

## PRESS RELEASE – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011

### Dublin landfill will not go ahead

#### **4 Councils say proposed new National Waste Policy offers chance of long term planning**

The four Dublin local authorities have decided not to proceed with the planned development of a landfill at Nevitt, North Dublin, due to substantial changes in the Dublin waste market and national waste policy since the planning process began 14 years ago.

The Fingal Landfill project overcame a final legal challenge to its development last month, following granting of the necessary planning consent and waste licence, having begun the process of developing a new landfill for Dublin in 1997. However Fingal County Council, in consultation with the 3 other Dublin local authorities, has decided not to proceed with the next step towards developing the site due to the large costs that would be involved and the changed circumstances which have rendered the project no longer viable. Lands that were acquired for the development over four years ago remain in the ownership of the Council but the Council will not now proceed with the CPO of further land in the area.

According to the Fingal County Manager David O'Connor, "we developed this project in good faith for the past 14 years as we had a clear responsibility under the Dublin Waste Management Plan to provide the people of Dublin with the infrastructure they needed and to follow government policy". "We have now reached a crucial juncture and in light of changed circumstances, the decision to proceed would incur major costs of up to €45 million, which in today's market and in light of evolving national policy could not now be justified", the County Manager explained.

Mr O'Connor said: "Deciding not to proceed at this stage has not been a simple decision to make but it is the correct one". "The families living on the site identified for the proposed landfill development have gone through a difficult process since this project began and I regret the uncertainty they have had to endure as this project suffered through inevitable delays due to matters outside of our control".

A consultation process currently underway towards a new National Waste Policy has been strongly supported by the 4 Dublin Local Authorities. "Along with my colleagues, the Managers of Dublin City, South Dublin & Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Councils, I look forward to a period of greater policy certainty that will allow the development of long term plans for Dublin", the Manager added. "We look forward to the outcome of this consultation process and the development of a new National Waste Policy which will allow Ireland to resume further progress towards a recycling and resource efficient society", he said.

**ENDS 13/12/11**

## Note to editors:

The proposal to develop a new landfill in the Dublin region has been a central element of the Dublin Waste Management Plans since they were adopted in 1999 and 2005. It formed part of a suite of infrastructure informed by EU legislation and international best environmental practice including waste-to-energy, recycling and biological treatment facilities. The site selection study for it began in 1998 and was delayed significantly by a legal challenge which was not resolved until 2003.

The Tooman/Nevitt site was selected in 2004.

Following completion of an Environmental Impact Assessment the Council applied for development consent and a waste licence. An Bord Pleanála finally gave development consent in October 2009 following three oral hearings. The Environment Protection Agency granted a Waste Licence in May 2010 after two hearings. At that point a judicial review of the EPA decision was sought which was withdrawn just last month, November 2011.

In the meantime, and in particular in the years since 2008, the situation in regard to waste collection in the Greater Dublin Area and the Government position on national waste policy has changed substantially:

- o In 1997 local authorities in the Greater Dublin Area were the only collectors of domestic waste and were required by Government policy to manage this waste within the GDA. The proposed Fingal Landfill was essential in those circumstances.
- o Alternative sources of disposal were not available when the project got underway
- o Collection of waste by private operators began in earnest in Dublin in 2008 and in 2012 all domestic waste in the GDA will be collected by private operators who are free to dispose of waste in any licensed facility (within or outside the GDA).
- o Significant landfill levies are applied today which were not applied in 1997.
- o Landfill Gate fees fell dramatically after 2008 (€70/tonne in 2008, €80/tonne in 2009, €40/tonne in 2011) and remain low, thus undermining the economic viability of the project
- o Since that time the Dublin Authorities needed certainty over where they could bring their waste while they still controlled it. The Fingal Landfill provided this certainty.