

Councillors Decision on Baths Represents Slap in Face for Public

Press Release - April 3rd

The wishes of the public for the future of Dun Laoghaire Baths were dealt a major blow at a specially convened council meeting on Wednesday 1st April to discuss the new Dun Laoghaire County Development Plan.

At the meeting the County Manager included a Special Local Objective "SLO" for the provision of an East Pier to Sandycove Enhancement Scheme in his draft written statement. Councillors had the option of accepting, amending or rejecting this objective.

The Manager's objective came despite the fact that the enhancement scheme was roundly rejected by the public following a series of street marches, public meetings and hundreds of public submissions.

Richard Boyd Barrett of the People Before Profit Alliance, Cllr Gene Feighery, and Bob Waddell of the Sandycove Baths Action Group, were united in their condemnation of the recent decision taken by Councillors to ignore public opinion on Dun Laoghaire Baths in favour of the County Manager's objective.

At the meeting Cllr. Feighery put forward a motion rejecting the Manager's special local objective and requesting Councillors to support her in replacing it with the following motion which she believes reflects the democratic will of the people with whom she marched.

Cllr. Feighery's motion read:

That Development of Dun Laoghaire Baths will retain the existing building with a modest extension to accommodate proposed public amenities/facilities which includes swimming facilities, and which does not include high rise or residential development. That infill development is minimised to provide adequate sea defences and that the scale of any upgrading and renewal project is limited to the area between the East Pier and the Baths.

Unfortunately, she only found support in four of her fellow councillors and the motion fell.

Richard Boyd Barrett of the People Before Profit Alliance said:

"The un-elected County manager is trying to reinsert crazy plans to reconstruct the entire seafront, even though the public have decisively rejected such plans. Even worse, the majority of elected councillors have now conspired with Owen Keegan in this cynical manoeuvre by voting down a good motion that reflected what the public actually do want. It makes a joke of democracy.

Four years ago thousands of people took to the streets demanding, simply and clearly, the restoration and upgrading of the baths as a public swimming amenity. Since then, the Council has wasted three years and well over €200,000 of taxpayers money, with

consultants, reports and political games, instead of just giving the public what they asked for. It's a disgrace.

Once again, the public needs to raise their voices to tell the manager and councillors to respect democracy. We don't want a new seafront! We don't want car parks on the seafront! We just want the baths restored as public swimming amenity!

Cllr Feighery said: ***“I cannot understand why some Councillors are determined to facilitate the Manager's plan as opposed to the will of those who elected them”***

Bob Waddell of the Sandycove & Glashule Residents Association said:

“I am disgusted that four years after huge protests, public demands and over €200,000 spent on consultants, nothing has been done to restore our baths.

First we get plans for an eight-storey apartment block; then we get plans for a complete reconstruction of the foreshore with car parks, infill and breakwaters. Why on earth can't they just give the people what they asked for – a restored swimming baths?

For more info/confirmation contact:
Richard Boyd Barrett 087-6329511
Gene Feighery 086-8501198
Bob Waddell 087-7616741