

## Sellafield censured

At March's meeting of the County Council a policy motion placed by Councillor Eoin Costello (FG) calling for action on the issue of Sellafield Reprocessing Plant was adopted with all party support.



The motion requires that officials of the Council contact the relevant agency in the UK with responsibility for Sellafield each time there is an incident at the facility to register the objection of the people of the county to the continued operation of the plant.

Councillor Costello stated that it must be remembered that the Sellafield is a facility where affairs are being conducted in a manner that would not be out of place in an episode of the Simpsons. In the past safety data has been systematically falsified, long term storage tanks for nuclear coolant are not sufficient to cope with the amounts of radioactive waste being generated and now the whole facility is to be expanded with the commissioning of a Mixed Oxide plant.

Any complacency by the English government on the risk Sellafield poses could prove seriously misplaced according to Mr. Costello. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown will be in the front line of any major accident at Sellafield.

The recent distribution of leaflets by the Department of Public Enterprise will have done little to address the legitimate concern of people living in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Mr. Costello stated. The leaflet, entitled "National Planning for Nuclear Emergencies", states that the Emergency Plan has been devised to respond to a major nuclear accident. The leaflet states that it would be several hours before any radioactivity reached Ireland. Councillor Costello queries this, given that the Seacat can reach Wales in half that time, if wind conditions were unfavourable there is the risk that contamination could reach Ireland in half the time identified in the National Plan for Nuclear Emergencies.

According to Councillor Costello the leaflet complacently states that it is not envisaged that an accident in a nuclear installation abroad would give rise to the need for the evacuation of people in Ireland. Mr. Costello expressed surprise at the Plan having no plan for the eventuality that sections of the East coast would have to be evacuated in the event of a Chernobyl style accident at Sellafield.

According to the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland(RPII)'s website the RPII operate a network of 12 stations throughout the country at which the gamma dose rate is recorded every 20 minutes. The most recent figures show that the stations along the East coast have the highest concentrations of Gamma radiation in the country with the Dun Laoghaire area having the fifth highest in the country.

According to Councillor Costello it is time that the British government appreciated the strength of feeling in Dun Laoghaire on this issue. It is a measure of the British government's disinterest in the Irish case that not only has the facility not been closed down but a recent decision by the UK Department of Trade and Industry has led to a major expansion of the plant with the commissioning of the Mixed Oxide plant at Sellafield. This was despite the fact that the Irish people had been told that the Taoiseach had made it a personal issue to let Mr. Blair know that he opposed the expansion of the facility. Mr. Costello stated that he hoped that the successful passing of

his motion will in some small way increase the pressure on the UK government.