

# Press Releases - Costello to fight charges - 20/08/00

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Unless the County Manager introduces the promised Customer Charter for the Refuse Collection service before the Estimates vote later this year Councillor Eoin Costello has informed the County Manager he will be voting against the Charges.

"At the time of the estimates last year I informed the County Manager that I would vote in favour of the charges only after receiving a commitment from him that a Customer Charter specifically for the Refuse Collection service would be introduced. Council officials produced a specimen of this proposed charter on the night of the estimates vote. This charter would give citizens the right to a proper standard of service and the right to an accountable complaints procedure."

As of that date the County Manager has not introduced this charter despite many requests from Councillor Costello to do so (via questions placed at Council meetings 13th March and 3rd July). In Councillor Costello's letter to Manager at the time of the estimates (see [www.eoincostello.ie](http://www.eoincostello.ie), Letters to the Manager) he informed the Manager that if he did not institute the Customer Charter immediately after instituting the charge Councillor Costello would have no alternative but to vote against this year's estimates. Councillor Costello is now committed to that course.

Problems have continued with the standard of the Council's bin collection service. In June residents of Woodbrook Glen, in the southern part of the Council's area, were left without collections for three weeks. When they rang the council they were not given a reason for this failure. They have sent a petition of complaint signed by 47 residents to the County Manager. Bank Holiday collections for St. Patrick's Day were very patchy with many areas having no collections. Recycling, which was a major part of the plan presented to the Council at the time of the estimates, is only being introduced in August 2000 in a very limited area (12,000 houses in the Ballinteer/Dundrum area).

In the draft environmental programme supplied to the Councillors at the time of the estimates council officials established the following timetable;

March 2000 Commencement of Kerbside Recycling Collections (did not happen).

April 2000 Commencement of Wheelie Bin routes with full service in operation throughout the County by November 2000(has not happened).

October 2000 Place contract for waste disposal baling station.

In the period since the introduction of the charge the Council have increased their investment in the bin collection service. In a reply to a question from Councillor Costello at the Dun Laoghaire Area Committee in July the Council stated that they had hired two refuse freighters, commenced procurement of wheelie bins, put in place new arrangements for Bank Holiday refuse collections and concluded agreement with the Unions for the introduction of the Wheelie Bin service.

However Councillor Costello points out that aside from any increases in expenditure the Council may identify, a Customer Charter was promised and must therefore be delivered.

"In all the letters of complaint I have received recently about the charges, citizens simply want their rights to be recognised. If they are to pay a charge for the refuse collection service they are entitled to expect it to be of a reasonable standard and when it is not, to have a proper and accountable complaints procedure."

Councillor Costello is aware that his stance will come at a cost to himself. "I am aware that voting against the charges will be at a personal cost to myself as it will lead to my suspension from my party. However I feel that I was elected to represent the interests of the people of my area. The failure to introduce any element of the Customer Charter is one example of the current County Manager's level of disdain for the publicly elected representatives. When he gave me a commitment to introduce the Customer Charter I gave him a commitment to vote against the next estimates if he failed to do so. I will now be honouring the commitment I gave him."