

Brady calls on Minister to spread budget across all aspects of housing

SINN Féin MLA Mickey Brady has called on the Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie, to go "back to the drawing board" with regards to her proposed 2009/2010 budget.

Mr Brady, who is a DSD Committee member, accused the Minister of "putting all her eggs in one basket" and says many small building firms will collapse and hundreds of jobs will be lost as a result.

"The Minister has said that all replacement schemes and maintenance schemes will be hit hard as she concentrates on new build," Mr Brady said. "Many small building firms will go to the wall and hundreds will lose their jobs if the minister goes down this path."

At this week's Social Development

Committee meeting Mr Brady asked the Minister to spread the budget across all aspects of housing.

"To discontinue kitchen and other replacements, as well as aspects of maintenance only costs more in the long run, homes will deteriorate if not dealt with and will cost more in the longer term," Mr Brady said.

"People have been expecting these essential upgrades for some time now but with this decision they have once again been let down by the Minister," he added.

"Small builders who rely on this work for employment will be greatly affected by this decision. For the second time in months, I have suggested that she use land which is situated



Alban Magennis visits Newry

Alban Magennis (2nd from left) pictured with Councillors Geraldine Donnelly, Frank Feeley, John McArdle and Stephen McClelland (centre), Community Business Enterprise Agency, when he visited Newry on Wednesday.

in areas of high housing demand to build new houses," Mr Brady continued. "This can cut in half the unit price of new build if given to housing associations. Up until now all we have been told is that this Sinn Féin proposal is being looked at."

South Armagh policing 'needs fresh action' - Fianna Fáil

POLICING in south Armagh needs fresh action with full support for the PSNI along with a cross border Garda input in certain aspects of implementation, according to a spokesperson for the Fianna Fáil Forum in the district, who said full policing support needed to be carried out in practice as well as theory.

With last week's announcement that over 25% of the force is now Catholic, it is time that the reforms were taken seriously and for things to be made real on the ground. It is felt the time is ripe for such commitment to also include effective Garda input as such had already been agreed in principle between the two governments. Full support for the PSNI and the Irish dimension went hand in hand.

"It's past the time for merely talking the talk. There's not much point in standing on the sidelines and only giving full support when all the good is gone out of it and the referee is about to blow the final whistle."

The South Armagh spokesperson said they noticed that Fianna Fáil was on the rise again in the latest polls issued on Friday last following the financial crisis and looked forward to ongoing and active liaison with Dublin in

promoting Crossmaglen and the border areas.

Crossmaglen's debut entry to All Ireland Tidy Town competition

CROSSMAGLEN is to be entered to the All Ireland Tidy Town competition for the first time. The move comes as part of a new initiative to promote the tourist image of the town and to make it better known as an attraction throughout Ireland.

It's understood that steps are also under way in the same move to have Crossmaglen better sign posted especially at the MI at the junction for Castleblayney. It is also understood that proposals are forthcoming to have the Dundalk Road at Sheelagh specially upgraded as part of new cross border tourist moves.



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Rathkeeland House
1 Blayney Road,
Crossmaglen
Newry, Co Down BT35 9JJ

Telephone: 02830868500
Fax: 02830868580

Email: info@crosssexaminer.co.uk
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