

# Letters to the Manager- Clarification of my position on charges - 24/08/00

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**August 23, 2000**

Dear Mr. Brady,

Thank you for your detailed letter, which I received this morning. I appreciate you taking the time to reply to my letter of 4/August/2000.

While I am grateful that you addressed the chronology of events in Woodbrook Glen, be it by omission, lack of awareness of new arrangements or labour difficulties, these estates, which are under our stewardship, did not have a bin collection from 5th June until 19th of June. Given that rubbish lay around in the heat for this period, this situation was not acceptable.

Your letter states that members of the public who rang were given full explanations. If you contact any of the 47 people from Woodbrook Glen who signed their petition to you I think you will hear a different story.

I am pleased to see that you accept that you gave a commitment that a Customer Charter for the bin collection service would be introduced at the time of last year's estimates. While I accept that you have had difficulties on the labour front you have not explained why you have taken no action whatsoever on the second element of the charter, a proper complaints procedure.

The introduction of a proper complaints procedure would

include all the elements identified below;

1. A bin collection hotline exclusively for information about problems with the bin collection service staffed from 9.30 to 5.

2. A guarantee of a

written reply from the Council

to written complaints received from residents within one week from date of receipt of complaint.

Information concerning this new procedure to be publicised through the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Times and advertisements in the local newspapers. There is no point in introducing the service if people don't know about it.

Information to be supplied to Councillors by report to each monthly meeting of the Dun Laoghaire Environment Area Committee;

1. The number of written complaints received by the Bin Collection Complaints Section.
2. A summary of activity in the period covered covering lift rate achieved, days lost to industrial relations problems, etc.

Turning to your planned introduction of the Charter. You state that you felt that there would be no point in introducing the Charter if it was not supported by an improved service. Be that as it may, your problems in the labour negotiations on the ground had no bearing on the second part of the Charter, a proper complaints procedure. The only bar to an accountable and professional complaints procedure, be it for the old or new bin collection service, was a lack of action on your part.

**Your letter states that:**

*"Our target at this stage is to try to have wheelie bins delivered in October and the new Customer Charter will be launched at the same time".*

Given that in the Draft Environmental Programme 2000, presented to the members at the time of the estimates, you set out the following targets;

**March 2000**

Commencement of Kerbside Recycling Collections

**April 2000**

Commencement of Wheelie Bin routes with full service in operation throughout the County by November 2000

**August 2000**

Finalise detailed design for waste disposal baling station.

As we speak none of the above have taken place (apart from the recycling collection which started in August in a very limited way). Therefore I am not prepared to take it on trust that your target to

have the wheelie bins and charter launched in October will be achieved. In any case I am not satisfied with you continually dragging your feet on the second element of the Charter, the proper complaints procedure, which is not dependant or subject to, your improvements in the bin collection service as the complaints procedure is an administrative function and can be proceeded with regardless of whether we had a new or an old service.

In conclusion, I am still determined to vote against this year's estimates as I have not received concrete proof that the Charter will be in place before we have to vote on this year's estimates. Concrete proof would consist of the following;

1. 1. A proper complaints procedure as outlined above is in place and operating as of October. I will be ringing this number myself anonymously to assess its efficiency.
2. 2. The Manager gives a report to the October Council meeting identifying the elements in the customer charter and the date on which they will be fully introduced.

I gave a commitment to the people who elected me that I would only vote for the first year of charges on the understanding that the Charter would be introduced before the next set of charges. I intend keeping this commitment.

Yours Sincerely,