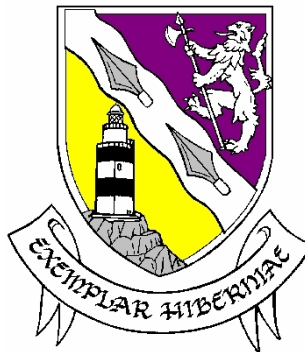


REVIEW

COUNTY WEXFORD

HOUSING



STRATEGY

2001 - 2006



APRIL 2004



TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Policy, Plans & Programmes.....	7
1. Planned Maintenance Programme.....	7
(a) Wexford County Council.....	7
(b) New Ross Town Council.....	8
(c) Wexford Borough Council.....	9
(d) Enniscorthy Town Council.....	10
2. Computerised Housing Systems.....	10
(a) PEMAC (Maintenance System).....	10
(b) EMOS (Application System).....	10
3. Estate Management Policy.....	11
(a) Wexford County Council.....	11
(b) Wexford Borough Council.....	12
(c) New Ross Town Council.....	12
4. Social Work Strategy.....	12
5. Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.....	13
Assessment of Housing Need.....	14
Housing Landbank.....	17
Multi-Annual Housing Construction / Acquisition Programme.....	18
Affordable Housing & Subsidised Sites.....	22

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Voluntary Housing Schemes	25
Housing Loans	27
Mortgage Allowance Scheme	28
Homeless Persons	29
Disabled Persons Grant	31
Essential Repairs Grant	32
Traveller Accommodation	33
Considerations	35
Conclusion	37
Bibliography	39

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Rented Housing Stock at 31/12/03	7
Table 2 - NRTC Housing Stock Survey Criteria	8
Table 3 - NRTC - Planned Maintenance Programme - Allocation of Finance.	9
Table 4 - Assessment of Housing Need 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2003.....	14
Table 5 - Analysis of Earners - Source: Assessment of Housing Needs 2002.....	15
Table 6 - Area of Choice and House Type Required at 28/03/02 - Wexford County Council Area	15
Table 7 - One Adult Households - Wexford County Council Area	16
Table 8 - Housing Land at 31/12/03	17
Table 9 - County-wide Landbank.....	18
Table 10 - Housing Construction / Acquisition Programme 2000 - 2003	19
Table 11 - Actual starts for 2003 - Breakdown Of Types Of Project	20
Table 12 - 2004 Housing Construction / Acquisition Programme.....	21
Table 13 - Affordable Housing - Completions to 31/12/03	22
Table 14 - Affordable Houses - In Planning / In Progress - Wexford County Council Area.....	23
Table 15 - Subsidised Sites - Completed / In Progress / In Planning - Wexford County Council Area	23
Table 16- Subsidised Sites - Completed - Wexford Borough Council Area.	24

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Table 17 - Affordable Housing Assessment of Need 30/05/03 - Wexford	
Local Authorities / Countywide	24
Table 18 - Housing Loan Applications Received 2001 - 2003 - Wexford Local	
Authorities / Countywide.....	28
Table 19 - Mortgage Allowance Scheme Statistics 2001 - 2003.....	28
Table 20 - Emergency Accommodation in Planning.....	29
Table 21 - Emergency Accommodation under Construction.....	30
Table 22 - Summary of Current Emergency Accommodation.....	30
Table 23 - DPG / ERG Funding Shortfall at 31/12/03	32
Table 24 - DPG / ERG applications received 2000 - 2003	33
Table 25 - Accommodation provided under the Traveller Accom.	
Programme at 31/12/03.....	34
Table 26 - Part V Applications Received at 31/01/04.....	36
Table 27 - Projected Population Increase 2002 - 2016	37

INTRODUCTION

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 required all Planning Authorities to prepare Housing Strategies and to incorporate these into their Development Plans by August 2001. The Housing Strategy now being reviewed was adopted in July 2001 as a first report to Wexford County Council, and was prepared as a joint strategy between Wexford County Council, Wexford Borough Council, New Ross Town Council and Enniscorthy Town Council. This review will provide the opportunity for the strategy to be updated in view of the progress achieved or where new or revised housing needs have been identified.

The Planning & Development Acts 2000 & 2002 Part V enables Local Authorities to acquire social and affordable housing, land or a financial contribution from developers of land zoned for residential use.

The objectives of this review are to:

1. Update the statistical base of the strategy
2. Present an overview of the activities of the Housing Authorities since 2001
3. Consider and address the issue of home affordability in the county
4. Adapt to recent national and local policies and programmes
5. Affirm the conclusions on the imposition and use of Part V
6. Prepare for and inform the Housing Action Plan for the county 2004 - 2008

POLICY, PLANS & PROGRAMMES

In addition to the programmes and initiatives outlined in Section 1.2 of *County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 - 2006*, the following initiatives and policies have been implemented.

1. Planned Maintenance Programme

The rented housing stock in the County at 31/12/03 was 3227 units and is broken down as follows:

Rented Housing Stock	
Local Authority	Units
Wexford County Council	1748
Wexford Borough Council	789
Enniscorthy Town Council	346
New Ross Town Council	344
Total	3227

Table 1 - Rented Housing Stock at 31/12/03

(a) Wexford County Council

Wexford County Council recognises the need to provide our clients with quality housing, a comfortable and secure place to live and to build houses to modern standards in keeping with latest building regulations.

It is the objective of Wexford County Council to bring all its housing stock up to modern standards by carrying out a programme of planned maintenance. The estimated cost of the planned maintenance programme is €6,430,000. A sum of

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

€1,000,000 by way of a loan was provided by Wexford County Council in 2003 and 2004 to commence the planned maintenance programme. This sum is in addition to the response housing maintenance budget. A total of 259 Council houses received replacement windows and doors in 2003. The planned maintenance programme will be continued in 2004 with a further €1,000,000 expenditure. Part V contributions will also co-fund the planned maintenance programme.

(b) New Ross Town Council

New Ross Town Council has in excess of 360 units in its housing stock. In 2003 it carried out a Housing Stock Survey in which its stock was examined under the following criteria:

NRTC - Housing Stock Survey Criteria	
1	Age of House
2	Condition of
	i. Windows
	ii. Doors
	iii. Insulation
	iv. Heating
	v. Roofing
3	The tenant was also considered as regards age

Table 2 - NRTC Housing Stock Survey Criteria

All the information collected was then assimilated into a database that allowed examination by the various categories. It became apparent that in certain cases where the houses were in excess of 25 years old substantial repairs / maintenance was required.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

The scheme came into operation in 2003 with €50,000 allocated to it in the annual budget. The Council Members came up with a scheme of who should receive the new windows etc. The Area Engineer then ordered what was required to meet the needs of those who met the criteria as set by the councillors through the scheme. The initial plan was to allocate an amount each year as follows:

NRTC - PMP Allocation of Finance	
Year	€
2003	50,000
2004	75,000
2005	100,000
2006	125,000
2007	150,000
Total	500,000

Table 3 - NRTC - Planned Maintenance Programme - Allocation of Finance

While attending a seminar on the Planning and Development Act 2000 - Part V - the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government informed New Ross Town Council that in certain cases Part V contributions could be used where there was a planned maintenance programme and where it is matched euro for euro by the local authority.

New Ross Town Council hopes this year to spend €100,000 on planned maintenance, that is €50,000 from its own resources and €50,000 from Part V contributions.

(c) Wexford Borough Council

Wexford Borough Council intend carrying out a survey with a view to implementing a Planned Maintenance Programme.

(d) Enniscorthy Town Council

Enniscorthy Town Council have commenced a survey of housing stock with a view to implementing a Planned Maintenance Programme.

2. Computerised Housing Systems

(a) PEMAC (Maintenance System)

Wexford County Council has implemented a computerised maintenance management system to assist in the control and management of housing maintenance. The system has a central database of the complete Council housing stock and is accessible via the wide area network in the Area Offices as well as County Hall. All requests for repairs and maintenance are entered on the central database and a record is kept on the system. Thus a maintenance history will be available for every house. The computerised system will help the Council make best use of its limited resources and also improve the quality of the service to our customers. This will be implemented in the urban local authorities also.

(b) EMOS (Application System)

The Council has implemented a computerised housing application system to assist in the management of the demand and need for social and affordable housing within the local authorities functional area. The system is accessible via the wide area network in the Area Offices as well as County Hall. All housing applicant information is recorded on the system including area of choice and type of accommodation sought. The system assists our four Area Housing Officers in speedy assessment of applicants. Further it provides valuable information on the demand for housing in the county which forms the basis for purchase of land and our Multi-Annual Housing Construction Programme.

3. Estate Management Policy

(a) Wexford County Council

An Estate Management Policy has been adopted by Wexford County Council. It is proposed that this policy will be adopted by the urban authorities in 2004. The Council's Area Housing Officers promote greater participation by occupiers in the management of their own estates through the following initiatives:

- Encourage families in new estates to work in partnership with Wexford County Council by highlighting the importance of forming a residents association, and by putting in place structures that allow community decision making to develop. This enables residents to become more proactive in contributing to the development of their community. There are currently 80 residents associations countywide.
- Establish a presence on the ground, visit estates and attend residents association meetings on a regular basis.
- Facilitate groups to seek assistance from other Government, Non-Government and Voluntary bodies.
- Coordinate and monitor the delivery of all Housing Department services and liaise with the other departments in relation to the delivery of their services.
- Organise and facilitate pre-tenancy training courses for families.
- The establishment of a countywide Residents Forum.
- The publication of a Tenants handbook.
- By taking very serious and proactive action against anti-social behaviour.

(b) Wexford Borough Council

Wexford Borough Council proposes to employ a Tenant Liaison Officer to implement an estate management policy.

(c) New Ross Town Council

New Ross Town Council has availed of a Tenant Participation Officer with the co-operation of the Community Warden Service. This allows a community warden to carry out the functions of a Tenant Participation Officer two days a week. As the Town Council can only avail of this service on this limited basis it was decided to concentrate on housing estates within the town which are perceived to have issues with community involvement. This has been in operation since the beginning of 2004 and so far has assisted residents in two estates in setting up Resident Associations, which in turn will lead to increased community involvement.

4. Social Work Strategy

A Social Work Strategy has been adopted by the County Council. The objectives of the Social Work Unit are as follows:

- Responding to referrals made by elected members, colleagues, other statutory and voluntary agencies and the general public.
- Ensuring that vulnerable people are identified by the Housing Officers in the Assessment of Need and are informed and advised appropriately of options and services suited to their needs.
- The promotion of family life and community development by providing ongoing support to tenants through home visits and attendance at Resident Association meetings.
- Helping reduce the extent and effects of social segregation.

- Enabling a prompt and adequate response to accommodation needs of homeless people.
- Assisting in the provision of suitable housing and halting site accommodation for the Travelling Community.
- Promoting the provision of accommodation that respects the person's cultural identity and is suitable to their long term needs.

5. Anti-Social Behaviour Unit

Under the Housing Management Initiative Grant Scheme 2003, an approval was granted for the establishment of an Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in Wexford County Council. This unit is now in operation.

The purpose of establishing such a unit is to have dedicated personnel to:

- Investigate complaints of anti-social behaviour
- Investigate breaches of tenancy
- Attend court to give evidence when required
- Mediate on resident conflicts and other related issues
- Liase with tenant/resident groups
- Liase with other sections of the Housing Department
- Develop and maintain a working relationship with An Garda Siochana – South Eastern Health Board and other agencies or groups on the issue of anti-social behaviour

The benefits of such a unit includes:

- Offer a structured system for members of the public to report incidents of anti-social behaviour in a confidential and secure environment.
- Assist in early prevention of anti-social behaviour, thereby leading to a reduction of homelessness through eviction from a Local Authority house.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

- Improving co-ordination and co-operation between the Local Authority, Statutory Bodies, i.e. Gardaí, Health Boards and non-statutory bodies through shared information
- Empower Residents to take moral ownership of estates that they live in
- Provision of a better quality of life for all residents in Wexford County Council housing estates, through the reduction in incidents of anti-social Behaviour and the implementation of the Estate Management Policy.

ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING NEED

Under Section 9 of the Housing Act 1988, each Housing Authority is required to carry out periodic assessments of the need for the provision by item, of adequate and suitable housing accommodation.

The assessment of needs was completed by the four local authorities in Wexford on the 31st March 2002. The overall net assessment of needs for social rented housing accommodation is as follows:

Assessment of Housing Need				
	1996	1999	2002	2003
Wexford County Council	543	699	992	1748
Enniscorthy	164	223	267	267 <i>E</i>
New Ross	116	133	376	395 <i>E</i>
Wexford Borough Council	319	337	433	448
<i>E - Estimated</i>				
Total	1142	1392	2068	2858

Table 4 - Assessment of Housing Need 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2003

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

This can be broken down into an analysis of earning capacity:

Analysis of Earners			
Local Authority	Earner	Non Earner	Total
Wexford County Council	268	724	992
Enniscorthy Town Council	66	201	267
New Ross Town Council	116	260	376
Wexford Borough Council	107	326	433
Total	557	1511	2068

Table 5 - Analysis of Earners - Source: Assessment of Housing Needs 2002

Wexford County Council has carried out an in depth analysis for the social housing need of its 992 applicants based on applicants' area of choice and house type required, divided into the 4 electoral areas. This is summarised in Table 6 below:

Area of Choice and House Type Required at 28/03/02					
Electoral Area	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom	Total No.
Enniscorthy	2	88	102	6	198
Gorey	18	177	80	6	281
New Ross	35	66	74	11	186
Wexford	85	126	113	3	327
Total	140	457	369	26	992

Table 6 - Area of Choice and House Type Required at 28/03/02 - Wexford County Council Area

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Societal trends are also reflected in the assessment of needs and it is noted that 71% of total applicants are of one adult households as detailed in Table 7 below:

One Adult Households	
Lone Female Households	100
Lone Female Households with children	439
Lone Male Households	152
Lone Male Households with children	17
Total Number of one adult households	708

Table 7 - One Adult Households - Wexford County Council Area

Further information of note:

- (a) Of the number of applicants assessed, 23% are employed, 35% unemployed, 30% lone parent support only, 6% FÁS/Back to Work, and 6% pensioners.
- (b) The analysis of existing tenure shows 50% of applicants currently living in private rented accommodation.
- (c) 86 Traveller households are assessed as requiring social housing.
- (d) The number of applicants who are non-nationals from outside the EU amount to 9.
- (e) 59% of total applicants household income is below €10,000.

The Council recognised the societal trends and the Housing Construction Programme and housing types provided will reflect the ongoing changing family structures, in particular the need to provide housing for elderly, single persons and the homeless in addition to the standard family house type.

HOUSING LANDBANK

Wexford County Council Housing Land at 31/12/03	
Location	Acres
Adamstown	3
Ballaghkeen	3
Boolavogue	7
Bridgetown	2
Bunclody	12
Clonroche	6
Coolcotts	17.75
Crossabeg	3
Enniscorthy	42
Gorey	58
Kilcorral	5
Monamolin	1.5
New Ross	31
Oilgate	8
Park	7
Rosslare Strand	12.25
Taghmon	10
Taylorstown	7
Total	235.5

Table 8 - Housing Land at 31/12/03

County-wide Landbank	
Local Authority	Acres
Wexford Borough Council	20
Enniscorthy Town Council	20
New Ross Town Council	9
Total	49

Table 9 - County-wide Landbank

Land is also to be used for roads, parks, amenities and open spaces.

MULTI-ANNUAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION / ACQUISITION PROGRAMME

Under the Multi-Annual Housing Programme 2000 - 2003 Wexford Local Authorities were granted approval for the construction 940 dwellings countywide. Wexford County Council exceeded its construction target by completing 533 units of accommodation and is in a position to continue this progress under the next Multi-Annual Housing Programme.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Local Authority	Starts for 2000- 2003	Starts Commenced in:				Overall Total Starts	Completions 2000 - 2003
		2000	2001	2002	2003		
Enniscorthy Town Council	100	22	30	46	17	115	116
New Ross Town Council	130	32	17	28	0	77	82
Wexford Borough Council	190	5	70	7	28	110	109
Wexford County Council	520	109	174	116	138	537	533
Total	940	168	291	197	183	839	840

Table 10 - Housing Construction / Acquisition Programme 2000 - 2003

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Local Authority	Construction of Single/Rural Dwellings	Purchase of 2nd Hand Houses	Sheltered Accom. for Homeless	LA Construction Projects	Turnkey		Part V	Total
					Projects	Acquisitions		
Enniscorthy Town Council	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	17
New Ross Town Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wexford Borough Council	0	3	0	6	19	0	0	28
Wexford County Council	15	6	2	115	0	0	0	138
Total	15	9	2	138	19	0	0	183

Table 11 - Actual starts for 2003 - Breakdown Of Types Of Project

2004 Housing Construction / Acquisition programme						
Local Authority	Single Rurals	Purchases	Part V	Construction	Turnkey	Total
Enniscorthy Town Council	0	2	0	21	0	23
Wexford Borough Council	0	11	11	28	12	62
Wexford County Council	12	10	0	230	26	278
New Ross Town Council	0	2	0	113	0	115
Total	12	25	11	392	38	478

Table 12 - 2004 Housing Construction / Acquisition Programme

The above programme has been submitted to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and is subject to approval.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & SUBSIDISED SITES

The Affordable Housing and private Subsidised Sites projects undertaken by the Local Authorities in Co. Wexford were initiated under the 1999 Affordable Housing Scheme under which land from existing landbank was used or the land cost was recouped from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Progress to date is outlined as follows:

Affordable Housing - Completed to 31/12/03	
Location	No of Units
Enniscorthy Town Council	38
New Ross Town Council	7
Wexford County Council	121
Rosslare Harbour	19
Castlebridge	38
Gorey	64
Total	166

Table 13 - Affordable Housing - Completions to 31/12/03

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Affordable Housing - In Planning/In Progress		
Location	In Progress	In Planning
Castlebridge	42	
Gorey		20
Coolcotts		44
Creagh		118
Cherryorchard		18
Castlemoyle		22
Total	42	222

Table 14 - Affordable Houses - In Planning / In Progress - Wexford County Council Area

Subsidised Sites - Wexford County Council					
Completed	No	In Progress	No	In Planning	No
Castlebridge	6	Gorey	6	Bunclody	6
Taghmon	8	Carrig-on-Bannow	6	Rosslare	10
Clonroche	6			Enniscorthy	12
New Ross	5			Gorey	16
				Bunclody	6
Total	25	Total	12	Total	50

Table 15 - Subsidised Sites - Completed / In Progress / In Planning - Wexford County Council Area

Subsidised Sites - 2001 to 2003 - Wexford Borough Council	
Completed	No.
Wexford Borough Council Area	11

Table 16- Subsidised Sites - Completed - Wexford Borough Council Area

A countywide assessment of the need for Affordable Housing was carried out in May 2003. The following table sets out the breakdown of the total of 274 applicants.

Countywide Demand for Affordable Housing at 30th May 2003	
Area	Units
Wexford District	177
Gorey District	61
Enniscorthy District	24
New Ross District	12
Total	274

Table 17 - Affordable Housing Assessment of Need 30/05/03 - Wexford Local Authorities / Countywide

Since May 2003 a further 80 applications have been received. The total number of Affordable Housing applicants in Co. Wexford at 29/02/04 is 354.

The analysis of the housing market in Co. Wexford carried on behalf of Wexford County Council by Patrick R. Corish F.I.A.V.I indicates that “the average price of a 3-bed semi-detached house in Co. Wexford is €170,000”.¹ The affordability gap based on the average single income affordable housing application in Co. Wexford is €55,000. The affordability gap based on maximum local authority loan is €40,000. House prices increased by 155% in Co. Wexford in the period 1996 - 2002 with a further 13% increase recorded in 2003. The report further indicates that house prices may continue to increase in 2004 and 2005.

An increase in affordable housing output, through the use of Part V resources, is required to supplement existing schemes, in order to keep pace with the established and projected demand for affordable housing.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING SCHEMES

The voluntary housing sector involvement in the provision of social housing accommodation has been increasing steadily since the adoption of the Housing Strategy. There are currently 17 Capital Assistance Schemes (CAS) and 10 Loan Subsidy Schemes (LSS) in operation in the County with another 20 schemes at design or construction stages. The 440 units of accommodation currently available is an 86% increase on the number of units available when the Housing Strategy was adopted in 2001.

In view of the increasing level of activity in this sector, the Department of the Environment & Local Government updated and consolidated previous guidelines in relation to voluntary housing schemes in 2002. The revised guidelines contain detailed requirements for the assessment of capital loan funding applications in

¹ *Analysis of County Wexford Housing Market: Demand, Supply and Market Trends*; Patrick Raymond Corish FIAVI MSc, Raymond E. Corish & Co Ltd., Custom House Quay, Wexford; Page 27.

relation to these schemes. Wexford County Council is required to assess funding applications on technical, housing needs, and value for money grounds prior to approval and submission to the Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, for funding sanction.

In October 2003 Wexford County Council prioritised voluntary housing schemes to ensure that people who appear to have least accommodation options and who are urgently in need of accommodation, receive first priority from the voluntary housing sector as outlined below.

1. People with disabilities and special needs
2. Homeless persons
3. Elderly persons
4. Families

Family type housing will be provided by approved housing associations through the following development options:

1. Part V Agreements
2. In partnership with Co. Wexford Local Authorities
3. Direct provision

The Council's strategy is to continue to develop links with the Voluntary Housing Sector and to assist it in meeting the housing needs in the County, in conjunction with future years of the Multi-Annual Programmes.

HOUSING LOANS

The Council continues to proactively assist potential house purchasers to achieve home-ownership by promoting the loans schemes on offer to facilitate the transition to home ownership.

The demand for loans increased considerably during 2001 and 2002 as the construction of affordable housing schemes commenced. The demand has decreased in 2003 due to the substantial rise in house prices and the resulting gap in affordability between house prices and our clients ability to borrow. As prices being paid for houses has continued to rise there has been no corresponding increase in borrowers income and therefore the capacity of borrowers to fund mortgages to purchase houses has remained static and in most cases reduced. This affordability gap is highlighted by a recent survey on Demand, Supply and Market Trends, conducted on behalf of Wexford County Council which indicated the average price of a 3 bed semi in the Wexford area to be €170,000 while the maximum loan available by regulation is €130,000 – a gap of €40,000.

An increased supply of affordable housing will be the primary source of loan applications in the short to medium term unless there is a significant narrowing of the affordability gap, i.e. a reduction in house prices or an increase in borrowers income.

Applications Received			
Loan Type	2001	2002	2003
SDAA	24	17	17
Shared Ownership	40	42	13
Tenant Purchase	21	20	20
Affordable Housing	34	81	32
Improvement Loans	8	11	2
Total	127	173	84

Table 18 - Housing Loan Applications Received 2001 - 2003 - Wexford Local Authorities / Countywide

MORTGAGE ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Wexford County Council has promoted the Mortgage Allowance Scheme whereby tenants of local authorities and voluntary housing groups who surrender their dwellings can avail of a grant of €11,450 payable over the 1st 5 years of a mortgage on a private dwelling. Table 19 below outlines the situation regarding applications and approvals with any unapproved applications currently at various stages of approval.

Mortgage Allowance Scheme Statistics			
Year	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Not Approved	Number of Applications Completed
2001	14	2	10
2002	21	0	19
2003	20	1	11

Table 19 - Mortgage Allowance Scheme Statistics 2001 - 2003

HOMELESS PERSONS

The Council continued the implementation of the Action Plan as provided for in the Integrated Strategy for Homelessness in County Wexford, which was adopted by both Wexford County Council and urbans on August 2002. The strategy was prepared by the Homeless Forum comprising of representatives from both the statutory and voluntary organisations.

The 3 year Action Plan includes the following objectives for the county:

- Local Authorities to provide transitional housing as part of the normal housing construction activities for the period of the multi-annual programme
- Voluntary Organisations to provide emergency accommodation in the four electoral areas.

	Provider	Type of Accommodation	Number of Units
1	Cluid & Focus Ireland	Sheltered accommodation to include family & hostel type accommodation	To Be Agreed

Table 20 - Emergency Accommodation in Planning

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Outlined below in Table 21 a summary of Emergency Accommodation under construction:

	Provider	Type of Accommodation	Number of Units
1	St. Vincent de Paul, Esmonde St., Gorey	Men Only	6
		Family Acc	4
2	Women's Refuge in		
	(a) Gorey	Transitional	1 house
	(b) Bunclody	Housing	1 house

Table 21 - Emergency Accommodation under Construction

Outlined below in Table 22 is a summary of current Emergency Accommodation:

	Provider	Type of Accommodation	Number of Units
1	Respond, Westlands, Wexford	Family	6
2	Women's Refuge, Distillery Road, Wexford	Women & Children, Domestic Violence	4 (22 beds)
3	St. Vincent de Paul, Women's Hostel, Wexford	Women & Children	4
4	St. Vincent de Paul, Ozanam House, Wexford	Men Only	22
Total Number of Units			34

Table 22 - Summary of Current Emergency Accommodation

Other services include:

- Mobile Homes are provided in particular circumstances including house fire and flooding events.
- Bed & Breakfast accommodation is only used in exceptional cases where there is no emergency accommodation available.

DISABLED PERSONS GRANT

A review of the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme was completed in 2003 in view of the need to improve the grant service, accurately assess applicants' needs, address the funding shortfall, and to clarify the terms of the schemes. The Council introduced the following measures in this regard:

1. Prioritisation of Disabled Persons grant applications.
2. Two levels of Disabled Persons grant funding
3. Revised medical and disability assessments
4. Consideration of means
5. List of approved contractors

The review has been successful in that the main objective was to ensure that the applicants most in need of grants will benefit from the funding available.

Significant improvements have become apparent as a result of the revised medical and occupational therapist assessments, thereby ensuring that approved works are suitable to meet the disabled persons needs.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

The current scale of demand is indicated in the table below.

	Grant Estimate 2004	Number of unapproved grants	Value at 31/12/2003	Unpaid grants at 31/12/2003	Value of unpaid grants
DPG	€750,000	223	€1,824,767	48	€444,100
ERG	€293,000	62	€ 498,793	31	€251,767

Table 23 - DPG / ERG Funding Shortfall at 31/12/03

More detailed assessment of applications including consideration of means has resulted in a reduction in the number of grant applications in 2003. The Council will continue to review the grant scheme as required in order to meet the housing needs of disabled persons who require house modifications subject to available funding.

ESSENTIAL REPAIRS GRANT

The Essential Repairs Grant Scheme was also reviewed in 2003. While no changes were made to the scheme, the allocation of grant funding was approved by the Council on the basis of the urgency and extent of the repairs required. Alternative options such as sheltered or local authority housing and improvement works in lieu of rehousing, will be considered where appropriate to resolve the accommodation needs of grant applicants in the event of funding shortfalls or prohibitive cost of repairs.

The number of Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs grant applications received in recent years is outlined in the Table below.

Grants	2000	2001	2002	2003
Disabled Persons	110	178	203	108
Essential Repairs	27	76	96	38
Total Grants	137	254	299	146

Table 24 - DPG / ERG applications received 2000 - 2003

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The Traveller Accommodation Programme, which was adopted by the Council in February 2000 outlines proposals for the accommodation of 249 Traveller families. The Council reviewed the plan in September 2001 and approved locations for 92 units of Traveller accommodation within areas identified in the programme. These units of accommodation included 42 houses, 30 permanent bays, 10 temporary bays and 10 transient bays. The halting site element of the programme is at present subject to review as requested by Wexford County Council in September 2003.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

The following accommodation has been provided to 31/12/03 for families included in the Traveller Accommodation Programme:

Traveller Accommodation provided at 31/12/03	
Standard Local Authority Houses	30
Halting Site Refurbishment / Extension	12
Temporary Halting Site Bays	3
Single Instance Houses	4
Voluntary Housing	4
Group Housing Schemes	15
Local Authority (WCC) Loans	5
Self Housed	39
Total	112

Table 25 - Accommodation provided under the Traveller Accom. Programme at 31/12/03

Notwithstanding provision of accommodation in light of the assessment of needs / current Census (November 2003) which identified 384 Traveller families in the County, the issue of accommodation needs again to be urgently reviewed with a view to meeting current / future needs. It is projected in light of the increase of 200 families in the last 11 years that the current number of families will by 31/12/06 increase to 480.

CONSIDERATIONS

The schedule of lands shows that there are 284.5 acres of Housing land. However some portions of this land would not be regarded as suitable for immediate development for various reasons. In addition the Council owns substantial lands in the environs of the four large urban areas. Bases on the recent assessment and established need throughout the county, the availability of lands on a dispersed basis throughout the County is urgently needed to address the overall housing needs. In order to achieve this objective, consideration should be given to direct purchase through the Councils Land Acquisitions Officer or to use the C.P.O. procedure.

There was little or no activity in residential development under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2002 up to 31/12/03. The Wexford County Council prepared a guidance document for developers / agents and established an in-house operations team to meet and negotiate with developers.

The previous tables do not include affordable houses or sites that may be acquired under Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 - 2002. Land costs associated with projects in progress and in planning must now be recouped from the proceeds of contributions made under Part V.

Although the local authorities of Co. Wexford have not yet acquired houses or land under Part V, discussions have taken place with approximately 60 developers / landowners and negotiations are nearing completion with a number of parties. Some agreements have been made regarding financial contributions.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

Part V Applications Received				
	At pre-planning stage	Planning Applications Submitted	Planning Permission Granted	Total
Wexford County Council	10	16	14	40
Enniscorthy Town Council	0	0	1	1
New Ross Town Council	2	2	4	8
Wexford Borough Council	2	8	2	12
Total	14	26	21	61

Table 26 - Part V Applications Received at 31/01/04

The 2002 Census shows a historic increase in the population in the County. A study of the 2002 Census indicates that the South East region has increased its population by 8.14% since the 1996 Census to 423,540. This shows that the population of the region is increasing at a faster pace than the country. Within the region, Co. Wexford experienced the highest % increase in population of the region increasing by 11.7% or 12,172 people since 1996, bringing the number of people residing within the county to 116,543, the highest since the 1881 census.²

² *Preliminary population results from Census 2002*; Research Officer, Community and Enterprise Section, Wexford County Council and CSO; July 2002.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

The projected population increase in the period 2002 - 2016 is set out in the following table: ³

Co. Wexford - Projected Population Increase 2002 - 2016				
Area	2002	2006	2011	2016
Wexford County	116596	123980	130950	138250

Table 27 - Projected Population Increase 2002 - 2016

Demographic trends such as ageing population, families, post nuclear family formations, immigration into Co. Wexford and repatriation, place increased and sometimes new demands on housing services, to increase performance on outputs in a balanced approach to building social mix.

CONCLUSION

While the supply of housing solutions, i.e. access to a range of housing supports, has increased substantially, the demand for housing services continues to grow. This supply is becoming more constrained by lack of services, availability of land at reasonable prices and increased management & planning obligations on the Housing Authorities. The Housing Authorities must use the full range of initiatives open to them, to deliver the solutions needed for the people of the County. It is accepted that Private Sector housing developments have a valuable part to play in the development of acceptable solutions for the welfare of society. Accordingly, Wexford Housing Authorities will continue to take a uniform 20% of

³ *Population Change and its Implications for County Wexford*; Peter Bacon & Associates; Wexford; July 2003; Page 10.

County Wexford Housing Strategy 2001 – 2006 Review

all private housing development through localised arrangements that deliver feasible solutions that must be in accordance with the Housing Plan.

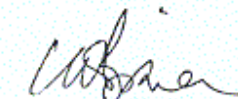
The Housing Strategy will continue to be implemented in a planned approach through a process of discussion and negotiation that culminate in a binding agreement between the Housing Authorities and private developers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Analysis of County Wexford Housing Market: Demand, Supply and Market Trends*; Patrick Raymond Corish FIAVI MSc, Raymond E. Corish & Co Ltd., Custom House Quay, Wexford; February 2004.
- *Population Change and its Implications for County Wexford*; Peter Bacon & Associates, Wexford; July 2003.
- *Preliminary population results from Census 2002*; Research Officer, Community and Enterprise Section, Wexford County Council and CSO; July 2002.



Eddie Breen
County Manager
Wexford County Council



Kieran O'Brien
Director of Service
Housing & Community Development