

Press Releases - Waste Waivers Welcomed - 07/12/00

Waste Waivers Welcomed

At the estimates meeting on Tuesday night Councillors voted in a set of estimates for the coming year. Chief amongst the provisions was no increase in the domestic waste charge, which remains at £150. Another feature was an increase in commercial rates of 5.85%, which was up to 3% lower than that adopted by many other County Councils across the country.



Councillor Eoin Costello stated that the Fine Gael group had lobbied the County Manager hard on the matter of waivers of the waste charge for people on low incomes. The Fine Gael group were particularly disturbed by the inequalities that the previous waiver scheme contained. Fine Gael insisted that a 100% waiver be granted to all households whose sole income is a Social Welfare Allowance or whose income is of a similar value and a graduated partial waiver for householders whose income is marginally above the income threshold.

Other features of the estimates included

- A sum of £600,000 in disabled person's grants
- Continuation of the Footpath Improvement Programme
- A development programme for all estates run by the County Council
- Improved maintenance arrangement for Traveller Accommodation locations
- Improvement works at Kilbogget Park and Cabinteely Park.

At the Estimates meeting Councillor Costello also moved the motion "That the Council allow for the waste charge in 2001 to be payable by direct debit." Councillor Costello had been contacted by people who wished to pay by direct debit as it made the charge easier for them to manage however the County Council were not offering that facility. From now on residents will be able to pay the charge by direct debit.

At the meeting disappointment was expressed that targets in the Environmental Programme, as outlined by the Manager at last year's estimates, had not been achieved. Wheelie bins have only been distributed to limited parts of the County despite a guarantee that most of the County would have been covered at this stage. The vote on the estimates was held up for 5 minutes while councillors demanded details of the Manager's Environmental Programme for 2001.

In relation to Councillor Costello's "Customer Charter for the Refuse Collection Service" the manager stated that this Charter was now printed and would be distributed with the December edition of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Times. Councillor Costello welcomed the move to a more customer friendly Council. "For too long the average citizen has had to suffer unanswered phones and unanswered letters when they sought to make complaints about the refuse collection service. I am confident that the Charter will start to improve this situation and give the citizens in our county the right to a proper standard of service in exchange for their £150.

The Manager stated that he expected to have wheelie bins distributed to all households by May of 2001. He also expects to have reached agreement with Oxygen Ltd on door to door recycling by May of 2001.

The Fine Gael group took the opportunity of the estimates to register their disappointment that the Minister for Local Government, at a time when the national coffers are overflowing, did not address the financial disadvantage that Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council labours under. The rates support grant was increased by £3 million but this will not even cover increases in staff costs for the year.

The Fine Gael group tabled the motion "Because of the special circumstances affecting Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council this Council calls on the Minister for the Environment & Local Government to make a special financial allocation to the local authority in 2001 in order to reduce the burden on commercial ratepayers and to extend the waiver system to a greater number of people in lower incomes.". The Council passed the motion.

At the estimates meeting Councillor Costello demanded that the Manger make the improvement of Kilbogget Park a top priority for next year.