

Submission on Water Charges – Cllr Noeleen Reilly

Sinn Féin is opposed to Water Charges. People are already paying for Water through general taxation. The government are bringing in water charges yet 43% of water is lost through leaks in the system. Surely it would be better to invest this money to fix and maintain the current system but also roll out a comprehensive water conservation campaign for households. Families simply do not have the resources to pay these charges at this time and this will only further put them on the breadline.

Costs so far include:

- Initial start up costs of €185 million
- That Includes €85 million on consultancy
- Metering will cost €540 million over three years
- Local authorities and state have picked up tab for leaks caused by installation
- Irish Water received €240 from exchequer for capital works
- It received €540 million loan from National Pension Reserve Fund
- It will receive another subvention of €486 million from Local Government Fund

The government have syphoned off €486 million from the Local Property tax to set up Irish Water. This money was meant for Local Communities at a time when services have been brutally attacked by central government.

Fine Gael and Labour have also been very vague in relation to how much the average bill will be. For the last few years we have had several figures quoted. In reality they appear unsure themselves. What is clear is that whatever is charged will not be sufficient to meet the costs of Irish Water in the first number of years. Who then bares this burden? Does this fall yet again on the business community? This is not sustainable long term and will no doubt lead to greater charges for domestic customers in the coming years.

If charges do proceed, Sinn Féin is calling for:

- The introduction of a waiver system for those unable to meet bills
- That water not be cut off or pressure reduced due to non-payment.
- That special consideration is given to the charging of disabled people and families with autistic children given their particular needs in relation to water use.