



Customers: Tesco Ballymun sign

By Eamon Donoghue

SENIOR staff at one Tesco store in Dublin have defended its €10 deposit on the use of trolleys.

The charge has divided shoppers – some customers are outraged at the inconvenience while other regulars have welcomed the move.

Shoppers said trolleys were not available at times in the past because people wouldn't bother to bring them back to the store.

One team leader in the Ballymun branch of Tesco in North Dublin said the reason for the decision was the scarcity of trolleys for shoppers.

'Our trolleys are all over gardens everywhere in Ballymun. We look for a €10 deposit, it's not a charge, but we have to.'

The store, which is set to close at the end of the month, had been notifying customers of the cost via a handwritten poster on their wall.

Anne Marie Devlin, pictured right, was also shopping yesterday in Tesco with her daughter Shereice, but said she was happy to pay extra for her trolley.

Ah, you're off your trolley – €10 cost for grocery cart

'It's right because no one brings them back.'

'Sometimes you could go in and there isn't a single shopping trolley there, people wouldn't bring them back.'

A number of shoppers in the area

It was €20 at Christmas

have adapted to the charge with the use of personal trolleys.

Shopper Phyllis Smyth objected to the charge. 'It's disgraceful. You have to pay €10 just to go as far as the car park.'

'At Christmas they were €20,' she said. 'So, if you need to wheel it home with your shopping, it's home and back straight away for your €10

or €20. And if you haven't got the €10 then you're really struggling.'

Another local woman said she had refused to pay to the €10. 'It's a disgrace in there, and the prices are ridiculous. We need a shopping centre in Ballymun.'

One local pensioner said: 'The Omni shopping centre Tesco only down the road is €1. That person who has to pay the €10 could need that €10 for shopping and it's gone on that. What if you only had €10?'

Fianna Fail councillor Paul McAuliffe said the charge was another mark of disrespect to people in the area.

'Tesco have already let the people of Ballymun down very badly before with the decision to close the store.'

He added: '€10 can be a high percentage of a lot of people's weekly shopping budget, especially for a person on social welfare.'



Picture: JOHN COGILL

Cost: Anne Marie Devlin, with her daughter Shereice, justified the fee

Hogan's water rate plan stalls as Labour revolts

Under proposal, semi-d families pay more than some millionaires

By Senan Molony
Political Editor

PHIL Hogan wanted to force ordinary families living in semi-detached homes to pay a flat-rate water charge of €266 – more than some millionaires with swimming pools.

But a furious Eamon Gilmore blocked it at Cabinet, Labour sources revealed last night.

The move led to a full-blown dispute between the Coalition partners at the Cabinet meeting.

The decision on water charges has

'We're not working to any set date'

now been put off for two weeks because tensions were so high between the two parties.

Information on the flat rates Environment Minister Mr Hogan wanted was leaked ahead of the special meeting and showed that in some cases people living in semi-detached homes in housing estates would have to pay more than those in terraced houses in upmarket Killiney.

The flat rates would have been applied to three in four households as they don't yet have meters.

Three types of flat charges were outlined under Mr Hogan's controversial memo. Homeholders in all terraced homes would pay €213.20 per year, regardless of the size of the

Free allowance won't even cover the barest essentials

A COUPLE with a 30,000-litre annual free water allowance will only be able to use 600 litres each week before they start paying for their water.

To avoid charges, they would have to limit themselves to just two showers each per week (200 litres), use the dishwasher and washing machine once per week (100 litres), and flush the toilet just twice per day each (252 litres per week).

This would then leave the couple with just four minutes of water for the entire week for

brushing their teeth, meaning each of them would have to turn the tap off between rinses to avoid exceeding their total water allowance.

Watering the garden, washing the car and using water for drinking and cooking would see the couple having to go without showers.

The average Irish person uses 150 litres every day, according to a conservative estimate by the Dublin local authorities. Only 4 per cent of the water supplied to homes is used for drinking.

house. Those in a semi-detached home faced a flat fee of €266.50 per annum, while those who enjoy a detached property would pay the highest amount, €319.90.

But Mr Gilmore pointed out that the most desirable homes in the country are located in Sorrento Terrace, on the cliff-top overlooking Dublin Bay at Killiney, where homes can sell for up to €8million each.

He added that this would mean a millionaire living there, where some of the homes have inside heated swimming pools, would pay less in a flat tax for water charges than someone of modest means living on an estate in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Another detail of the plan was that there would be only 30,000 litres of free water per house per year, even though the average adult uses 55,000 litres per year.

Following the tumultuous Cabinet meeting, the Taoiseach rowed in behind Mr Hogan in the Dáil, saying the average figure for a standard household would be €240 a year.

At the end of a 'robust' ministerial meeting, nothing was agreed. A resumption of the water rate talks is to occur after the Easter break.

Labour said last night that there remained 'substantive' differences between the parties. The Tánaiste and large numbers of Labour TDs

Irish Water employ former PR consultant to Fine Gael

A FORMER adviser to Enda Kenny during the 2011 General Election is acting as a consultant to Irish Water.

Fine Gael headhunted Mark Mortell in 2010 to advise the party in the run up to the General Election.

Last night the parent company of Irish Water, Bord Gáis Éireann Group, confirmed to the Irish Daily Mail that Mr Mortell was involved in consultancy work on behalf of Irish Water, which has so far spent €86million on

consultants.

'We can confirm that Mr. Mortell's work for Irish Water is expected to cost less than €10,000 in 2014,' a spokesman said.

BGE said it had used the services of PR company FleishmanHillard, of which Mr Mortell is a director, for the past five years.

'FleishmanHillard was engaged following an open tendering process,' the group said. 'It is not policy to disclose any financial details relating to commercial operations.'

stayed away from Leaders' Questions in the Dáil yesterday, believed to be a signal of their unhappiness.

Mr Gilmore also expressed frustration when asked his attitude to specific proposals on water charges being leaked from the Fine Gael side ahead of the Coalition discussions.

'It's never helpful when issues that have to be considered by Government are trawled in the media in advance,' the Labour leader said.

Four key areas which the Coalition has yet to agree on include the ability-to-pay question for low-income households, the treatment of people in vulnerable groups, special allowances in cases of medical need, and

allowance levels connected to the number of children in a household.

Labour has also let it be known that it does not consider itself bound by the Taoiseach's repeated pledge that people will know the details of their likely water charges by the time of the local and European elections late next month.

'There are negotiations ongoing between the parties on this. There remain substantive differences between them,' the Labour spokesman said. 'We are now working towards getting the right decisions, and not to any particular date.'

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