemes including Water Conservation

- Blackstairs GWS
  - Works on the By-pass infrastructure required for the treated water tank at the treatment plant in Corrageen, Rathnure have been rescheduled until 2021.

### Measure 5 - Transition of Existing Group Water Schemes and Group Sewerage Schemes

- Bing GSS
  - Agreement to be reached in regard to Road Re-instatement before Site Investigation quotations can be sought. Site investigation quotations expected to be sought once confirmation of numbers is received.
  - Part XI application on hold until Ecological Report complete

### Measure 6 - Community Connection Networks (Water)

- Battlestown CWC
  - Due to insufficient resident uptake, advised by group leader that scheme not expected to proceed.
  - Alternative solutions to resident issues currently being investigated.
- Ballinahask, Kilmuckridge CWC
  - Due to insufficient resident uptake, advised by group leader scheme not expected to proceed
- Crosstown GSS Scheme/Orchard Lane GSS
  - Awaiting confirmation from Irish Water on takeover of both schemes

## 4. Water Conservation



<p><b>Water Conservation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Countywide consumption to date, for June 2020 was on average 43.35MLD, a decrease of 1.1MLD from May 2020.</li> <li>➤ This represents a YTD average of 42.49MLD, which means we are currently outside our 2020 target of 41.84MLD</li> </ul>
<p><b>Leak Detection &amp; Repair</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Leak repairs are ongoing throughout the county. 40nr leak repairs were completed in June 2020.</li> <li>➤ Planned Leak detection and subsequent repairs were undertaken in Coolgreanny, Ballindaggin, Ballygarret, Enniscorthy, Wexford, Wellingtonbridge, and Duncormick.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Find &amp; Fix</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Capital funded leak reduction works has commenced in Enniscorthy in late June. Proposed enabling works were undertaken and 2nr dedicated leak detection crews commenced further investigations. A direct labour Repair Crew commenced in Enniscorthy in July 2020.</li> <li>➤ Leak Investigation enabling works were completed in Enniscorthy, Duncannon, Arthurstown, Fethard and Killag in June 2020.</li> </ul>

## ROADS & TRANSPORTATION

### NATIONAL ROADS

#### M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy PPP Scheme

##### **Covid-19 Site Closure**

Works are recommencing on site on a phased bases in order to close out any outstanding issues in relation to the project. It is expected that all programmed works will be completed by the end of July.

##### **M11, N80 Link and N30**

The M11, N80 Link and N30 are now open to traffic. Works in relation to fencing, landscaping drainage and general housekeeping will continue until contract completion.

##### **Side Roads**

Any outstanding works in relation to side roads will involve the installation of Traffic Management on a temporary basis to enable the works to be carried out safely.

##### **Liaison Office**

Wexford County Council is continuing to liaise with the public in relation to the scheme.

## **N25 New Ross By-Pass**

Finishing works are continuing on site following the lockdown in accordance with covid-19 guidelines in order to close out outstanding items. Works include finishing items on a number of side roads and the close out of minor items of accommodation works for landowners. Snagging inspections are continuing to ensure that all finishing works are completed to an acceptable standard. It is anticipated that finishing works will continue through the summer period.

The PPP Company continues to provide operation and maintenance services in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines. The 24/7 emergency contact number 1800 989090 will also continue to operate and respond to any emergencies. Wexford County Council's Project Liaison Officer remains available for consultation until the completion of the outstanding works.

## **N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour**

The public consultation on the constraints study and scheme options commenced on 6 July and runs until 3 August. Prior notice of the consultation event was advertised on local media and on the project website <http://oilgate2rosslareharbour.ie> and all consultation information was published on the project website in advance. In excess of 6,800 information brochures and Freepost feedback forms were also be distributed door to door in the study area in advance of the consultation. The project is aware that brochures were not successfully delivered to some properties. In these cases brochures are being posted out immediately as the project becomes aware of individual cases. Brochures are also available for collection in County Hall.

There has been a very high level of public engagement in the first week of the consultation with a very high volume of traffic on the website, and over 150 queries as well as over 50 feedback forms received in the first four days. Queries are being responded to on an individual basis by senior members of the project team.

Upon completion of the public consultation all feedback received will be considered and the detailed assessment of scheme options will commence. The project is committed to completing this assessment as expeditiously as possible in order to provide certainty on the preferred scheme option. It is anticipated that the preferred option will be announced and a report published very early in 2021. In the meantime the project team continues to perform their duties in line with Covid-19 restrictions and government advice, and will continue to address any project queries by phone or email via the contact details provided on the project website.

## **N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare and Rosslare Europort Access Road**

The public consultation on the constraints study and scheme options ended on 29 June. Three scheme options are under consideration, two of which are along the existing road corridor and one offline option which also utilises the Ballygerry Link Road. Over 70 consultation feedback forms have been received, these are currently being examined and a detailed assessment of the scheme options is underway. It is anticipated that the preferred scheme option will be identified in October and updates will be provided on the project website <http://rosslareeuroportaccessroad.ie>.

The project continues to consult closely with Irish Rail and Rosslare Europort as the scheme develops in parallel with plans for the future development of the Port.

The project team continues to perform their duties in line with Covid-19 restrictions and government advice, and will also continue to address any project queries by phone or email via the contact details provided on the project website.

## **2019 National Road Pavement Schemes**

The following scheme was awarded in 2019 but only commenced in 2020.

### **Pavement Repairs N25 Ring Road Wexford, N25 Orristown Junction Killinick**

This scheme was tendered in October 2019.

A contractor was appointed in November 2019.

This scheme was commenced on 2 June and was completed on 8 July.

## 2020 National Road Pavement Schemes

The 2020 TII road improvement allocation has been received from TII.

The following schemes will be carried out in 2020:

- N30 Mountelliot Pavement Scheme
- N11 Kileen to Newtown Phase 2 Pavement Scheme
- N25 New Ross Roundabout to Clonard Great Pavement Scheme
- N11 Ferns Pavement Scheme

### **N30 Mountelliot Pavement Scheme**

This scheme runs from the newly constructed Mountelliot Roundabout to the R731 Ballyanne junction in New Ross.

This scheme was tendered in May. The tender return date was 18 June.

Works should commence in early August with an 8 week construction programme.

### **N11 Kileen to Newtown Phase 2 Pavement Scheme**

This scheme runs from the Ferrycarrig Bridge to the Maldron roundabout on the N11.

Works are progressing on the tender documents. This scheme should be tendered in July.

Works should commence in September with a 12 week construction programme.

### **N25 Holmestown to Tomcool Pavement Scheme**

This scheme runs from Holmestown junction to Tomcool junction on the N25.

This scheme should be tendered in late July.

Works should commence in September with an 8 week construction programme.

### **N11 Ferns Pavement Scheme**

Preliminary archaeology investigations were carried out in 2019. Further archaeological investigations are underway. These are required to be carried out in advance of the pavement scheme going ahead. These investigations should be completed by 17 July.

The timing of the pavement scheme will become clearer once the archaeological investigations have been completed. It is expected that the pavement scheme will be tendered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the year.

Construction is likely to commence in the first quarter of 2021 with an 8 week construction programme.

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS

The Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations were announced on 21 January 2020. Wexford's allocation was €17,088,007, up €2,646,207 on 2019.

### Resurfacing/Strengthening

The strengthening programme (Machinery Yard) commenced in the Gorey-Kilmuckridge District on 21 February. It was postponed from 30 March to 18 May due to public health measures. The first phase of the Machinery Yard programme was completed on 18 June.

### ***Roads completed (macadam surfacing) in the last month were:***

English's Cross to Ballindoney Cross; Dunmain to Rathumney (both in New Ross District).

Ballyheige; Whitemill Road (both in Wexford District).

Drumgould to Castlegardens; Hospital Hill, Bunclody; (both in Enniscorthy District).

Redmondstown (Rosslare District).

***Roads completed (Road Recycling) in the last month were:***

Carrigbyrne to Newbawn; Ballyvergin to Adamstown; and Dunmain to Campile (all in New Ross District).

**Surface Dressing Works**

The surface dressing programme commenced in the Enniscorthy District on 22 June. Roads completed in the last month were:

Tinakilla; Castle Lane; Killabeg; Mangan; Curraghgraique; Ballinavoughran; Graigue Beg, Hand Hill; and Ballyrankin (all in Enniscorthy District).

Oldcourt; Dunbrody; Kilcloggan; Tintern; Rochestown Lane; Millquarter; and Lacken Cross to Newtown Commons (all in New Ross District).

**Community Involvement Schemes**

Two roads were completed within the last month.

Knockduff, Bree (Enniscorthy District); and Bridgetown to Ballyharty (Rosslare District)

**Local Improvement Schemes**

The Department of Rural and Community Development has approved €329,878 grant for County Wexford for 13 lanes. Successful applicants are currently being contacted.

**General Maintenance**

Drainage, patching and road surface repair works ongoing in all Districts.

**PUBLIC LIGHTING**

**Public Lighting LED Upgrade**

Over 7,000 lanterns have been upgraded to LED since the beginning of 2016.

It is hoped to upgrade the remaining 5,700 lanterns on ***non-National Roads*** and ***Housing Estates*** in 2020.

Design works are underway, with 50% of the lanterns already designed.

Installation is substantially completed Bunclody and New Ross.

The full scheme should be completed by late October.

Wexford County Council applied to TII to upgrade the remaining lights on ***National Roads*** to LED in 2020. The locations are listed below:

- N11 Oilgate
- N25 Kilrane and Rosslare Harbour
- N25 Ashfield cross Roundabout
- N25 Barntown
- N25 Larkins Cross
- N25 Balinabola
- N30 Clonroche
- N80 Ballycarney
- N80 Bunclody

TII approved all schemes on 16 April.

Lighting designs have been completed.

These nine schemes were tendered in four separate Lots.

Lots 1 to 3 have been awarded.

It is expected to have all nine sites upgraded by the end of October.



## 5. Finance:

### Audit Committee/Audit

The Audit Committee meetings have been resumed with the first meeting arranged for 15<sup>th</sup> July. The Local Government Auditor, Catherine Tuohy will also meet with the Audit Committee on this date to discuss the 2018 Accounts and associated Audit Report. The annual report from the Audit Committee to the members will be completed and submitted for consideration as soon as possible thereafter.

The 2019 Audit of Accounts by the Local Government Audit Service formally commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> July. This year's audit will be completed in line with government restrictions and guidelines as a result of the COVID-19 situation. \_

### COVID -19

The COVID 19 emergency continues to impact negatively on the finances of Wexford County Council across all income sources. The emergency also continues to impact on the council's ability to deliver budgeted & planned expenditure for the 2020 Operational and Capital expenditure programmes both in terms of time lost due to the crisis but more specifically due to the potential losses of income that support these programmes. In addition we continue to accumulate unplanned expenditure on our response to the crisis. (€760k at 6<sup>th</sup> July)

Details of the 3 Month Rates Waiver scheme for businesses forced to close from 27<sup>th</sup> March is still awaited but it expected that details will be announced shortly.

The focus, for the moment, continues to be firmly on cash flow and financial management as we continue to move through the crisis while also trying to assist our customers in as far as we can. July will see a return of many of the council services which will in turn result in an increase in expenditure as programmes recommence and this will place additional pressure on cash flow and when coupled with falling income it is likely that there will be increased reliance on overdraft in the short term. Planning towards our financial recovery can only really commence when we have some indication that there is a return to some level of normality and some indication of what if any funding will be provided to Local Government to deal with the costs of the crisis and more importantly the financial impact on local incomes.

54 Mortgage Customers have applied for the 3 Month Mortgage Break since it was implemented on 20<sup>th</sup> April as an option for customers struggling to pay their mortgages to the council. An online application is available on the Council's website to facilitate these applications. **Circular 18/2020 of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020** has confirmed a further mortgage payment break for local authority borrowers from 3 to 6 months. The Housing Loans section have updated our website with revised details of the Mortgage Break and are also reconnecting with the customers who are currently on a break to determine if they wish to extend their current break by the additional 3 months.

**Circular 19/2020 dated 6<sup>th</sup> July** has been received to notify local authorities of revised employment related eligibility criteria for RIHL (Rebuilding Ireland Housing Loans) applications to account for the impact of the COVID-19 situation. A copy of the circular has been circulated to members for reference. In summary specific changes include:

- In the case of temporary unemployment due to the COVID emergency (i.e. where an applicant was in receipt of PUP (Pandemic Unemployment Payment) the requirement for 2 years continuous employment for the principal earner and 1 year continuous for the second applicant has been relaxed temporarily where the applicant became unemployed as a result of the COVID situation and returns to work for a continuous period of 3 months post their COVID-19 unemployment. Approvals in principal cannot be progressed unless these criteria are met.
- In the case of applicants on the Temporary Wages Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) the continuous period of employment is not an issue as they continue to be "linked" to their employee. In these cases Local authorities can assess a loan application on pre-TWSS employment situation and income. However, approvals in principal cannot be progressed unless the applicant has returned to and remained at pre TWSS level with no recourse to TWSS support for at least three months.

Further details on the conditions are included in the circular letter.

## **Cash Flow/Overdraft**

Following council approval at the June meeting to an increased in temporary borrowing by way of Overdraft from €13m to €30m to deal with COVID related potential cash flow difficulties that may be facing the council ministerial sanction is being now sought for this increased overdraft level. In the meantime Ministerial Sanction is in place for borrowing by way of overdraft in the amount of €13m for the period to the 31st December, 2020.

**Tom Enright,  
Chief Executive.**



## **Circular 19/2020**

06 July 2020

### **COVID-19 – Amendment of Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans (RIHL) Credit Policy**

I am directed by Mr. Darragh O'Brien T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, to inform you of amendments to the RIHL Credit Policy employment related eligibility criteria to account for the impact of the COVID-19 situation. This updates the Credit Policy issued in conjunction with Circular 7/2018 on 31 January 2018.

The RIHL is open for applications and all local authorities should continue to receive and process applications subject to the considerations set out below. There is no question of a blanket ban on loans in the light of the Covid-19 situation. Local authorities should assess each application on a case by case basis with regard to the appropriate duration of post-Covid-19 situation employment for applicants impacted by Covid-19.

#### **Amendment of RIHL Credit Policy**

The RIHL Credit Policy is now amended with effect from the date of this Circular to provide for the treatment of applications from persons who;

- experienced temporary unemployment during COVID-19; or
- were on the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS).

The content of this circular applies, as appropriate, to applications already received and that are at various stages of processing/approval in addition to new applications. In particular, the Covid Guidance on Outstanding RIHL Applications and Approvals, previously issued on 21 May 2020, requested that local authorities should seek updated income and employment information from applicants already in the system. The principles set out in this circular should inform the approach to outstanding





applications and approvals where temporary unemployment and recourse to the TWSS have occurred.

### **Temporary Unemployment**

The RIHL Credit Policy currently stipulates that the primary earner must have at least two years continuous employment and the second applicant must have at least one year of continuous employment. It is recognised that the current Credit Policy could result in a large proportion of the workforce not being eligible to apply for the RIHL until at least 2 years' if they have suffered temporary COVID related unemployment.. The continuous employment criteria has been amended to allow for the economic impacts of COVID-19 by the insertion of a new Section 8.5 as detailed below:

#### *“Section 8.5 - Temporary Amendments in Light of Economic Impacts of COVID-19*

*In light of the COVID-19 situation, the requirement in Section 1.3 that a primary earner must have at least two years continuous employment and the second applicant must have at least one year of continuous employment can be relaxed temporarily. Periods where an applicant was unemployed as a direct result of the COVID-19 situation should not be deemed as a break in the required continuous employment and should be disregarded if the following conditions are met;*

- *The applicant confirms that they became unemployed in or after March 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 situation;*
- *The applicant became unemployed in or after March 2020 and returned to employment before 1 January 2021. Proof of receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), or other pandemic relevant scheme, should be provided. If another unemployment support was obtained, the applicant should explain why they did not access the PUP;*
- *The applicant must have resumed continuous employment for a period of at least three months post their COVID-19 unemployment. An applicant can apply before they completed the three months of post COVID-19 employment but any Approval in Principle granted must specify that they must have resumed continuous employment for a period of at least three months before any mortgage drawdown; and not experienced any material change in their income.*
- *On a case-by-case basis, applications where the period of continuous employment post-temporary Covid-19 related unemployment is less than*



*three months can be eligible, if the local authority considers that the particulars of the case warrant this approach, for example if the business of the applicant's employer is considered stable and there is no reason to expect another period of unemployment, subject to there being at least two years of employment overall.*

- *In the situation of joint applicants, where one applicant was employed as normal and one applicant was made unemployed due to the COVID-19 situation, it is possible for this joint application to be eligible. However, the assessment of borrowing and repayment capacity and final loan approval will be based only on the income of the employed applicant.*

### **Further Guidance for LAs on Treatment of Temporary Unemployment**

For the calculation of continuous employment, disregarding the period of COVID-19 unemployment, the applicant will still be required to have completed the required period of employment (i.e. two years continuous employment) in addition to any period of unemployment arising out of COVID 19. The applicant will need to demonstrate three months of employment undertaken post COVID-19 related unemployment. For example, the primary applicant would be eligible for a RIHL loan if; they worked continuously for all July 2018-Mar 2020, were unemployed all Apr-June 2020 and resumed work for all July-Sep 2020, as they would have had 24 months of employment, disregarding the Covid-19 break, and would have completed 3 months continuous employment post the break.

Scheme eligibility will continue to be based upon the income of both applicants. Therefore, local authorities need to be satisfied that any period of temporary unemployment does not bring joint applicants under the €75,000 income ceiling for a temporary period that would not normally apply if they had been in their normal employment.

### **Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme**

COVID-19 has also resulted in many employees being paid through the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS). While such employees technically meet the continuous employment criterion, their employment situation is predicated on a temporary scheme. Local authorities should therefore request confirmation from applicants as to whether their wages are currently supported by the TWSS, or any successor scheme.



The following text will be inserted to Section 8.5 – Temporary Amendments in light of COVID 19:

*“If the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme (TWSS) is supporting the applicant’s income, or was supporting the applicant’s income at any stage during the previous three months:*

- *Local authorities can assess the loan application based on the applicant’s pre-TWSS employment situation and income. However, any approval in principle of the loan should state that prior to any mortgage drawdown the applicant’s employment and income level must have returned to and remained at the pre-TWSS level specified in their application form without recourse by the employer to TWSS supports for at least three continuous months. Final loan approval will be based upon post TWSS income. Any material negative change to the applicant’s income may result in the loan approval being suspended, reduced or withdrawn.*
- *On a case-by-case basis, applications where the period of continuous employment post-TWSS is less than three months can proceed to drawdown, if the local authority considers that the particulars of the case warrant this approach, for example if the business of the applicant’s employer is considered stable and if there is no reason to expect a further period of reliance upon state support to pay wages.*
- *In the situation of joint applicants, where one applicant was employed as normal (without recourse to the TWSS) and one applicant was availing of TWSS due to the COVID-19 situation, any credit assessment and/or approval in principle must follow the principle that any loan drawdown that takes into account the income of the applicant on TWSS is conditional on the return of that applicant to their pre-TWSS income (or else is re-assessed based on their post-TWSS income). However, it is possible for this joint application to continue to drawdown based solely on the income of the applicant that was not in receipt of TWSS. In this case, the assessment of borrowing and repayment capacity and final loan approval will be based only on the income of the employed applicant, the income of the applicant on TWSS should be disregarded in relation to calculation of borrowing and repayment capacity.*

#### **Further Guidance for LAs on Treatment of TWSS**



It is important that applicants availing of the TWSS, which is a temporary response to an unprecedented situation, are not unduly excluded from applying from the RIHL. By engaging in the application process for the RIHL, an applicant will have the opportunity to assess their overall eligibility for the scheme, and evaluate their borrowing capacity in advance of their return to normal employment.

On the other hand the Department is also aware of the importance of ensuring that:

- lending by local authorities is advanced on a prudent basis;
- applicants do not have unrealistic expectations of the amount that they can borrow; and
- the administrative burden on local authorities is minimised.

Therefore, LAs should;

- Upon receiving an application for the RIHL, where an applicant is on TWSS, inform the applicant that any approval in principle they receive will be explicitly conditional on resuming employment on pre-TWSS rates for at least 3 continuous months before any loan can be approved. Applicants who do not feel that they will regain their pre-TWSS income in the near future should be advised that it may be better to apply later once their income situation has stabilised. Those applicants who are confident that they will return to pre-TWSS employment and income levels may wish to proceed with the application process. Alternatively, in joint applications where one applicant is on TWSS, the applicants may wish to apply based solely on the income of the non-TWSS applicant.
- The Approval in Principle (AIP) letter to the applicant should be clear that the final loan drawdown will be contingent upon the applicant demonstrating that they have an income equivalent to the income specified at time of application (pre-TWSS). Local authorities should contact relevant applicants and clarify for them that as they are in receipt of TWSS, or have been during the previous three months, that their AIP is based on their pre-TWSS income. They should also notify the applicant that before any mortgage drawdown based on this AIP, the applicant's employment situation must have returned to and remained at this pre TWSS level for at least three continuous months. It should be highlighted that borrowing and repayment capacities and final loan approval will be based upon post TWSS income, which each applicant will be required to



prove. Any material negative change to post-TWSS income may result in the loan approval being suspended, re-issued at a revised level or withdrawn.

- If an applicant provides updated income information (when they wish to proceed to drawdown) and in the LA's opinion their income situation has worsened materially (e.g. their post-TWSS income is lower than their pre-TWSS upon which they applied), the LA should send the revised information to the Housing Agency who will provide a revised recommendation in this situation. This also applies to joint applications where one applicant was not on the TWSS and the other one did not return to normal employment, the drawdown can proceed on the income of the non-TWSS applicant but a further Housing Agency credit assessment may be required to calculate the appropriate borrowing capacity of the applicants.

### ***Additional Documents***

A revised copy of the RIHL Credit Policy will be made available to assist practitioners in the Housing Manual at [www.housingmanual.ie](http://www.housingmanual.ie) . Authorities are reminded that the full Credit Policy is not publicly available due to commercial sensitivities, and that a redacted version of the Credit Policy is publicly available on [www.rebuildingirelandhomeloan.ie](http://www.rebuildingirelandhomeloan.ie) which will be updated to reflect this amendment.

In addition, COVID guidance on outstanding RIHL applications and approvals, previously sent on 21 May 2020, is attached. The document has been updated to indicate that the deadline to send in revised information for applications where circumstances have changed is 31/12/2020. After this date, an applicant must send in a new application if they wish to continue their application for a RIHL loan, but they will no longer be able to avail of the pre-14 January 2020 interest rate. The template Letter of Declaration of Circumstances and guidance on RIHL Applicant Meeting Mid and Post Covid-19, which issued on 21 May 2020, are also attached for ease of reference.

Please bring this circular to the attention of all staff working in the Housing and Finance areas. Any queries related to the amended Credit Policy may be made to [rebuildingirelandhomeloan@housing.gov.ie](mailto:rebuildingirelandhomeloan@housing.gov.ie)





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*Michael Hough*

Michael Hough