



One year in Government: Achievements and highlights

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Introduction from the Party Leader



The last year has been exhilarating, challenging and hugely rewarding. Despite the ups and downs that being in Government will always bring, the Green Party has made a mark.

In my view, progress on climate change has been the highlight of our first year in Government. In December last year we saw the delivery of a transformed motor tax system alongside record investment for alternative energy research, tax breaks for energy efficient savings and the announcement of the phasing out of traditional energy inefficient lightbulbs.

The Green Ministers have gained a reputation for being the hardest workers at cabinet. Our policies have brought a fresh perspective to problems faced in this country, but change isn't easy.

Behind the scenes we have also been working on a range of policy areas, as set out in the Programme for Government. Influence in areas such as equality, immigration and animal welfare all take place away from the public eye.

I believe the question of whether we are better off inside, rather than outside of Government, has been firmly answered. What we must do now is to get the message out about the real and tangible benefits the general public are experiencing from our presence in Government.

Stronger local governance and a directly elected Mayor for Dublin

In April John published a Green Paper on local government reform, saying that the proposals sought accountable decision making and quality local service delivery.

The Green Paper proposes the introduction of a Mayor for Dublin with strategic functions and greater local leadership with elected mayors for all counties and cities.



Supports open way for €4bn investment in offshore wind

In February Eamon announced a major increase in financial supports for offshore wind-power, increasing subsidies from €57 to €140 per megawatt hour. The move will open the way for major additional investment in offshore wind.



Carbon budget delivers light bulb ban and motor tax reform

John delivered the country's first ever 'carbon budget' in December. Highpoints included: a ban on incandescent light bulbs from 2009; green reform of motor tax; new annual reports on progress towards meeting emission reduction targets; and evidence that climate change considerations are now integrated into the Government's budgetary policy and decision-making processes.

Achievements to date... Achievements to date... Achievements to date... Achievements

- 28 May 2008: New measures to enhance Dublin Bay.
- 26 May: €20m for university energy research.
- 15 May: New Irish film channel announced.
- 14 May: Broadcasting Bill a major step forward
- 12 May: Ireland's biodiversity a multi-billion euro asset.
- 6 May: Trevor secures €10m contribution to the world food programme.
- 5 May: Recommendations on Waterford Viking site accepted.
- 29 Apr: €3.5m for protection of local heritage.
- 28 Apr: Tighter controls on waste exported for recycling.
- 14 Apr: Dublin Transportation Authority Bill published.
- 8 Apr: Consultants appointed to undertake transmission network study.
- 7 Apr: Wicklow County Council directed to progress Sugarloaf protection..
- 3 Apr: Early success for red squirrel project in Mayo.
- 20 Mar: Substantial funding increases for conservation of built heritage.
- 29 Mar: Greens in Govt lead Earth Hour activities.
- 25 Mar: New bathing water regulations introduced.
- 19 Mar: Boyle welcomes pension fund withdrawal from bomb firms.
- 17 Mar: New Diaspora TV channel in time for St Patrick's Day 09.
- 14 Mar: Agreement on EU climate change plan welcomed.
- 13 Mar: New measures for sustainable electricity sector.
- 12 Mar: Independent study into transmission lines launched.
- 3 Mar: Enforcement powers of local building authorities strengthened.
- 29 Feb: Alteration of Limerick City boundary ordered.
- 27 Feb: New planning guidance on management of residential estates.
- 25 Feb: Overhaul of Dublin

New action plan to increase organic production



In April Trevor launched a plan aimed at achieving the Programme for Government target of 5% of land area in organic production by 2012.

Smart meters for every home

Eamon announced that a nationwide programme to install 'smart' electricity meters in every home to the grid would begin in 2008.

New electricity microgeneration programme announced

Eamon announced a pilot grant scheme in September that will allow users to generate electricity for their own use.

Tax Commission established

In February the Greens welcomed the establishment of the Commission on Taxation, as promised in the Programme for Government. The body is tasked to ensure that future taxes are fair and equitable and prepare the way for the introduction of a carbon levy.

Energy efficient building regulations for new homes

John published draft regulations in October dealing with energy efficiency for homes, including a mandatory minimum level of renewable energy for the first time and provision for 40% improvement in energy efficiency and a 40% reduction in CO2 emissions.

€26m for wave power research.

Eamon launched a major new ocean energy initiative in January that will see new facilities in Cork and Mayo, grants, and a new feed-in-tariff for wave energy.

'Green' planning exemptions announced

John opened consultations in October on proposed exemptions from the planning process for micro-renewable technologies – including wind turbines, CHP plants, solar panels and biomass boiler units – for industrial, commercial and public buildings and agricultural structures.

New support scheme for bioenergy



Farmers will be at the forefront of the fight against climate change, Eamon said in January, announcing new grants for businesses, schools and hospitals who install biomass-fuelled and anaerobic digestion Combined Heat and Power Units.

Achievements to date... Achievements to date... Achievements to date... Achievements

and Galway water systems.

- 14 Feb: Exports Bill passage through the Dáil welcomed.
- 10 Feb: New planning guidelines focused on creating sustainable communities.
- 31 Jan: Finance Bill includes green tax incentives for business.
- 30 Jan: Changes proposed to Limerick electoral boundaries.
- 23 Jan: Ireland on track to meet renewable targets.
- 21 Jan: Greens to the rescue of the otter and slug.
- 10 Jan: Brussels supports minimum bulb standards.
- 10 Jan: Study shows Ireland can surpass renewable

targets.

- 9 Jan: €21m for sustainable agriculture and forestry research.
- 9 Jan: New law to deal with junk-food advertising to kids.
- 8 Jan: Local electoral area boundary committee established.
- 3 Jan 08: New rules include free return of used batteries.
- 31 Dec 07: €6m for local recycling.
- 17 Dec: New agricultural grants announced.
- 15 Dec: Govt welcomes Bali climate deal.
- 11 Dec: €600,000 for community environmental projects.

- 5 Dec: Ministers welcome greenest budget yet.
- 29 Nov: New climate change campaign launched.
- 28 Nov: Greens address Seanad reform.
- 26 Nov: Free access to geotechnical database.
- 23 Nov: High-level group meets to discuss the sustainable energy.
- 19 Nov: Repairs ordered for Mayo nature site damaged by Corrib gas works.
- 19 Nov: Action plan for endangered red squirrel.
- 7 Nov: Extra protection for rare Hen Harriers.
- 5 Nov: €4m extra for recycling.

Monaghan County Council directed to vary development plan

Last July John directed Monaghan County Council to vary its Development Plan following the Council's intention to zone land for a potential additional 102,000 people – an increase of 182% on the county's current population over six years.

New oil and gas exploration licences to benefit Irish tax take

Eamon awarded revised licences in March for hydrocarbon exploration off Ireland's west coast which will lead to significantly increased tax takes for the state.

New pilot scheme to encourage domestic energy saving

In April Eamon announced a new home energy saving scheme that will encourage and incentivise homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.



John Gormley introduces new draft apartment guidelines which seek to improve the quality of new built accommodation in Ireland

New apartments to be bigger and better

John published guidelines for planning authorities in September aimed at promoting successful apartment living with better internal space standards and more storage space.

Diaspora TV for Irish abroad within a year

On St Patrick's Day Eamon announced that a hybrid RTÉ One/RTÉ 2/TG4 channel would be available within a year on a free satellite service to cater for Irish communities abroad.

Achievements to date... Achievements to date... Achievements to date... Achievements

- **1 Nov: Single electricity market launched.**
- **31 Oct: Govt pledges new laws on same sex unions.**
- **30 Oct: Protection sought for unique Irish coral.**
- **24 Oct: Archaeological review gets underway.**
- **22 Oct: EU closes nitrates case.**
- **17 Oct: Greens make progressive contributions to pensions paper.**
- **12 Oct: New water pollution regulations.**
- **3 Oct: Stronger controls for organic food and farming.**
- **3 Oct: Energy efficiency action plan unveiled.**
- **3 Oct: Preservation order placed on national monument at Rath Lugh.**
- **1 Oct: On-the-spot litter fines increased.**
- **20 Sep: Woodland SAC extended to include Cascade Wood.**
- **20 Sep: Boundary committee to examine Limerick borders.**
- **19 Sep: €20m funding for marine researchers.**
- **17 Sep: €5.8bn investment in water services.**
- **3 Sep: New phase for Greener Homes Scheme.**
- **22 Aug: Increased penalties under Nitrates Directive.**
- **16 Aug: John releases White Tailed Eagles in Kerry.**
- **30 Jul: New protection of Irish shellfish waters.**
- **23 Jul: Major public awareness campaign on climate change announced.**
- **23 Jul: On-the-spot litter fines increased.**
- **20 Jul: Social Inclusion Unit programme extended.**
- **19 Jul: Red Kites fly again in Wicklow after 200 years.**
- **12 Jul: Submissions invited for local government green paper.**
- **10 Jul: John signed new regulations to prevent illegal shipments of waste abroad.**
- **9 Jul: All three Green ministers chose hybrids.**
- **27 Jun: Special committee on Lismullin established.**
- **21 Jun: More stringent standards for building energy grants.**