Five years ago one issue dominated the election debate in Co. Wexford – the very real threat to the future of our Accident and Emergency service at Wexford General Hospital.

In the 2011 General Election, I made Wexford General the central issue of my campaign, to ensure 24 hour A&E service and build a state of the art Accident and Emergency unit.

Five years later both objectives have been achieved. Six months after I was appointed a member of cabinet, over €20 million was secured for Wexford Hospital, and for good measure a new maternity suite has also been built at the hospital.

In the most difficult of economic times, the greatest progress has been made in ensuring Wexford gets the acute hospital services it deserves. The €20 million project has transformed accident and emergency services and for the first time, world class facilities are available for the people of Wexford and the staff at Wexford General.

Brendan Howlin TD

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform

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DRAMATIC FALL IN UNEMPLOYMENT

The most recent CSO figures show we have had an increase of 3% in the number of people in employment in the year to the end of June. Some 1,300 new jobs are being added every week. Our current national unemployment rate is 9.4%, which is a similar level to France and the lowest in Ireland since 2009.

Locally unemployment fell by 10.5% in Wexford town since this time last year, with a total fall of 24.2% in the county since this Government took office in 2011. Since 2011 4,691 people have left the live register and in the past 12 months 1,500 people have come off the live register in Co. Wexford. We are going in the right direction, local jobs are being created, the action plan for jobs is working, and investment in infrastructure is bearing fruit.

OVER 1300 JOBS A WEEK BEING CREATED

ATHENAEUM TO BE RESTORED TO FORMER GLORY

The building, which dates from the 1890s, was the headquarters for the Enniscorthy Volunteers during the 1916 Easter Rising and has a very rich history. The Athenaeum was the last garrison to surrender in the country and there are several events planned for the historic building. Enniscorthy is just one of five locations to have been selected as a venue for a state.

Commenting on this allocation Minister Howlin said – “I look forward to seeing this building restored for the locals of Enniscorthy and for visitors to the area. A wreath laying ceremony will take place here in 2016, in recognition of the importance of the events which took place in Enniscorthy.”
World class facilities for Wexford Gardaí

Work has begun in Mulgannon on the new Garda Divisional Headquarters. The contemporary building design of this new Headquarters will transform a derelict site in a key area of Wexford town. The project will generate nearly 250 jobs during its construction phase. It will provide world class facilities to An Garda Síochána after many years of labouring in unsuitable and overcrowded conditions.

Garda Commissioner Nóirín O’Sullivan said:

“This is a very welcome development for Gardaí based in the south-east of the country. It is vital that as a 21st Century police service, Wexford Gardaí have facilities that meet the requirements of the communities we serve.”

“Victims of crime deserve to be engaged within a modern welcoming environment, and I look forward to the new station in Wexford providing that very function. In addition Wexford Gardaí will have facilities that will enable them to continue to provide the highest level of service and protection to the communities in the Wexford area, and this investment also highlights the progressive nature of policing in modern Ireland.”

Johnstown Castle set for Royal treatment

€7 million investment set to turn Johnstown into iconic cultural attraction.

Johnstown Castle and Gardens are set to receive a major make over in the coming year which will see the iconic and historic Wexford beauty spot become a national attraction. The investment will restore the Castle to its former glory, enhance the gardens and lakes and further develop the Irish Agricultural Museum.

The development will turn the Castle into a leading attraction, offering an unrivalled location for Weddings and other events. It is also envisaged that music and cultural festivals would be planned for the grounds.

The project will be developed in an environmentally sustainable way, utilising the historic landscape and castle to create an enhanced cultural experience.
Transforming Education

€50 million for Wexford Schools

Co. Wexford is set for a building spree in the coming months, with over €50 million being earmarked for new school buildings and school modernisations.

Wexford CBS

The town centre Wexford CBS is set for an €11 million modernisation, with both the primary and secondary schools currently being completely transformed. The development will accommodate a new special needs unit, a guidance suite, a music and drama room, a lecture hall, a library, new science laboratories and an advanced PE hall, which will include a fitness suite and seven new ball courts.

Wexford Loreto

Wexford Town is to see the development of a brand new state of the art Loreto secondary school. The exciting new development, which will cater for 900 students will be set on a 10 acre site and Pembroke Hill, Killeens, on the outskirts of the Town.
Barntown

Once dubbed the school of the portacabins, Barntown National School has seen a complete transformation. The school faced numerous false dawns over many years and opened its doors in January 2015. Funding was also secured for a purpose-built pitch alongside the school which will also have a community focus. The new building will cater for generations of Barntown students and will be fit for purpose; a modern school for a thriving community.

New Ross

The €7.5 million new twin primary school project for New Ross is also nearing completion and set to be opened in the coming weeks. The project will see the amalgamation of New Ross CBS Primary School, Michael Street School and St Joseph’s NS. This amalgamation had been promised for more than a decade but suffered delays and lack of political support from successive governments. The project was earmarked as a priority by Brendan Howlin when he was elected in 2011.

Adamstown

After a 16 year wait, work is nearing completion on a new school at Coláiste Abbain, Adamstown. Funding of €5.65m was approved for a state of the art school extension which will cater for 350 pupils and the new school will open its doors 2016.

Enniscorthy

Enniscorthy Town has also seen the benefits of investment in education. St Aidan’s national school is already undergoing a radical re-fit which will represent the biggest capital investment in primary education outside Dublin in the history of the State.
Primary Health Centre for Town Centre

A brand new Primary Care Centre has been approved for Wexford Town. Construction on the new facility is set to get underway early next year and will be completed by early 2017.

The new centre will be situated at the Health Centre Campus, Grogan’s Road, Wexford Town and will house GP and community nursing teams, as well as an Area Medical Officer.

It will also offer a GP Out of Hours Service, while services will also be available in Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Social Work, Speech & Language Therapy, Home Help, Addiction Services, Dental Services, Nutritional and Dietician Services, Psychology & Counselling Services, Audiology & Ophthalmology, Chiropody / Podiatry, Early Intervention and School Age.

“I am delighted to confirm that Wexford Town is to get its own Primary Care Centre and I’m encouraged that it will be completed so soon. It means that local people will have a top-class, community-based healthcare service on their doorstep, and it is a further step towards delivering the right care in the right place at the right time.” – Minister Brendan Howlin

NEW ROADS BRING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

New roads bring new opportunities for Co. Wexford – €600 million investment for the model county.

Investment in infrastructure sees completion of the Wicklow section of M11 and the commencement of the Enniscorthy and New Ross bypasses.

In June of this year, the Arklow to Rathnew section of the M11 was officially opened by Minister Brendan Howlin. This new section of motorway will greatly improve safety and shorten journeys into Co. Wexford.

It creates 90km of motorway or dual carriageway between Dublin and Gorey in Co Wexford and is part of a 280km continuous motorway or dual carriageway between Clough in Wexford and Belfast.

Minister Howlin added it “will significantly improve the safety of this stretch of road” and “boost the economic capacity of counties Wicklow and Wexford”.

This is however just the first part of a major roads development for Co. Wexford. Work will soon commence on the Enniscorthy and New Ross bypasses. Both projects represent a massive €570 million investment in the infrastructure of the county and will greatly enhance Wexford’s accessibility and connectivity improving the county’s attractiveness for business investment and job creation. Hundreds of jobs will be created during the lifetime of these projects.

Enniscorthy to reap rewards of bypass

Work on the Enniscorthy bypass is set to begin before the end of 2015. The project is approximately 41 km in length incorporating a new 27 km motorway and tie-in to the east of Enniscorthy, an 8 km single carriageway bypass to the west of Enniscorthy, a 4 km dual carriageway section linking the N30 and N80 that crosses the River Slaney, and associated side road improvements. The entire project is due for completion in mid 2018.

“...and tomorrow the Barrow we will cross”

The N25 New Ross Bypass is approximately 14 km in length and includes what will be the longest bridge in Ireland, extending 900m over the River Barrow to the south of New Ross and will take 30 months to complete. This bypass will end the dreadful tailbacks that currently exist and have scuppered investment in New Ross for decades.
Minimum Wage to increase to €9.15

The Low Pay Commission, which the Labour Party established, has recommended that the national minimum wage be increased by 50 cent to €9.15 per hour. We intend to introduce this increase on January 1.

I am aware that some sectors will not welcome this 50 cent increase but we should bear in mind that the minimum wage has not risen beyond €8.65 in eight years. Following the Low Pay Commission’s recommendation, 122,000 people who are on the minimum wage, or just above it, will see their pay packets increase. This is good news for workers, their families and the economy. Full time workers on the minimum wage will see their wages increase by more than €1,000. That is a significant amount and it will make a real difference to them and their families’ lives.

I believe that work should always pay and as Labour Party Minister, I want to ensure that those on the lowest wages in our society have a real opportunity to share in our economic recovery through pay rises and tax cuts.

Natural Gas set to revolutionise Wexford Industry

Wexford industry is set for a major game changer in the coming months with the completion of the natural gas pipeline. The 41km pipeline to Wexford town represents a €16.5 million investment by Gas Networks Ireland. There will be a 29km gas network within the town which will supply gas to both domestic and commercial users. The village of Taghmon will also see gas delivered to the area.

After decades of poor industrial infrastructure, finally Wexford will be able to compete with other towns and cities and attract leading industries. Wexford businesses such as those in the hospitality, leisure, care and education sectors will be able to enjoy greater convenience while saving up to 60% on energy costs.

Commenting on this milestone project Minister Brendan Howlin said “Having been involved for a number of years in working towards ensuring that Wexford will have a natural gas connection, I welcome the progress in recent months on this programme. Connecting to the natural gas network will lead to reduced costs for businesses in Wexford and will make Wexford Town much more attractive as a location for new energy dependent companies. This new resource will also provide householders in Wexford an economic new energy option for their homes.”

Without a doubt this will revolutionise industry in Wexford, allow our domestic businesses to flourish and make Wexford a more attractive location for investment and development.
Investing in Wexford’s sporting future

Clubs return to heart of town - St Josephs and St Marys of Maudlintown invest in local communities

St Marys of Maudlintown and St Josephs, have firmly set down roots in their town centre communities. St Josephs have, with the assistance of Minister Howlin and his office, purchased their new pitch at Whiterock Hill, while the Marys of Maudlintown are close to the completion of their spectacular new home in the Rocks.

Sports Capital grants also pave way to unlock sporting potential

Other groups across Co. Wexford have benefited from recent capital grants. Wexford Harbour Boat and Tennis club have recently upgraded their tennis courts, Wexford Wanderers and the Faythe Harriers Hurling and Camogie club have also see injections from Sports Capital awards.

Wexford Gymnastics Club have secured €110,000 and their new building is nearing completion on O’Leary Road in Coolcotts.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Name</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Faythe Harriers Hurling &amp; Camogie Club</td>
<td>€150,000</td>
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<td>Wexford Wanderers RFC</td>
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