

# *Donabate/Portrane* **newsletter**

*Produced by Socialist Party Councillor & Dublin North General Election Candidate Clare Daly*

## **SUPER-SIZE SEWERAGE PLANT CAMPAIGN MOVES TO NEXT STAGE**

**T**he Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) into the Greater Dublin Area Strategic Drainage Study is currently underway. It was this study which recommended a super-size sewerage plant for Portrane as the solution to the drainage needs of the seven local authorities in the Greater Dublin Area up to 2031.

Let's be quite clear - if it wasn't for the magnificent campaign of people power by the local community, the construction of this plant would already be well underway! It was people power that forced the initiation of the SEA.

An SEA is an examination of the envi-

ronmental affects of major plans before they are implemented. The fact that this proposal was being advanced without such an assessment is an enormous indictment of the lack of proper environmental procedures in this country. However, better late than never!

### **DRAFT SCOPING REPORT GOES ON DISPLAY**

On March 21st, the first significant part of this process commenced with the publication of the draft scoping report. This report is on public display until Friday April 20th, on the Council's website [www.fingalcoco.ie](http://www.fingalcoco.ie), in the Donabate & Portrane Community Centre, and Fingal

County Council offices in Swords.

This report basically sets out the terms of reference of the SEA. It suggests that a major regional sewerage treatment plant should be assessed in terms of its impact on issues such as the human health, biodiversity, air quality and other detailed environmental considerations.

More importantly it also examines various alternatives to a regional super-size plant which could also meet the drainage needs of the region, such as numerous small more localised treatment plants.

*Continued overleaf*

*Clare Daly is the Socialist Party Councillor for the Swords Ward, and will be our General Election candidate in Dublin North. She is a shop-steward in Aer Lingus. For advice or assistance on any community or workplace issue,*

*she can be contacted at any of the numbers below.*

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## CAMPAIGN AGAINST SUPER-SIZE SEWERAGE PLANT MOVES TO NEXT STAGE

*Continued from front*



You can make your views known about what you believe should be the priorities in the assessment, by contacting paul.smyth@fingalcoco.ie, or Paul Smyth, Fingal County Council, Grove Road, Blanchardstown, before 5pm on April 20th.

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

A full environmental report is then undertaken into the issues highlighted in the scoping report. This environmental report will go on display later in the year for public comment, and will then form the basis of the SEA. The SEA will recommend a preferred option for dealing with the drainage needs of the region. This will then be given to the seven local authorities for their consideration.

### IS THIS A DONE DEAL?

Many residents may believe that the SEA process is just an expensive PR exercise to con the community into believing that alternatives are being examined – but that they have every intention of going ahead with the mega-plant in Portrane irregardless! This may very well be true. But intending to do something and actually being able to do it are two completely different things.

They intended to have it well on the way to construction at this stage, but instead they have to go through the time and expense of the SEA process! The Socialist Party believes that this process should be used, not with any illusion that it will guarantee an outcome in the community's favour, but rather as a vehicle to expose the devastating consequences of such a propos-



*Over 350 residents attended the public meeting on 14 March*

al, to highlight the alternatives and step up political pressure to end this environmentally unsustainable method of sewerage treatment.

### VESTED INTERESTS

The backdrop to this proposal is the phenomenal explosion of population that has taken place in the greater Dublin area. Powerful interests want to see this sewerage infrastructure in place so that they can carry on developing and turning areas under concrete. Already millions of taxpayers' money has been spent on consultancy fees. It will not be abandoned lightly.

However although they may have felt that they could take the heat from the relatively small community on the peninsula, the reality is that organised opposition has already frustrated their plans. This must be kept up.

### COMMUNITY PRESSURE PAYS

The only people who benefit from this proposal are narrow economic interests. There are sustainable alternatives but these will only be delivered with organised people power in the commu-

nity. Ultimately the recommendation of the SEA will come back to the seven local authorities to be voted on. Parties must not be allowed to hide behind electoral boundaries. If their Fingal councillors claim to be opposed to this proposal, then their party colleagues outside Fingal must do the same.

This situation is unprecedented therefore how it will unfold is unclear. It is possible that should there not be agreement between the seven local authorities then the Minister would have the power under the Critical Infrastructure Bill to impose this project over their heads.

However no matter where the decision is ultimately made -the only defence the community has is to continue to organise and put the pressure on. This proposal is not inevitable. There are alternatives if the will is there to consider them. Political pressure is the only way.

*Leaflet issued by Socialist Party Councillor Clare Daly. For More Information phone Clare on 8408059/087-2415576.*