

Scraping the Northern Ireland protocol, as some unionists have demanded, "just isn't realistic", although the EU could demonstrate "flexibility and pragmatism" in how it was implemented, he insisted.

Mr Covey also said he didn't accept unionist claims that checks and inspections on some goods travelling between Britain and the North under the post-Brexit arrangements "undermines their Britishness".

"I don't agree with that but can understand how that perspective has developed and many have really forced that messaging, and added a language of the identity of politics to the protocol that really has fired up many in the loyalist community in particular who feel this is threatening their identity," he said.

Mr Covey said "we are all working to ensure that we have a calm summer, but it wouldn't take a lot to spark, primarily young people, to lash out as they did in April because of the perceptions that many have, that they haven't been listened to, that their tradition isn't being respected, that they have in some way been outmanoeuvred through the Brexit process and the implementation of the protocol".

His comments during an online discussion organised by the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at Notre Dame University in the US came as a survey suggested that just 13 per cent of voters in the North trust the Democratic Unionist Party in relation to the protocol.

The poll results will concern Jeffrey Donaldson, who

of 1,500 respondents from the electorate who they trusted and distrusted to manage the interests of the North when it came to the protocol.

There was least faith in Boris Johnson's UK government, with 86 per cent of voters saying they distrusted London, 53 per cent of them saying they distrusted Downing Street "a lot". Only 6 per cent trusted the administration.

The next least trusted group was the DUP, with 56 per cent distrusting them "a lot" and another 22 per cent responding that they simply didn't trust the party over the protocol. Just 13 per cent trusted the party.

A majority of voters (56 per cent) also distrusted Sinn Féin on the issue - with 45 per cent registering "a lot" of distrust. Nearly a third (31 per cent) trusted the party.

Distrust of the European Commission/EU was at 48 per cent, while 40 per cent said they trusted Brussels. Voters responded similarly over the Irish Government's role, with 48 per cent registering distrust against 38 per cent who trusted Dublin.

Prof Katy Hayward, of QUB and co-investigator on the research, said the findings showed people in the North "highly exercised" by the protocol - both for and against in equal proportions.

A majority believed special arrangements were needed for the North in the wake of Brexit, but there was a clear split on whether people supported or objected to the protocol, with 47 per cent backing it, and the same number opposing. A total of 57 per cent wanted the UK to align with EU regulations as a solution.

McDonald says she is not in thrall to 'shadowy figures'

JENNIFER BRAY

Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald has said that she is "in thrall to nobody" as she rejected claims that she is accountable to unelected figures in the organisation.

Speaking at the Irish Times Summer Nights Festival, Ms McDonald was asked by host Kathy Sheridan about concerns that the party hierarchy would be "led by people who we do not know" if Sinn Féin enters government.

"When I am asked about this it is generally in exchanges like this or in conversations with media people or commentators. That is not something that is raised with me on doorsteps. I am in thrall to nobody," Ms McDonald said. "I am elected by the people of Dublin Central. My colleagues are elected. We are accountable to the people who elect us."

"He said it, and what else was he going to say? That was a classic case of 'Dirt bean lom go ndúirt bean léi' - the type of thing that somebody said that they thought. I don't operate in conjecture of that nature. I am the leader of Sinn Féin and I'm in thrall to no figures, shadowy or otherwise."

When asked by Ms Sheridan if any phone calls are made to figures in Belfast, Ms McDonald said: "We deal with colleagues but ultimately I am the

party leader nationally. Ultimately I have to have an eye on everything that is happening across the island. Of course we work together. But if you are asking is there some outside structure outside of Sinn Féin that has to okay actions, that simply is not the case."



Mary Lou McDonald: 'We are accountable to the people who elect us'

needed reassurance on the News at One. Don't panic!

resumption of indoor hospitality, but Nphet presented it with an appalling medical vista if it goes ahead.



during Leaders' Questions. For starters, the Taoiseach's "we are enjoying each other's company again" headline last year. Long, Kelly and

cars completely dúnna?" he roared at Ryan. Will there be an international examination of Nphet's "ponkers advice"? Danny Healy-Rae was hopping up and down with anger. "What has the Government by jumping into the river Shannon.

Photograph: Alan Betson

COMMARBLE CONTAE CHILL MHAINTAIN WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF A COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER UNDER SECTION 76 OF AND THE THIRD SCHEDULE TO THE HOUSING ACT, 1966 AS EXTENDED BY SECTION 10 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (NO. 2) ACT, 1960 AS SUBSTITUTED BY SECTION 86 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1966 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY SECTION 6 AND THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE ROADS ACT 1993 AND BY SECTION 222 OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000 PUBLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 4 (a) OF THE THIRD SCHEDULE TO THE HOUSING ACT, 1966 AS AMENDED BY THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2000

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL COMPULSORY PURCHASE (CHAPEL ROAD PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME) NO. 1 ORDER 2021

Wicklow County Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Local Authority") proposes in exercise of the powers conferred on them by Section 76 of and the Third Schedule to the Housing Act, 1966 as extended by Section 10 of the Local Government (No. 2) Act, 1960 as substituted by Section 86 of the Housing Act, 1966 and as further amended by Section 6 and the Second Schedule to the Roads Acts, 1993 and by Section 222 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and as construed in accordance with Section 213 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to acquire compulsorily the lands and the rights over the lands hereinafter described and has made an Order entitled as above which is about to be submitted to An Bord Pleanála (hereinafter "the Board") for confirmation. If confirmed, the Order will authorise the Local Authority to:

- acquire compulsorily, for the purposes of the Roads Acts 1993 to 2015 and the Chapel Road Pedestrian and Cyclist Infrastructure Improvement Scheme permanently, the land described in the Part 1 of the Schedule hereto
- acquire temporarily, the land described in the Part 2 of the Schedule hereto

The Order will also authorise the Local Authority to extinguish the private rights of way described in Part 3 of the Schedule hereto, by order made by them after they have acquired the land, where the said private rights of way are over the land so acquired or any part thereof, or over land adjacent to or associated with the land so acquired or any part thereof.

The lands described in the Schedule are lands other than land consisting of a house or houses unfit for human habitation and not capable of being rendered fit for human habitation at reasonable expenses.

Owners, lessees, and occupiers of the lands described in the Schedule will receive individual written notice.

Any objections to the compulsory acquisition of land and rights over land described in the Schedule should be made in writing to An Bord Pleanála, 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, before 5.30 pm on or before the 13th August 2021.

The Board cannot confirm a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of the land if an objection is made in respect of the proposed compulsory acquisition by an owner, lessee, or occupier of the land, and not withdrawn until it has caused an oral hearing to be heard into the objection and considered the objection and the report of the person who held the Oral Hearing.

A copy of the Order and the Maps referred to in it may be seen at the offices of the Local Authority at County Buildings, Station Road, Wicklow and Greystones Municipal District Offices, Mill Road, Greystones, County Wicklow on working days (by appointment only) between the hours of 9.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m. from the 1st July 2021 up to and including 13th August 2021 and may also be also viewed online at www.wicklow.ie/linv

Dated this 30th day of June 2021.

Colm Lavery, Director of Services, Transportation, Water & Emergency Services.

More than half of septic tank systems failed checks

KEVIN O'SULLIVAN
Environment and Science Editor

More than half of septic tanks and other domestic waste-water treatment systems failed in a nationwide inspection last year because they were not built or maintained properly, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

A review of 809 inspections conducted in 2020 by local authorities shows that 54 per cent (433) failed, while 23 per cent (182) were found to be "a risk to human health or the environment" as faulty systems can contaminate household wells and pollute rivers.

Septic tanks and other domestic waste-water treatment systems are used by rural householders to treat sewage. There are nearly half a million systems in operation, mostly septic tanks. If not built and operated properly they can contaminate household wells with harmful bacteria and viruses or cause pollution due to run-off into nearby waterways.

The EPA is responsible for the development of a national inspection plan for domestic treatment systems. Under the current plan covering the period 2018 to 2021, local authorities must undertake a mini-

mum of 1,000 inspections each year, distributed by risk across the country.

Six local authorities have taken 34 legal proceedings for system failures in households since the plan commenced.

The level of inspections in counties varies hugely, the EPA report says. Only one inspection was carried out last year in the counties of Kerry, Sligo and Longford. Where more extensive inspections were carried out counties Kilkenny (79 per cent), Mayo (75 per cent), Meath (68 per cent) and Wexford (66 per cent) had the highest failure rates.

Failures fall into two categories: "desludging and maintenance failures" and "structural defects causing illegal discharges to ditches/streams, leaks, ponding and rainwater ingress" - with poor maintenance arising in 40 per cent of cases.

Director of the EPA's office of environmental enforcement, Dr Tom Ryan, said: "Householders should ensure effluent from their septic tank is not ponding in their garden, going to nearby streams or contaminating their drinking water well."

Householders should visually check their septic tank and get their well tested at least annually to satisfy themselves that it is not posing a risk to the health of their families, their neighbours and the environment, he added.

Local authorities issue advisory notices to householders when septic tanks fail inspection. The report found there were 468 cases open more than two years at the end of 2020.

"Fixing septic tanks that fail inspection is a priority," the EPA said in response to the findings, noting the septic tank grant scheme, which offers grants of €5,000 to assist in addressing malfunctioning systems, was expanded in 2020.