



Cllr. Éilis Ryan

THE WORKERS' PARTY

Socialist – Secular – Democratic



3rd August 2016

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to thank you for your support for the motion that I proposed at the council meeting on Monday July 25th. The motion, you will recall, was as follows:

*In light of this history, and considering the housing crisis which those on low and middle-income households in Dublin, the Council supports the development of a **pilot scheme of 100% public, mixed income housing on the O'Devaney Gardens site.***

Under the scheme, all housing on the site will be

- *Built by and rented from the Council*
- *50% of housing units rented at current differential rents to households currently on housing waiting lists*
- *50% of housing units rented to households earning above the waiting list threshold, but with demonstrated housing need, and paying higher rents in line with their income.*

The solutions offered in the previous council plan for O'Devaney Gardens - the Housing Land Initiative – are clearly not adequate. At 30%, the provision of social housing is too low to make a dent in the waiting list. The attempts to address the housing crisis faced by average income earners who do not qualify for social housing are clearly flawed: the 'private cost rental' model which the HLI advocates constitutes a large subsidy from the State to private landlords and the estimates the Council provided for 'affordable starter homes' would exclude 70-80% of the population - not very affordable!

I believe the diversity of the party support which the motion received reflects the growing consensus that the way to achieve healthy income mixes is to bring into our public housing the many households on middle incomes who struggle to afford either private mortgages or private rental accommodation.

It is worrying that the Council's management have already sought to undermine the potential for the motion to be implemented. In particular, management have asserted that the motion goes against the existing planning permission for the site, may require a cost benefit analysis, and would cause undue delays to development on the site. These criticisms are unfounded.

The planning permission stipulates a combination of social and "either private or affordable" housing, rather than social and private. Affordable can certainly be interpreted to include a public rental model – rather than being necessarily private.

The cost benefit criticisms of the model are unfounded. While it would require upfront investment, the higher average rent due to the council owing to the broader income distribution would in fact make it a more affordable way to deliver public housing – and would not necessitate subsidies to private landlords. In any case, a cost benefit analysis would also reflect the strong social benefits that the motion entails, in addition to any economic analysis.

Finally, the delays in relation to O'Devaney Gardens development can not be blamed on this motion – they go back many years.

Over the coming weeks, I will be seeking commitment from the Council management that the motion for "Solidarity Housing" on O'Devaney Gardens that was voted for by Dublin City Councillors be implemented in full.

I will also be seeking for the adjacent site at Infirmary Road be developed separately, and without delay, rather than bundled with O'Devaney Gardens, to facilitate the rehousing of existing tenants. Tenants in O'Devaney Gardens should not be used as a bargaining chip to push forward an inappropriate development on the site.

I look forward to your support in moving forward the motion which we agreed together.

Best,
Cllr. Éilis Ryan