

Dáil Topical Issue Speech — Dáil Éireann — 32nd Dáil, Topical Issue Debate

Date:	13 January 2016	Author:	Deputy Joe Higgins TD (Socialist Party)
Forum:	Dáil Éireann — 32nd Dáil, Topical Issue Debate	Status:	PUBLIC — no redaction required
Resp. Minister:	Minister of State Deputy Ann Phelan TD	Relevant Section:	Topical Issue Debate: Office of Public Works Properties, pp. 34–35 of the Official Report
Official record:	https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/debateRecord/dail/2016-01-13/debate/mul@/main.pdf		

REPORT PARAGRAPH

Deputy Higgins subsequently raised these issues on the floor of the Dáil on the 13th January 2016 asking for the matter to be fully investigated by way of a public enquiry, stating that different parties had been affected by the manner in which the Anne Street site was assembled.

EVIDENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Martin Power had asked Deputy Higgins to examine documents obtained from Wexford Borough Council. Deputy Higgins concluded there were anomalies and unanswered questions about how the Anne Street site was assembled and that documents he had seen were prima facie evidence of very serious irregularities.
2. Deputy Higgins called for a full public enquiry into the matter — placing the concerns formally on the parliamentary record and establishing their seriousness at the highest level of the State.
3. In response, Minister of State Ann Phelan directed that Wexford County Council, as successor to Wexford Borough Council, should address any issues in the first instance — establishing the basis on which the Council subsequently agreed to investigate.
4. This intervention predates the October 2016 Review/Report and demonstrates that concerns about the site assembly were raised independently in the Dáil before the Council's investigation had commenced.

KEY PASSAGES FROM OFFICIAL RECORD

"This issue is complex and convoluted but documents that I have seen are prima facie evidence of very serious irregularities, giving rise to serious unanswered questions by public bodies in the matter of the assembly of the site."

— Deputy Joe Higgins TD, Dáil Éireann, 13 January 2016

"I am satisfied that there are serious unanswered questions and anomalies surrounding the assembling of this site involving public bodies."

— Deputy Joe Higgins TD, Dáil Éireann, 13 January 2016

"If there are issues with the manner in which these sites were assembled by Wexford Borough Council, they should be raised in the first instance with its successor, Wexford County Council."

RELEVANCE TO THIS REPORT

This source is the foundational parliamentary record establishing that the Anne Street site assembly irregularities were brought to the attention of the State at the highest level. It provides the direct parliamentary basis for why Wexford County Council subsequently agreed to investigate the matter at a full Council meeting on 8 February 2016. The Ministerial response — directing concerns to Wexford County Council as successor authority — is central to why Martin Power engaged with the Council from February 2016 onwards. This source also demonstrates that the concerns predate the October 2016 Review/Report and were raised independently in the Dáil before the Council's investigation had commenced.

Official source: <https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/debateRecord/dail/2016-01-13/debate/mul@main.pdf>

Note: this summary refers to the official Oireachtas transcript of Dáil Éireann proceedings, Vol. 902, No. 1, Wednesday 13 January 2016 (Official Report, Unrevised). The full record is available at the link above.

Statements and allegations referred to in this summary were made in the course of Dáil proceedings by the named speaker and are reported here as matters raised in Parliament. This summary does not adopt or assert those statements as established findings of fact.

This summary has been prepared for the purposes of the Martin Power public report on the Anne Street, Wexford site assembly. It does not make any legal finding. It identifies the source, summarises the relevant point relied upon, and records its relevance to the Anne Street Report for public-facing evidential reference.