

Official Opening of the Dublin Bay PPP Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Monday, 30 June 2003 saw the official opening of the Dublin Bay Waste Water Treatment Plant. The plant was opened by An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern TD, The Lord Mayor of Dublin Cllr Dermot Lacey.

The plant caters for sewage generated in the four Dublin local authorities; Fingal, South Dublin, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and Dublin City. The plant which is already operational is one of the most advanced of its type in Europe. It will make a huge contribution to the quality of water in Dublin Bay through the reduction of pollutants being discharged.

The plant will greatly contribute to Ireland's compliance with the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, with which full compliance is expected to be reached by 2005.

Also the increased quality of seawater in the Bay should allow popular beaches such as Merrion, Dollymount Strand and Sandymount to reach water quality standards of a level suitable to attain the prestigious Blue Flag award.

The Public Private Partnership element of the scheme, represented by the plant itself, is being operated as a DBO (Design, Build Operate) project and is funded by the EU Cohesion Fund, The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Dublin City Council. The additional infrastructure such as pipelines and pumping stations are being provided by conventional means.

The plant represents a good example of the role that Public Private Partnership can play in providing projects of this scale. A large number of water and waste-water plants around the country are now being developed through PPP, largely as DBO projects.

The treatment methods of aeration, heating and ultraviolet light ensure that the treatment process itself is more environmentally friendly as well as the plant's output. The dried sludge by-product of the process is turned into pellets to be used as fertiliser for farming, which also represents an environmental benefit in comparison to existing fertilisers. The Ringsend plant is the only facility in the world to use this combination of treatments.

Opening the facility An Taoiseach said; "I am very happy to be here today for the opening of this wastewater treatment plant. Together with the other elements of the Dublin Bay Project; the pumping station in Sutton and the submarine pipeline across the Bay - it represents the single biggest step ever taken in this country to improve our marine environment".

John Walsh of the EU Regional Policy and Institutional Reform Directorate of the European Commission read a statement on behalf of Commissioner Michel Barnier stating that the project provided a very good example of

sustainable regional development as well as allowing Dublin to meet the requirements of the urban wastewater treatment Directive.