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FF SENATOR CRITICAL OF FG MINISTER OVER FUND CLOSURE

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023



A LOCAL Fianna Fáil Senator has opened the first fissure between Government partners by daring to criticise a Fine Gael Minister for closing a funding pathway which a Kildare town project was expecting funding from.

In February, Minister Simon Harris decided to close the Immigrant Investment Programme (IIP), which had invested over €1.25bn for community enterprises across its 10-year existence, and ‘Sensational Kids’ on Mellitta Road was relying on the IIP to continue to provide speech and occupational therapy for our new youth.

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Fianna Fáil Senator Catherine Loughlin has said that Minister for Justice Simon Harris “needs to do more to support groups such as Sensational Kids who have been negatively

impacted by the sudden closure of the IIP programme”.

“I have been working with the wonderful team at Sensational Kids in Kildare to try and realise their vision of to have a centre with the potential to support 30,000 children in the coming 10 years,” said Senator O’Loughlin. (To date, ‘Sensational Kids’ as provided such services to over 2,700 children, saving their families over €2m in therapy fees.)

“Karen Leigh, the CEO has built Sensational Kildare up with blood, sweat and tears, however, the group has run into big problems as they were beneficiaries of an IIP grant to fund a very important project in the town,” said the senator.

“Costs have increased since 2021, when Sensational Kids originally costed its plans, when they were told there was no deadline for the IIP, and it could make a submission when it was ready,” she revealed.

“It was in the process of looking for extra funding, but the IIP was closed overnight without any notice, and now, there is a big danger the centre will not go ahead.”

“We all know the costs of doing business and especially in terms of construction, they have increased hugely, in this case it’s an increase of millions, but regardless of your view of the IIP, we absolutely need to ensure that projects that were approved are given the funding necessary to bring them to fruition.”

By Finian Coghlan

Email Journalist

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Tuesday, 23/05/23 - 7:25pm

The death has occurred of Estella (Stella) Costelloe (née Bermingham), Tallaght, Dublin / Newbridge, Kildare

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