

Letters to the Manager- Motion demanding Manager introduces Refuse Collection Customer Charter - 10/04/00

That the manager produces the Bin Collection Service Customer Charter and the associated information for the members by the end of February.

At the time of the Estimates the manager insisted that the only way to improve the bin collection service was to bring in a service charge. The majority of the members, not wishing to see the bin collection service privatised, agreed to this. To ensure that customers got what they were paying for, an improved refuse service, I asked that the manager include a Customer Service Charter. This is common in many businesses(see **part 1** for Eircom's Customer Charter).

At the time of the estimates the manager agreed to introduce the customer charter and circulated a sample of what it would include (see **part 2**). As this issue is highly emotive the proper handling of it is essential. The manager informed us that bills would be going out to a largely unsuspecting public in March. I asked that the **Customer Charter** accompany this demand for money. By seeing a commitment to a **Customer Charter**, the people of the county would feel that the frustration with the bin service they had experienced

in the past would be addressed in the future and to achieve this maybe it would be worth paying the charge in the expectation of getting value for money.

In February the manager circulated the "**Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Times**" with an article by him on the front page (see **part 3**.)

While he told people about the charges and made general noises about improvements to the refuse service **there was no mention of the customer charter.**

In February the bills went out to the inhabitants of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown. Again vague statements about improvements were made by the manager (see **part 4**). **There was no mention of the Customer Charter.**

In the weeks after the Estimates meeting a **Draft Environmental Programme 2000** was produced for the members (**see part 5.**). In this there was a commitment that by April 2000 the first Wheelie bin routes would commence operations. The head of the relevant department informed me last week that tender information for these wheelie bins is only being published at the moment. **In fact the only element of the plan that is on schedule is the issuing of the Charge Demands.**

The introduction of the wheelie bins is pivotal to the future implementation of the polluter pays principle. Early in the New Year the members were informed that agreement with the unions was imminent. Then we read in the front page of Southside People (**part 6**) that the Council might privatise the refuse collection service.

In the manager's letter to the members of 3rd November 1999(**see part 7**) the manager stated that **"With a newly elected Council we now have a collective opportunity to make a real and lasting impact on the County over the coming five years."**

If the manager is truly interested in collective action he would have produced the customer charter which he promised to the members.

From my experience so far, the manager seems to regard the members as a brood of broiler hens in a hen house. The din of their clucking while he is stuck in the hen house chamber can be irritating but is of no real consequence to him. What's the worst thing that's going to happen, a peck on the toe from one of the more audacious hens? The only time that their scratching around is to be watched or attended to is when the manager wants the eggs of the hens in terms of votes, backing his estimates or his upcoming revision of the development plan.

On behalf of my fellow members I would like to inform the manager that we are not a bunch of hens to be lead along by the beak. All the members here tonight fought hard to be elected to this chamber and are doing their best to represent the interests of those who elected them to that job.

While he may feel it is safe enough not to communicate with the hens while he is busy attending other matters I would remind him of what happened on Animal Farm where the animals eventually took over the farm. Come the next estimates the members may very well have lost confidence in the manager and will not support him.