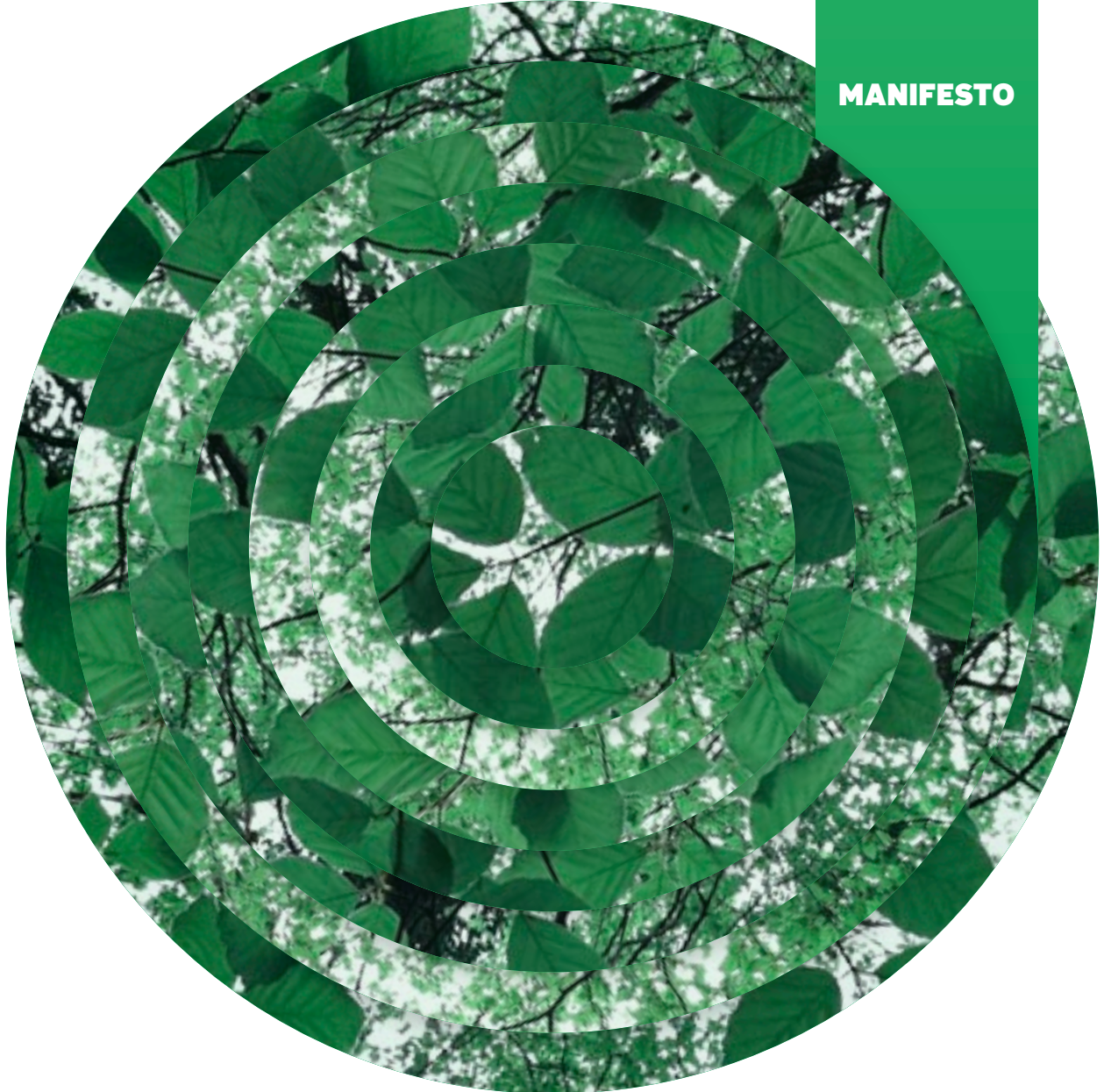




**green**  
party  
comhaontas glas

**MANIFESTO**



**TOWARDS**  
**2030**

**A DECADE**  
**OF CHANGE**



## Executive summary

There is now international consensus that we have just a decade to make the changes necessary to halt the warming of our planet and save our natural world. We need to rethink how we live, how we travel, how we work and how we consume. We, the Green Party, have a special role to play in this decade of change, because we have spent forty years thinking about how we can protect the environment while simultaneously advancing social justice, nurturing our economy and building our communities.

This manifesto details practical solutions that redress the damage done to our natural world and make Ireland a better, fairer place to live, with clean energy, cheap and accessible public transport and thriving rural communities. Every person and every place matters in making this a fair process and a just transition.

### In government, we will:

1. Urgently build public houses on public land to alleviate the housing crisis.
2. Invest in GP services to ease the pressure on hospital waiting lists.
3. Get Ireland moving by doubling investment in public transport, committing 10% of transport funds to cycling and 10% to walking.
4. Reduce pupil-teacher ratios, invest in third-level institutions, and end pay inequality in education.
5. Fast-track apprenticeship programmes to train the 20,000 workers required to adequately retrofit our housing stock. We will use European Investment Bank finance to help fund a major programme of deep retrofit of public and private buildings.
6. End the issuing of oil and gas exploration and extraction licences and stand firmly against the importation of fracked gas from other territories.
7. Future-proof Ireland's energy system with a massive investment in offshore wind. We will plan for the development of 5GW of offshore wind in the Irish sea by 2030 and 30GW of floating offshore wind from the Atlantic and Celtic seas by 2040.
8. Immediately establish a Just Transition Commission to bring communities, trade unions, businesses, and climate transition experts together to overcome obstacles to a fair transition to a low carbon economy.
9. Reward farmers for sequestering carbon, restoring nature, and producing clean energy, through a reformed Common Agricultural Policy.
10. Ban single use plastic and set up a bottle deposit and return scheme, to dramatically reduce plastic waste.
11. Hold a referendum to insert a clause on environmental protection in the Constitution.
12. Restore our peatland and expand our native forests to capture carbon and protect nature through a National Land Use Plan. This will begin with a scheme to pay farmers to plant one hectare of native woodland on their farms.





## Introduction

The next ten years are critical if we are to address the climate and biodiversity crisis which threatens our safe future on this planet. We believe that Ireland can rise to this challenge and that in doing so we will be able to improve the health, welfare and the security of all our people.

In ten years' time you or your children may be working in jobs that don't exist yet, in industries we haven't so far thought of and in climate conditions we often would prefer not to worry too much about. You may be raising children or caring for elderly relatives, supporting friends and neighbours, settling into your first serious job or setting out on a well-deserved retirement. Whatever your future holds we believe that the quality of that future and you and your family's well-being matters. How we live as a community is a choice, and we shape that choice every few years by voting in general elections. Each vote matters because under our constitution it is the people who are sovereign. We stand for election to reflect the common will of the Irish public and to help deliver their desire for a better future for all our people.

Our philosophy promotes fairness and justice, not just in the here and now and for those we love, but for other communities in less fortunate circumstances and for generations of Irish people in the not too distant future. We believe in making time for family and friends and creating an economy that allows us all to be well cared-for and fulfilled. This starts with providing for everyone's everyday needs – a safe and warm home, secure access to food, water and transport, and a healthy and stable environment so we can live in respect and dignity with each other and in harmony with nature.

The need for action in addressing the ecological crisis is a call to arms for this generation. We cannot afford to wait, and we need to address this ecological emergency with real urgency. Sticking to the status quo or claiming we can't afford to change isn't going to cut it anymore.

Our manifesto sets out practical solutions which can restore the natural world and at the same time improve our daily quality of life. It is a ten-year challenge because it will take more than one government to deliver the scale of change that is needed. We will not make the necessary leap if we see it as a divisive issue between rural and urban Ireland, or between young and old or if we turn it into a fight between traditional political factions.

Every person and every place matters in making this a fair process and a just transition. That is why we are committed to working with all parties to deliver the necessary solutions. We have a special role to play because we have spent forty years learning lessons about how to achieve this system change.

We believe that our response must come from the bottom up as well as from the top down. We trust in the ability of local communities to come up with climate solutions that best suit their local environment. We can use this transition to revitalise and support communities, creating places that are less lonely and more caring, by making sure that our enterprises serve our society and the environment and not just their own short-term interests.

We are going to reach out to each other and the larger world around us. We are joining the dots of finance, resources and community to craft a robust

and reliable economy that will foster a kinder and more empathetic society. We passionately believe that the only way forward is a synergy between these three key elements and we will continue to fight with all we have so that each one operates in service to the others.

Imagine Ireland in ten years' time if we manage to make the necessary changes. We will have created a new energy system where offshore wind and solar power support a local economy which is enterprising, efficient and competitive. In the same time frame and using the same power sources we can develop a digital services sector which fulfils the potential of the internet, by restoring public trust in its governing principles and by giving the control of personal data back to the people.

In ten years' time we will have created a new transport system where walking, cycling and public transport use become the norm. By planning properly and building for the future in a sustainable way we will be able to provide warm homes for all our people, reducing commuting times and restoring a sense of pride in our local places, where everyone has access and connection to their own beautiful local environment.

In a decade we could turn things around in Irish farming and forestry by employing a new generation of young people who are paid properly to look after our land. This team of climate heroes will be at the front line in providing us with healthy, regional food, restoring biodiversity, improving water and soil quality and providing greater resilience to the disruptions climate change will bring.

The new circular economy which comes with this Green New Deal will work best when everyone has universal access to health, housing and educational services. The economy is dependent on a healthy society for its success. Neither can exist for long in the absence of a stable and regenerative environmental system, which in the end provides for all our needs.

We're not just trying to save the whole world – we're going to make your world a bit better, a bit kinder and a bit greener. That's what our economy is for. That's what we call growth.



1.

**Addressing the  
Climate and  
Biodiversity Crisis**

## 1.1 Climate Emergency

The need to address long-term problems, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, is a key priority for the Green Party. We support the enactment of national legislation to respond to climate change and transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. This will reduce our over-dependence on imported sources of fossil fuel energy. It will also better prepare us for global events related to extreme weather, such as storms and droughts, which could compromise our food security and lead to increased displacement.

We propose the development of a new national planning process encompassing both climate mitigation and adaptation. Guiding that planning process will be five-year climate budgets, the first of which will be agreed in the first year of a new government term. We will seek to establish cross party consensus in the writing of a new National Development Plan which reflects these environmental priorities.

Transitioning to a low carbon, sustainable economy will require investment and reform on a massive scale. Environmental policy cannot be contained in a single government department. Our manifesto proposes fundamental changes in energy generation, transport policy, industry, land use, taxation, planning and housing.

Achieving this level of change is only one part of the challenge. During the transition, we will guarantee that local voices will be heard, and that policies will be implemented according to the needs of local communities. We must also ensure that the transition is just and equitable. If managed effectively, a new green economy is an opportunity to deliver social as well as ecological justice. It builds a new economy which can revive a strong sense of community as we restore the natural world.

By 2040, Ireland's power, heat and transport systems should no longer rely on fossil fuels and our agricultural system should achieve carbon neutrality. This is technologically possible, and would result in greater employment, energy efficiency, security, an improved economy, and improved public health, in addition to contributing to a healthier climate.

We know that the bulk of this change must take place in the next decade and that Ireland is far behind in meeting this challenge. We believe that the Irish people are ahead of politicians in being willing to show leadership and it is vital that

the next government starts to take immediate decisions that bring emissions reductions at scale.

The European Commission is proposing an increase in the overall EU CO<sub>2</sub> emissions target to a 50-55% reduction by 2030 and Ireland needs to set at least that level of ambition if we are to play our part in the transition. This will require at least a 7% per annum reduction in annual emissions for the next decade, which is far greater than the 2% annual reductions proposed in the outgoing administration's 'All of Government Climate Action Plan'. Denmark has already committed to a 70% reduction by 2030, with the acknowledgement that they do not yet know how they will be able to achieve the full change and that they plan to learn how to do so as they start the process. It is clear that they believe their country can get an economic advantage from being one of the leading countries in trying and testing new low carbon solutions. We see no reason why Ireland should not be able to adopt a similar approach.

We will work with all political groupings in the new Dáil to maintain the cross-party approach that has applied in recent years to see how we could deliver on this ambition. One of the first tasks of the new government will be to work with the European Commission in the development of the National Energy and Climate Action Plan for 2030, so that we play our part in delivering on the commitments we have signed up to in the Paris Climate Agreement.

We set the carbon emissions reduction target for 2030 on the understanding that it sets us on a course to achieving near decarbonisation by 2040 and that our country will deliver net emissions reductions by 2050. To meet this objective, we will also need decadal targets for sequestration in ecosystems and for reductions in methane and nitrous oxides so that they are substantially reduced to natural emissions fluxes for the Irish territory.

## 1.2 Biodiversity Loss

The biodiversity crisis is equally grave for our country and for the wider world. Globally we have lost 60% of all wildlife over the last fifty years which is reflected in Ireland by the fact that two thirds of our bird species are on the red and amber conservation concern lists. Half of our rivers are assessed as being in moderate, poor or bad ecological status and the number of rivers in pristine condition have fallen from 500 in the 1980's down to only 20 today. Half of Irish bee



species are in decline and one third face extinction. It is the same story in our seas where the loss of salmon, sea trout, herring and cod are examples of the wholesale destruction of the marine environment that is taking place.

Thankfully a lot of the solutions we will need to avail of to address the climate emergency can also help us address the biodiversity crisis. The restoration, rewetting and rewilding of the peatlands which make up 20% of our land area can help protect insect and bird life as well as storing carbon. Increasing the area under forestry cover from 11% today to 30% by 2050 can help restore biodiversity and water and soil quality if we do it in a way which promotes natural regeneration of forests and close to nature 'continuous cover' forests rather than monoculture plantations, designed to be clear felled. At sea, the creation of marine protected areas can restore natural food chains which also improve the capability for the sequestration of carbon in deep waters. Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy to pay farmers properly for storing carbon in their soils and using less intensive farming practices is also going to be good for Irish wildlife.

Central to the combined approach to these two emergencies is the development of a National Land Use Plan which aims to optimise water and soil quality, store carbon, restore biodiversity, reduce flooding and revive the Irish family farm as a new generation of young people are paid properly for the stewardship of our land.

Just as the Paris Climate Agreement frames our approach to the Climate Crisis, we should be taking a leading role in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, so that Ireland can deliver on the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and integrate ecological and social justice in a way that works for every county and for every sector in our society. Those goals are our best manifesto for the future and we will make sure that the Irish Government adopts them as the core direction for public policy.

To address the climate and biodiversity emergencies, we will:

- › Within the first 100 days in Government implement the Climate Action (Amendment) Bill to strengthen the powers of the Climate Change Advisory Council and introduce new five-year climate budgets.

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- › Draft new Ministerial guidelines to ensure and optimise cooperation and information transfer between An Bord Pleanála, the Environmental Protection Agency and all relevant Government departments.

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- › Resource the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the National Council for Forest Research and Development (COFORD) and non-governmental environmental organisations (NGOs) at a level appropriate for them to carry out all their functions and develop new areas of responsibility.

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- › Set up a system of multiple permanent and continuous air and marine ecosystem monitoring stations to address the current high levels of air and water pollution.

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- › Immediately implement a nationwide ban on smoky coal in order to address the huge risk to health posed by the burning of this fuel.

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- › Tighten restrictions on the harmful use of pesticides and insecticides.

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- › Strengthen the role and membership of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Advisory Board to have more expertise and greater input into the agency's strategy. We also propose allocating additional legislative and funding support to the EPA to increase enforcement.


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- › Establish a forum of appeal for the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control license system and to provide an independent route to review and redress where the EPA currently has full jurisdiction.

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- › Continue to support the proposition that a crime against nature be created in international law as a crime against humanity and future generations and that it be formally recognised as a Crime against Peace subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

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- › Create structures that will enable the creation of an all-island agreement on environmental protection and cross border enforcement of standards.

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  - › Introduce annual audits of local authority environmental performance and invest in local government environmental enforcement capacity.

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  - › Implement the recommendation of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Action as accepted and endorsed by the Dáil on 9th May 2019 to develop a new National Land Use Plan.

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  - › Seek to reverse declines in habitat richness, increase biodiversity, manage emerging threats from pollutants and invasive species, and expand National Park areas.

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  - › Provide better support for the restoration and planting of new hedgerows to provide biodiversity corridors, carbon shelters and nutrients in our agricultural system.

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  - › Legislate for the protection of our natural heritage such as hedgerows and wetlands. This will require planning permission to be sought for any significant land augmentation.

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  - › Improve water quality in lakes, rivers, streams, sea and coastlines.

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  - › Stop burning peat for electricity and prevent the resumption of industrial peat extraction following the High Court's striking down of Fine Gael's regulations purporting to exempt it from planning permission.

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  - › Undertake a major programme of peatland restoration and rewetting.

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  - › Implement educational programmes to involve the whole community in helping protect the natural environment.

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  - › Fund and support the National Pollinator Plan across all land types and require that any institutions in receipt of public funds fully comply with targets to promote and protect biodiversity within our insect population.

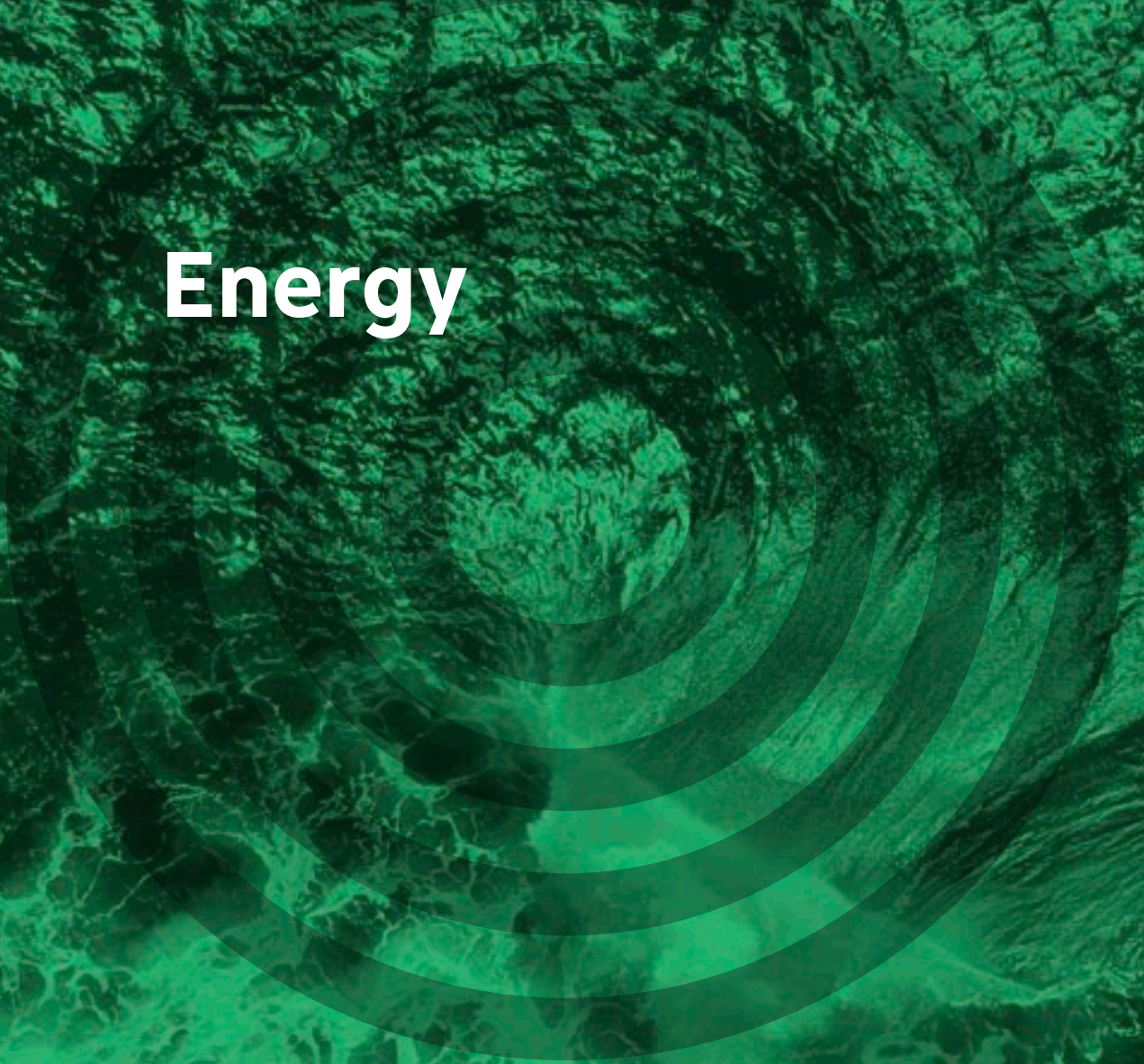
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  - › Resource and implement a programme of surveying and monitoring key red and amber listed birds of conservation concern (e.g. Curlew, Barn Owl, Corncrake) in order to ensure their conservation.

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  - › Declare a Total Emissions Control Area around the Territorial Waters of Ireland.

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2.

**Energy**



## 2.1 Energy Efficiency

The first priority in our energy transition has to be a reduction in overall energy demand. Zero Carbon Britain has carried out detailed analysis on how the UK could move to a 100% renewable energy system. Their modelling shows that the viability of such a transition is made possible with a 60% reduction in the demand for energy in heating and transport and a 40% reduction from cooking, lighting and electrical appliances, due to a combination of technological advances, regulatory decisions and positive behavioural change.

We need a new National Energy Efficiency Action Plan to deliver such a level of efficiency gain for Ireland over the next decade. While the existing plans have delivered an average annual energy efficiency improvement of 1.4% over the last two decades, this has been surpassed by a larger annual increase in our overall level of economic growth and therefore energy consumption.

One of the first targets for greater efficiency must be in the use of energy in our residential buildings which accounts for 35% of our total final energy consumption. In government we will introduce measures to deliver the deep retrofitting of 75,000 houses per annum as recommended by the Climate Change Advisory Council. Some one million Irish houses have oil fired central heating systems and we will replace the vast majority of those boilers with heat pump or renewable alternatives over the next decade. These measures would be transformative for households experiencing difficulty with their energy bills and would place fuel equality at the forefront of policy change.

- › We will begin this process by introducing apprenticeship programmes to train the estimated 20,000 workers that are required.
- › These workers' first task will be to retrofit social housing and public buildings where the State has direct control and access to funding from the European Investment Bank (EIB) under 'pay as you save' financing mechanisms.
- › We will also access EIB financing to provide core capital funding to back a State guarantee for finance raised for the deep retrofitting of private residential buildings. Such a loan mechanism would guarantee the retrofitting loan to the degree necessary to enable a very low interest cost for the whole amount.

- › We will follow the Tipperary Energy Agency model and ensure homeowners can access advice, oversight and quality management for retrofitting projects.

## 2.2 Energy Supply

The key to this new energy revolution will be to balance the changing demand for energy with the variable supply that will come from our abundant renewable energy supplies. Ireland has a comparative advantage in this energy revolution that is taking place across the world due to the extent of wind power available to us and the relatively low population density on our island. The cost of photovoltaic power has fallen 90% since 2010 and the cost of wind power has fallen 40% over the same period. The average cost of renewable power is now below the wholesale price of electricity and new advances in battery storage and in other renewable technologies is going to provide further impetus to the transition. To make the most of these opportunities we will:

- › End the issuing of new licences for the exploration and extraction of all fossil fuel sources anywhere in Ireland's territory.
- › Stand firmly against the importation of fracked gas from other territories.
- › Plan for the development of 5GW of offshore wind in the Irish sea by 2030 and 30GW of floating offshore wind resources from the Atlantic and Celtic seas by 2040.
- › Develop a new 'power to gas' infrastructure converting renewable electricity to hydrogen as a means of developing new energy storage and a transport fuel alternative.
- › Continue to develop our renewable energy as a net resource for trading across EU energy markets as part of a North Seas Offshore electricity grid, including the United Kingdom and our other European neighbours.
- › Invest in the development of smart grids to integrate distributed renewable energy and access the potential of demand-side management. This, along with increased levels of energy storage, will help us address the challenge of the variability of renewable energy.

- › Empower communities and households to install 700,000 rooftop solar PV systems in Irish homes and on 55,000 commercial premises by 2030. This will provide for 5% of our electricity needs. It will be achieved by direct installation on public buildings and by changing building regulations to promote the installation of PV panels during any major renovation.
- › Remove the current limits of 50%/12m<sup>2</sup> roof space for solar panels.
- › Introduce regulations to mandate large industrial users of energy to transition to zero carbon fuel sources and develop carbon capture technologies in their production processes within the next decade.
- › Develop a national skills base within the renewable energy industry and other related industries to maintain competitiveness in this rapidly changing sector. Having a strong skills base ensures the correct development of policy and support towards a low carbon economy.
- › Develop a generation and export electricity tariff for community-based, micro-renewable projects. For farm-scale projects to receive an income from solar and other renewables, legislation must be introduced which puts communities at the centre of future energy development.
- › Enable households to sell surplus renewable energy back to the grid to allow communities to benefit from leading the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- › Support the introduction of anaerobic digestion production networks, established on the basis of local and farmer cooperatives, using waste resources rather than increased agricultural production to provide the energy feed stock.
- › Establish a network of county or regional energy agencies with business models similar to the EU 'save' agencies (CODEMA, Three Counties and Tipperary Energy Agencies are examples of these). Government programs would be delivered via these agencies and administered centrally but delivered locally. All local authorities should produce geographical heat plans for the decarbonisation of heat.

### 2.3 Community Energy Ownership

Renewable power supplies have the advantage of being available everywhere and can be delivered by new community cooperative methods. The use of such local power supplies to meet local needs can be facilitated by improvements of the distribution grid which reduce the need to transport and store energy and can revive a rural economy where the resources are greatest. To facilitate a fast-paced energy transition to a model of community ownership, we propose to:

- › Redevelop our energy infrastructure to combine large-scale renewable installations, especially offshore wind, with a 'distributed energy grid'. This involves a switch from relying solely on energy flows from a few major centres to the periphery, to a system where power is also generated by a large number of small scale localised centres and used locally.
- › Create a National Community Energy Strategy to upgrade Ireland's legislation on cooperatives so that local energy projects can act as innovative electricity supply companies.
- › Introduce new micro-generation financial supports for private individuals and local cooperatives to empower all residents to supply renewable energy to the grid with feed-in-tariffs.

3.

**Transport**

The background is a green-tinted aerial photograph of a forest. A target graphic, consisting of several concentric circles, is overlaid on the image. The text '3.' is positioned in the upper left, and the word 'Transport' is centered within the target graphic.

A long history of bad planning has led to urban sprawl. This has combined with an under resourced and fragmented public transport system which does not work for many, hostile conditions for people walking and cycling, and billions of investment in motorways to create an over reliance on private cars, leading to some of the worst traffic congestion in Europe. We have long advocated for a radical rethink of how we get around in Ireland. The National Development Plan under Project Ireland 2040 commits €5.7 billion to national road schemes. A spend of this magnitude on further expanding motorways at the expense of improving and expanding public transport options is completely counterproductive when we consider the significant cost of the penalties we are already incurring as a direct result of our failure to reduce emissions in line with international agreements.

Investing in our transport system presents the opportunities of a generation to deliver improved quality of life and to tackle climate change. We will overhaul Ireland's transport system, making public transport a real option for the majority of the people in rural, suburban and urban Ireland. We will secure 10% of the capital transport budget for walking, 10% for cycling and will split the remainder 2:1 in favour of public transport over road building and maintenance. This strategy will allow Ireland to increase and improve the capacity of public transport and active travel while working towards free transport for most users. A rethink of our approach to public transport and active travel will allow us to vastly improve the quality of life for people in Ireland, freeing families from the financial burden of running multiple private cars while driving down congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gases.

### 3.1 The Commuter's Charter

We recognise that commuters are often poorly served by our existing transport infrastructure. If Ireland is to address the challenge of decarbonising our economy while improving the lives of its citizens, we need to dramatically alter the direction of national transport policy.

Our policy emphasises public transport for the public good and shared transport options that use less energy than individual cars or other vehicles and improve the well-being of commuters. We recognise that not everyone who wants to work can afford a private car, and children and people with disabilities are often excluded. The availability of public transport for activities not connected with work also serves to improve social cohesion.

To deliver on this vision, we will:

- › Introduce a 'one tag' scheme for multi leg journeys to allow users to take any number of trips in any direction on any form of local public transport for two hours after use of the LEAP card.

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- › Increase the priority of buses on roads (thereby reducing journey times for passengers). This would be achieved by expanding the Quality Bus Corridor network, constructing Bus Rapid Transit and implementing priority traffic signalling for buses.

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- › Improve the public realm in our cities, towns and villages by providing wider footpaths with quality materials and design that make it easier for people to walk instead of driving short distances.

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- › Provide more zebra crossings to prioritise walking as a way of getting around. We will amend national legislation so that zebra crossings can be put in place without expensive Belisha beacons on minor roads.

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- › Provide secure and sheltered waiting spaces in public transport hubs.

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- › Increase the provision of cycling parking at all transport nodes and facilitate cycling storage on both coach and rail lines.

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- › Make public transport free for all students and pilot a €365 public transport annual pass modelled on the fare structure first introduced in Vienna in 2013.

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- › Extend the LEAP card provisions beyond its current regional boundaries to develop a truly integrated national travel service that would offer regular commuters significant savings on travel.

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### 3.2 Walking

The recent increase in public transport usage relative to car usage is encouraging, but the reduction in pedestrian numbers is a cause for concern. We clearly need more investment in pedestrian infrastructure to make our cities, towns and rural areas safe and comfortable to get around on foot. Specifically, we will:

- › Allocate 10% of the capital budget in transport to walking infrastructure.

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- › Create a role within local authorities of Street Officers who may issue both parking and dog-fouling fines and who actively patrol communities to ensure that streets and neighbourhoods are accessible to all.
- › Introduce new regulations to reduce the waiting time to a maximum of 30 seconds for pedestrian signal times and ensure that all pedestrians have adequate time to cross the road.
- › Create a 'safe routes to school' programme to make it safer for children to make their own way to school and implement school clean air zones that will restrict car access.

### 3.3 Cycling

As well as being a huge benefit to public health, cycling needs to be an essential part of lowering the carbon footprint of our transport system.

We need to build networks of greenways in our cities and cycle-friendly infrastructure right around the country. Cycling in rural areas, if made safer and connected with proper public transport, could be a win-win as it increases mobility and helps improve our tourism offering. To enable and promote cycling we will implement the National Cycle Policy Framework, adopted by a previous Government in 2009 but not implemented. We will also:

- › Allocate 10% of the capital budget in transport to cycling infrastructure.
- › Accelerate the development of a network of pedestrian and cycling greenways across the country which will work for leisure, tourism and commuting needs.
- › Introduce a programme of bicycle maintenance and safe cycling education in schools to improve cycling behaviour and the safety of bicycles on the road.
- › Ensure that every County and City Council has a high-quality cycling policy and implements best practice infrastructure around housing and school projects.
- › Implement the cycle bus initiative around the country. This initiative is actively supported by local authorities.

- › Identify and retrofit the 50 most dangerous junctions in the country to the standards set out in the National Transport Authority's National Cycle Manual and the Department of Transport's 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' at a minimum.
- › Retrofit junctions with priority traffic lights for cyclists and convex mirrors that allow truck drivers to see cyclists on their near-side, where appropriate.
- › Ensure that all road upgrades and new roads include provision for cycling built to standards consistent with best practice in the Netherlands.
- › Ensure that cycle safety becomes a core part of the driving test, particularly for HGV and LPSV drivers.
- › Allow contra-flow cycling in one-way streets on specifically signed roads with low volumes of traffic, as is the norm in many European cities.
- › Allow cyclists to make a left turn when traffic lights are red, but giving way to pedestrians walking on a green man, as is the case in many European countries.
- › Have traffic lights programmed to give cyclists a head start, where appropriate, and deliver 'green waves' for cyclists on heavily cycled routes.
- › Ensure that new HGVs are required to meet design standards such as the Direct Vision Standard which ensure their drivers can see other road users.
- › Require all trucks to be fit by law with sensors, audible turning alarms, extra mirrors and side-safety bars to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians.
- › Review the operation, priorities and aims of the Road Safety Authority.
- › Introduce bike transport facilities on all Irish Rail trains. This measure will support bike commuters and bike tourism in Ireland. Every train should have dedicated bike holding facilities.



### 3.4 Buses and Rail

Our bus and rail networks have such a crucial role to play in terms of meeting our emissions reduction commitments, but years of underinvestment and poor management mean that they are not making the contribution they should be. We will address this by radically changing the way we invest in bus and rail in this country, and in doing so unlock the real potential for public transport in all parts of Ireland - a system that is reliable, affordable and accessible to all. Specifically, we will:

- › Increase the government subvention to public transport operators.
  - › Require that all new urban buses should be 100% electric or low emission hybrid.
  - › Maximise connectivity between and within different modes of transport by setting up more Park and Ride facilities and Bike and Ride facilities on routes into cities that are not adequately served by public transport.
  - › Continue to support the BusConnects project and its ongoing work with communities to optimise the layout of the proposal, ensuring that facilitating walking and cycling and creating a quality environment are primary goals of the project.
  - › Ensure that all train stations are fully accessible by ringfencing funding for lift repairs and station maintenance and by ending the practice of leaving stations unmanned.
  - › Expand rural bus links to improve public transport connections between rural towns and villages.
  - › Set out a timetable and work programme for commuter rail improvements in Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford City.
  - › Focus on increasing train speeds on all inter-city rail routes to better compete with car journeys.
  - › Progress the full electrification of the rail network and upgrading/expanding the following:
    - › the northern commuter line from the existing end of the DART network in Malahide past Drogheda
    - › the line from Heuston past Hazelhatch and completion of this line between Inchicore and Park West
    - › the line from Connolly past Maynooth.
- › Prioritise the completion of the Kildare Route Project Phase 2 and the Navan Railway Line (extension from M3 Parkway station to Navan).
  - › Reconsider the case for advancing the planning for the Interconnector (DART Underground) between Spencer dock and Inchicore.
  - › Commence construction of Metro North from North of Swords to the South of Ranelagh Luas station and initiate an immediate review of the three options for extending the Metro further South from there.
  - › Progress the appraisal, planning and design of the Luas to Bray, Lucan, Poolbeg, and Blanchardstown via Finglas, with park and ride facilities at the M50.
  - › Support the development of a light rail system for Cork and Galway cities and devise new urban rail plans for Limerick and Waterford cities.
  - › Review derelict train lines throughout the country with a view to revitalising and reopening some of the routeways as a regional infrastructural resource where appropriate.
  - › Restore and expand rail freight capacity to promote it over truck haulage and aviation.

### 3.5 Low Emissions Vehicles

We advocate for shared, public transport services over individual usage. However, we also support the increase in usage of electric powered vehicles and would undertake the following policy items.

- › Adapting procurement contracts in the public sector to ensure a preference for the rollout of electric vehicles in areas such as public service vehicles (maintenance crew, ambulances etc.) and company vans, where they do not compete with methods of public transport.
- › Requiring that all new public buildings include EV charging points and overseeing a national rollout of charging stations at every operational petrol station.

- › Ensuring that incentives for electric vehicles include and favour electric bicycles, velomobiles and other innovative lightweight EVs. We recognise that electric bicycles are the fastest growing sector of the electric vehicle industry and have the potential to massively complement investment in cycling facilities.
- › Promoting new e-mobility solutions including car-sharing, car pooling, ride sharing and municipal e-bike and e-scooter schemes.
- › Increasing the €1,000 spend limit on the Bike to Work Scheme to provide adequate support for the purchase of e-bikes.

### **3.6 Aviation and Shipping**

The transport of goods and people by sea and air is almost 100% reliant on petroleum fuels. To-date there has been no considerable shift away from oil as the main source of energy for this international sector. The aviation industry contributes over 2% of our global annual carbon emissions and this is increasing year on year. Shipping accounts for over 90% of all international trade and 2.5% of global CO<sub>2</sub>. We believe that both of these international industries must be brought into a regulatory framework for carbon emissions.

- › In line with the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommendations we support the creation of a global carbon offsetting scheme funded by the aviation industry. We also call for a global carbon emissions tax and that the voluntary aspect of the agreed resolution is revised and set as compulsory from 2020.
- › We support the recommendations of the EU commission to integrate shipping emissions into overall carbon reduction targets.

4.

**Housing**

We see housing as a human and social right, interdependent with good planning, transport, infrastructural development and land management. The government's housing policy and its over-reliance on the private sector has guaranteed that housing has become unaffordable both to buy and to rent for large parts of our population.

We have a long-term vision for housing for the 21st century – warm, comfortable and efficient homes in sustainable, active communities supported by excellent travel and transport options.

#### 4.1 The Housing Crisis

Ireland is facing a housing and homelessness emergency of staggering proportions, with the most recent figures indicating that over 10,500 people are living in emergency accommodation. We believe that the State needs to play a stronger role in increasing the supply of housing to ease pressure on communities. We propose the following specific measures to respond to the housing emergency.

- › Replacing Rebuilding Ireland with a National Housing Plan to build public housing on public land, directly procured by local authorities.
- › Implementing a cost-rental model for the delivery of public housing that creates affordability for tenants and a sustainable model for the construction and management of homes.
- › Empowering local authorities to access finance with more flexibility to facilitate the construction of social housing.
- › Reforming housing procurement methods to maximise effective and timely delivery of housing and value for money.
- › Reforming the Housing Assistance Payment to drive investment into the provision of new social housing units rather than relying on sourcing from the private sector.
- › Actively managing the public housing stock and reducing the number of weeks' vacancy arising at the end of tenancies.
- › Setting turnover and insurance requirements in public procurement construction policy to levels proportionate to the scale of the contract

being awarded to encourage the marketplace participation of small to medium enterprise.

- › Calling for a referendum on the right to housing.
- › Taxing vacant lands and buildings that could be used for housing.
- › Simplifying compliance processes to allow empty units above shops to be converted and occupied.
- › Drafting new national guidelines to empower local authority tenants to find the home that is right for them with regard to their current circumstances.
- › Improving land use by disincentivising land hoarding and by maximising efficient use of public lands, both from existing lands and lands that may be acquired by CPO.
- › Reviewing the Mortgage to Rent Scheme to identify and revise the factors that have hindered uptake including applicable thresholds and criteria.
- › Reviewing the Fair Deal Scheme to incentivise people to rent out empty properties.
- › Excluding income from the Rent a Room Scheme for the purposes of means testing social welfare payments, to encourage people to use the scheme without fear of their social welfare being cut.
- › Extending the Housing First pilot projects run in Dublin by the Peter McVerry Trust and Focus Ireland to other parts of the country without delay and resourcing the Housing First National Implementation Plan 2018-2021.

#### 4.2 High-Quality Green Housing

Our housing policy seeks to deliver sustainable, high-quality housing to meet Ireland's energy and emissions commitments. Implementation of the policy will provide Irish communities with warm, comfortable, efficient, climate-adaptable homes. This will be achieved by:

- › Implementing a strategic plan for deep retrofitting of the Irish building stock, including significant financial supports for deep retrofit of private and rented homes based on an assessment of the full range of benefits that

deep retrofits can unlock. These benefits extend far beyond lower energy bills to include increased comfort, avoiding repair costs associated with damp, reduced health costs, increased property value, the creation of skilled jobs and locking-in reduced carbon emissions for the lifespan of the building.

- › Ensuring that all social and affordable housing funded in whole or in part by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is certified to the Irish Green Building Council's Home Performance Index standard or equivalent and creating incentives to meet the Home Performance Index Gold standard.
- › Mandating that by 2022 all new buildings in Ireland will be designed and constructed to zero carbon standard.
- › Supporting and promoting alternative models to enable people to own their own sustainable home by means of new types for procurement and home ownership that provide people with a long-term secure interest in their home without having to finance land and construction costs upfront.
- › Making detailed property files available to all prospective purchasers/tenants of a building by aggregating files from the building control management system, safety file, DEAP dwelling report, and records from grant-funded works, wherever available.
- › Introducing building regulations on calculating and limiting embodied CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from buildings. This will help to minimise upfront emissions by reducing the use of high embodied carbon materials.
- › Investing in skills, training and apprenticeships for all trades with a focus on low-carbon construction methods.
- › Building new homes at a density appropriate to their location and the needs of the local population, with an emphasis on higher densities in urban centres and near work and transport hubs.
- › Ensuring that rental accommodation is high-quality and is regularly inspected for compliance with minimum standards. We will incentivise landlords to invest in appropriate retrofit and energy efficiency measures to reduce illness

and energy poverty arising from poor housing conditions.

- › Implementing the recommendations of the 'Safe as Houses' report.
- › Enacting our Homeowner Protection Bill to ensure that builders and developers have a duty to purchasers of residential property and to subsequent owners to build the dwelling properly.
- › Establishing an independent building standards regulator, exempting defective homes from property taxes, and establishing a scheme of financial assistance, such as low-cost loan finance and tax relief, to assist with the cost of repairing defects.
- › Requiring a building's BER score to be displayed on all property signage to better inform consumers and increase general public awareness of the energy performance of Irish homes.
- › Revising planning and building regulations to ensure that new developments – from one-off houses to new towns – are planned, designed and built with climate change mitigation and adaptation as a central concern. This will take account of flooding risk, increased driving rain, overheating, and the risks posed by extreme weather events.
- › Requiring rainwater harvesting to be included in the design of all new buildings.

### 4.3 Protecting Renters

In addition to rents in Irish towns and cities being among the highest in the world, renters in Ireland are forced to contend with insecure tenancies. To address this issue, we will:

- › Remove sale as a reason for ending a lease.
- › Resource and strengthen the Residential Tenancies Board to allow for swift resolution of disputes between landlords and tenants.
- › Introduce a form of rent review popular in Germany, which is to base rents on the official rent guide for the areas (the Mietspiegel, literally 'mirror rent').
- › Drawing from the recommendations of the NESC report on Ireland's rental sector, support

a move from four-year leases to effectively indefinite leases with a concurrent increase in the rental housing supply.

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- › Progressively tighten minimum BER standards for the vast majority of rental properties.
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#### **4.4 Planning and Community-led development**

Spiralling housing costs and gentrification have the potential to cause massive disruption to settled communities and to force households into housing distant from work, school and college. This leads to longer commutes which not only damage our mental and physical health but harm our planet as well. We outline the following positions to address this issue.

- › We support the cohousing model whereby individuals, rather than developers, construct homes in their own communities thus empowering them to meet their own housing needs. We propose to make public land available as community land trusts for this kind of development.
  - › We propose that the State identify key communities at risk of gentrification to ensure that direct supports and the available safeguards outlined in this section are fully in operation in those areas.
  - › We propose that in those communities in danger of becoming unaffordable for local populations the social and affordable housing requirement is increased to 35% for all new housing developments.
  - › Following on from an assessment of existing land owned by the State, we advocate engaging in a major programme of State acquisition of land and derelict properties as envisaged in the Kenny Report.
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#### **4.5 Healthy buildings**

Homes, workplaces and public buildings should be safe and comfortable for everyone. In 2019 we introduced our Healthy Homes Bill to tackle poisoning from radon, a naturally occurring, odourless, radioactive gas which is the second largest cause of lung cancer in Ireland. To continue this work, we will do the following.

- › Introduce a mandatory radon retention sum of circa €2,000 on property transactions, with the exception of properties where a radon test by an accredited laboratory has been made available to the prospective purchaser. This would be retained by the purchaser's or vendor's solicitor for up to six months, to allow testing and, if necessary, remediation work to be done.
  - › Roll out indoor air quality sensors and dataloggers in all public buildings for people vulnerable to cardio-respiratory problems, including school classrooms, patient areas in hospitals and care facilities, nursing homes and other relevant institutional buildings, and make the results publicly available on a website.
  - › Expand and refine the SEAI and HSE's pilot Warmth and Wellbeing Scheme as a national scheme to improve the thermal comfort, energy efficiency and indoor air quality of homes of people in energy poverty who are living with chronic respiratory conditions.
  - › Require the SEAI to notify building control authorities automatically of any provisional or final BERs for new homes that have been published which indicate possible non-compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations.
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5.

**Financing the  
Transition**



Sustainable economic and welfare policies are the best way to achieve social justice into the future. In conjunction with our international Green Party colleagues we are working towards the introduction of a circular economy that places a higher value on the Earth's resources. We seek to avoid damaging our communities environmentally and aim to reimagine the role of our existing market systems as being more nuanced than just driving a relentless increase in consumption and industrial growth. The equitable and respectful treatment of all members of our society is a cornerstone of this philosophy. Citizens and residents of Ireland can no longer be conceived of as mere economic units within a market structure. We believe that our society must recognise the value of caring, of community activism and commit to the right of all people to fulfil their basic economic needs.

Meeting our climate targets will require investment on a massive scale. We will meet the financial demands of this challenge by reforming our tax system, harnessing green private investment and issuing green bonds.

## 5.1 Tax

Ireland must develop a circular and sharing economy that operates in a carbon neutral manner. The current cycle of boom and bust increases economic inequality and leaves communities and families vulnerable to poverty and uncertainty. Rather than squandering periods of growth and encouraging our economy to overheat, times of prosperity must be used to provide the frameworks to protect people. The best protection that Ireland can afford itself during this time of prosperity is to widen the tax base, including a strong and fair system of corporate taxation. We need to strengthen our own indigenous enterprises so we are less dependent on foreign direct investment and nurture an economy that is based around improving our quality of life and delivering climate justice and greater social equality.

Environmental and energy concerns must be reflected in economic policy. We will incentivise environmentally friendly activities and disincentivise those that are damaging to the environment. Economic growth on its own does not lead to a better quality of life for all citizens. Fiscal policy should target inequities and ensure that all work, formal and informal, is rewarded. To achieve these aims, we will:

- › Reintroduce an 80% windfall tax on the sale of rezoned land with a proportion of the collected funds delivered directly to the local authority.
- › Restructure corporate research and development tax reliefs to encourage greater investment in third level institutions and to make them more accessible to small and medium-sized Irish enterprises.
- › Support proposals for a European Financial Transactions Tax, especially on speculative investments such as hedge funds and derivatives.
- › Where practicable, reduce VAT on products and services linked with energy conservation and renewable energy and other environmentally beneficial activities.
- › Review all areas of tax expenditure to ensure they are equitable, and encourage and reward activities with positive economic, social and environmental benefits. Our 2019 budget submission demonstrated that tax revenues can be increased substantially without compromising on social justice objectives.
- › Progressively limit tax reliefs on pension contributions where a pension fund has already accumulated enough funds to provide a pension of €48,000 per annum.
- › Pursue a wealth tax on individuals holding assets over €10 million.
- › Make corporate tax sustainable at the 12.5% rate by supporting the OECD process for global corporate tax reform which aims to stop unfair tax avoidance practices.
- › Set up a new Commission on Tax and Welfare to advise on the reforms needed to prepare Ireland for future macroeconomic, demographic and environmental challenges.



## 5.2 Site Value Tax

A Site Value Tax (SVT) is a recurring annual tax on the value of a site excluding the value of any improvements or properties. Site value is measured on the basis of the market value of the land under the property. We propose a SVT designed to incentivise land and property improvement, unlike the existing Local Property Tax. A SVT offers a number of benefits including discouraging land speculation and urban sprawl.

## 5.3 Environmental Levies

The tax system has a key role to play in helping to meet the fundamental challenges of converting to a 100% renewable green energy economy, meeting climate change goals, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing air pollution. We believe that the following tax changes are an important part of the solution to these challenges.

- › Gradually increasing the carbon tax in each of the next ten years until it reaches €100 per tonne and introducing a mechanism to return all the revenues raised from further increases to citizens by increasing social welfare payments and tax credits.

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- › Ending all fossil fuel subsidies.

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- › Reintroducing the flight tax and working towards a global aviation and shipping tax.

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- › Equalising excise duty rates on diesel and petrol.

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- › Replacing the diesel subsidy to farmers with an incentivisation program for the use of environmentally sustainable alternatives.

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- › Introducing a levy on aggregates extracted from the ground such as rock, sand, gravel, etc. and used in the construction industry. The purpose of this charge will be to encourage recycling of previously used construction materials and to compensate for environmental issues caused by quarry activities.

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- › Initiating a comprehensive review and public consultation on the alternative funding mechanisms that may be introduced to replace the revenue that will be lost from falling revenues as the consumption of transport fuels decreases.

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6.

**Employment,  
Enterprise and  
Innovation**

We believe that Irish businesses will benefit from transitioning to a low carbon economy. This change will bring countless opportunities for innovation as Ireland becomes a global leader in clean energy, technology and services in areas such as housing retrofit, renewable energy generation and carbon sequestration. We will see new, more productive and efficient industries emerge as we make this leap.

We must ensure that no community is left behind as we move towards a circular economy and go carbon neutral. We will put social and community welfare at the heart of this just transition by granting a political voice and economic and social support to affected workers.

We oppose the current importance given to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and related measures of national production/income in Ireland by government and policy makers. GDP focuses entirely on economic activity regardless of external effects such as carbon and methane emissions, habitat degradation, air and water pollution, economic inequality and the exploitation of workers and it gives no value to unpaid workers like carers or volunteers. While technological advances can reduce or offset some of these externalities, political decisions led by the imperative of increasing GDP will continue to miss out on what is important and ignore the real value of natural capital. We will introduce a new measure of national progress which will better reflect the lived experience of all our people and the long-term sustainability of what we are doing.

### **6.1 The Future of Work – A Just Transition**

As we move towards a low-carbon economy, we have a responsibility to protect those vulnerable to job losses. We will enact the Just Transition Bill which we introduced in the Dáil last year.

- › The bill will establish a new Just Transition Commission and mediation service which will work within a new form of social partnership, bringing affected communities, trade unions, businesses, climate transition experts and government together to see how we can overcome obstacles to a fair transition to the low carbon economy.
- › We will provide retraining, employment and social protection for affected energy workers and communities.

- › Bord na Móna should take a lead in this transition to a green economy in the Midlands. This would involve the development of training and job opportunities in a variety of fields such as peatland restoration, home retrofitting, green construction and novel horticultural activities involving the productive use of wetlands.

### **6.2 Ethical Trading**

We propose that all trading agreements and relationships on a micro and macro level should operate in harmony with the principles of reduction in consumption of resources, reuse and repair if possible, recycle and reclaim if viable, and to consider the whole life and impact of consumer goods during their production and use.

- › We will work in conjunction with the International Labour Organisation and their Decent Work for All campaign to raise employment standards both for Irish residents and global workers.
- › We propose the creation of an Irish Sourcing Code of Conduct based on the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code. Both Irish and multinational companies will be able to participate in this code. It will ensure that the trade of all products respects core international labour practices and will ban goods or services that are produced by slave labour or exploitative working conditions.
- › In line with our food policy and our agriculture policy we propose to move towards more regional markets of food production and trade that would deliver greater food security for the nation.

### **6.3 Community Solidarity in Business**

Our policies promoting community solidarity operate in accordance with the Green Party objectives of bringing decision making to the most appropriate and lowest possible level and promoting self-reliance within communities and regions.

- › We will expand the role of existing post offices and promote the reopening of post offices where they have been closed by increasing the delivery of public services through the network.
- › We support the development of a community land trust in Ireland and will advocate for the promotion of them legislatively and financially.

## 6.4 Business and Innovation

We believe that the business community should play a key role in the response to the climate and biodiversity emergency. Our policy seeks to develop a thriving indigenous business sector, allowing us to reduce our economic dependency on foreign multinationals. We will support this sector in creating jobs, developing innovative green technology, helping communities to thrive and improving our quality of life. Specifically, we will:

- › Match the Earned Income Tax Credit to the PAYE tax credit to facilitate the equalisation in the treatment between employees and the self-employed.
- › Set up a taskforce on climate-related investment to mandate that pension funds divest from any companies not meeting environmental, social and corporate governance principles.
- › Change the remit of Enterprise Ireland (EI) to support small companies that cannot be easily scaled. EI should help companies to invest in green and efficient equipment.
- › Introduce an open intellectual property policy within Irish borders to encourage academics based in Ireland to commercialise their research.
- › Promote share-based employment schemes to provide incentives to employees with company ownership to push for company success for themselves, not just their employers.
- › Place a greater emphasis on allowing greater SME competition for public service contracts via a Public Procurement Ombudsman.
- › Work with the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland to extend their Future Growth Loan Scheme.
- › Implement a capital gains tax roll-over relief for successful company venture exits that are then reinvested into further early stage investment into Irish start-ups.
- › Grant a capital gains tax exemption for the Employment Incentive and Investment scheme (EIIIS) to encourage investors to finance risky but worthy start-ups.

## 6.5 Employment Affairs

To guarantee a just transition to a low carbon economy, we need to provide workers with decent pay and conditions, income and job security and adequate representation and voice. These principles must apply to workers in all sectors and occupations and in every region of the country. We will therefore:

- › Support the vital role that trade unions can play in ensuring that workers have access to further training and education and that their rights and interests are upheld.
- › Reform Joint Labour Committees to remove the employer veto in setting pay and conditions. This will improve the conditions facing workers in sectors such as catering, hotels, retail and agriculture without overburdening employers.
- › Develop targeted and industry specific renewable energy courses for manual workers in general as well as for skilled tradespeople.
- › Reform the Back to Education Allowance with a view to improving third level educational opportunities for mature students.
- › Ensure that all labour market activation services are provided on a public, community or not-for-profit basis and that activation policies place jobseekers at their centre.
- › Introduce restrictions on non-compete agreements including for the formation of competing companies as they stifle innovation and reduce workers options to work within their industry of expertise.

## 6.6 Cooperative Business

We propose to create a mechanism to allow the transfer the ownership of existing businesses to their employees and stakeholders. This would be especially appropriate for businesses that may not be able to continue to generate adequate profits to attract outside investment, e.g. shops, post offices and other socially important businesses in rural locations.

- › We propose that existing shareholders of a business may pass an ordinary resolution under the company's memorandum of association to issue new share capital with the value up to 12.5% (or the prevailing corporate tax rate) of the company's net profits for the last full reporting year.

- › Shares issued under this legislation will automatically be assigned to the company's cooperative.

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- › Existing shares in a company may be sold or gifted at any time to the cooperative without either incurring capital gains tax liability on the part of the seller, nor gift tax liability on the part of the receiver.

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- › Non-profit financing for the purchase of shares in businesses by employees' trusts at face-value will be provided to the cooperatives by our proposed public banking system for SMEs, and by a special non-profit investment body that will be set up at a national level for larger companies, within the usual parameters of prudent lending.

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## 6.7 Digital Economy

With the increased digitisation of society and the movement of much of our social and economic lives online, we need a balanced digital policy that can support the innovation and access to information that is required to deal with the climate crisis, while ensuring safety and the protection of our human and civil rights.

It is paramount to create opportunities for digital inclusion and to facilitate access to information. This starts with equipping people with digital skills and promoting active digital citizenship through learning and training.

Public confidence in the digital revolution is increasingly being eroded by the use of personal data by both the State and corporations without proper consent, or through exploitative business models that turn consumers into the product in what has been called 'surveillance capitalism'.

Many of the world's largest digital service providers are based in Ireland, bringing investment, highly skilled jobs and tax revenue. These benefits also bring responsibility, and Ireland can be a world leader in creating a business environment that sets and enforces high standards that protect the rights of citizens here and across Europe. To implement our digital economy policy, we will:

- › Work to introduce a legally binding duty of care on large online platforms to put the well-being of people at the heart of decision-making processes.

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- › Introduce incentives to encourage innovation and diversity in online business models to provide alternatives to exploitative data harvesting as ways to generate revenue online.

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- › Introduce regulations to limit targeted advertising where targeting might exclude access to, for example, employment or housing opportunities based on gender or ethnicity.

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- › Introduce legislation to ensure the integrity of our elections by updating the Electoral Acts so digital campaigning, including online advertising, must conform to the same high standards of traditional campaigning.

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- › Increase the funding of the Data Protection Commission to allow greater enforcement of digital rights, and to ensure that Ireland delivers on its responsibilities under GDPR.

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- › Encourage the adoption of sensors and other technology to help fight the climate and biodiversity crisis.

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- › Continue to support net neutrality. The internet should remain an equal playing field. Your ISP shouldn't be allowed to charge you more to access selected parts of the internet.

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- › Adjust defamation legislation to protect the creators and publishers of legitimate critical, satirical, and parody content.

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- › Support the strengthening of fair use provisions in copyright law.

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- › Protect the privacy of individuals by limiting data retention and sharing in and by State bodies.

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- › Oppose web blocking systems. They are largely ineffective and open to abuse.

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- › Protect the right to access to uncompromised encryption and other privacy tools.

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- › Increase Garda capacity for dealing with online crime.

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- › Encourage foreign investment by providing explicit protection for personal data regardless of originating country.

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- › Promote the education of children about online safety, what their data rights are, and why it's important.

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- › Support digital literacy education for all ages across the country, to allow people of all ages and backgrounds to benefit from IT.

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- › Support the idea of Open Data for non-personal information, encouraging governments and organisations to make their information freely available and accessible online with the purpose of increasing innovation and creating opportunities for new businesses and empowering local communities.

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- › Legislate for the right of employees to not answer or respond to work related correspondence outside of work.

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- › Prohibit the use of facial recognition technologies without consent.

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- › Ensure that the development of new data centres does not hinder the meeting of our climate targets and investigate new applications for the use of waste heat from such facilities.

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- › Offer information for parents about protecting children from online harms.

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- › Implement the National Broadband Plan while exercising all available options to minimise the cost and maximise the use of the new service.

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- › Implement the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Communications on the future funding of public service broadcasting and progress the recently established Government Commission on the same subject.

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- › Continue the engagement of the Oireachtas Communications Committee on the International Grand Committee on Disinformation and Fake News, to promote international cooperation in the regulation of harmful content on social media platforms.

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## 6.8 Public Banking

To deliver on the aim of the National Planning Framework and get more balanced regional development across the country, we need a new pillar in our banking system which can deliver small scale commercial lending to the small and medium business sector across the country.

A Local Public Bank will have a mandate to serve the community in its region by providing finance and other modern banking services to the real

economy. This would fill the space previously occupied by the ACC and ICC, which were unfortunately sold to commercial banks during the Celtic Tiger years. Public banks such as these number some 1,000 and exist in 21 countries across Europe. These banks would also have a particular public mandate to provide financing and credit services to local small businesses in rural Ireland. The core features of the model are the following.

- › A business model that is not profit orientated. The bank must have profits to survive and grow but its core goal is to create value and sustainability for its community.

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- › A defined regional basis. The bank has a clear geographical area within which it operates, which allows it to gain in depth knowledge of the area and build lasting relationships with the community. Deposits raised in each region would be recycled as lending in the same region to ensure its future economic prosperity.

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- › A decentralised, network structure. Each bank would be independent with decisions taken locally. The network would own a service provider that would allow efficiencies and uniformity to products, costs and controls.

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- › A stakeholder model. The public ownership model allows the bank to avoid focusing on shareholder value and speculation and instead focus on the real economy.

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## 6.9 Tourism

The success of the Wild Atlantic Way has demonstrated the potential for marketing Ireland as a clean green holiday destination. We envisage ways of marketing Ireland as an eco-tourism centre. To make this happen, we will:

- › Create an All-Ireland Walkways Development Plan to establish long distance off-road walking and cycling routes as well as promoting sustainable, outdoor/adventure tourism.

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- › Develop food trails to build on our reputation for high quality produce.

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- › Promote youth and child friendly water sports to encourage activity and awareness of our maritime heritage.

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- › Develop 'Liveable Cities' with traffic-free areas and new parks to benefit residents and tourists. We reiterate our commitment to develop Liveable Cities with a focus on the right to affordable housing in urban areas.

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- › Separate out the National Parks from the Wildlife Service and provide for a large increase in the areas and resourcing of our national parks.

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- › Work with Fáilte Ireland to develop and promote Ireland as a long stay tourism destination to spread tourism more evenly across the country and to maximise the economic return and minimise the transport emissions from the tourism sector.

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- › Connect Rosslare to Larne and Rosslare to Galway as two new tourist rail routes at the same time as we upgrade the lines for commuter and regular rail travel services.

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7.

**Social Protection,  
Well-Being and  
Valuing Care**



## 7.1 Universal Basic Income (UBI)

We believe that the current system of social welfare payments should be reformed to support all recipients and to maximise their educational, social and employment opportunities. This requires an approach that can respond to people's needs throughout the life course and provide security of income and other benefits to all Irish families through ill-health, financial difficulty, employment uncertainty or the demands of caring for a family.

A system of UBI represents a significant realignment of our current economic commitments. UBI operates as a standard payment to every individual that is resident in the State without reference to their means or their ability/availability for employment. It is non-means tested and does not increase or decrease as someone's income changes.

We propose to move towards a system of UBI through gradual reform of the tax and welfare system. We will build on existing structures such as child benefit, the State pension and the Department of Social Protection and Employment Affairs working-age payments. Specific measures to progress the principles of the UBI include the following.

- › Introducing a trial study of UBI, similar to those carried out in Finland and Canada.
- › Preventing child benefit from becoming eroded by inflation.
- › Merging the contributory and non-contributory State pensions into a universal pension as recommended by Social Justice Ireland.
- › Introduce a refundable tax credit to supplement the income of part time workers.

## 7.2 Carers

The number of Carers in Ireland is estimated at 360,000. Carers struggle, with very little effective help, to provide high-quality care on an ongoing basis within the home. Many studies show that carers pay a high price for their work in physical, psychological and financial terms. It is also estimated that a third of carers eventually themselves become a financial drain on our health service because of illnesses developed as a result of the toll that long-term caring takes on their health.

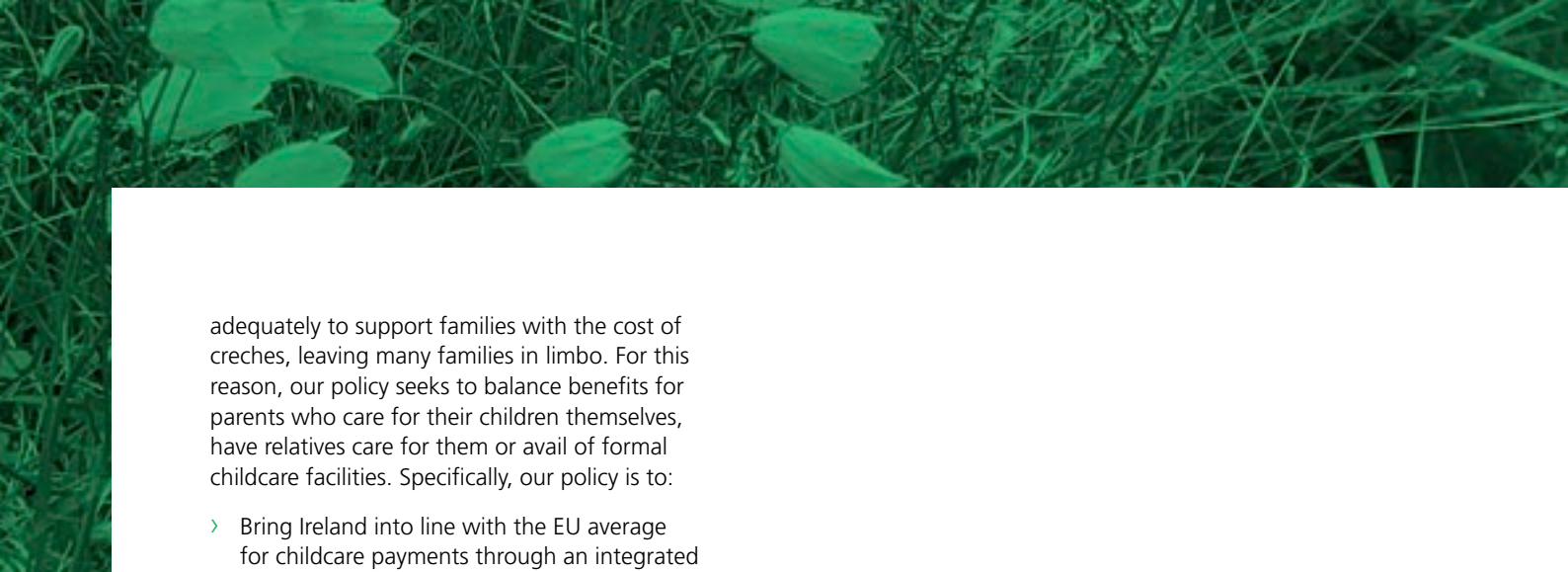
Our policy to value carers involves:

- › Promoting carer-led service provision through consultation to ensure that the most appropriate services and supports are put in place.
- › Entitling full time carers to 360 credits' worth of free long-distance learning under the internationally recognised Credit Accumulation and Transfer scheme for recognised and accredited third level institutions.
- › Recognising the immense contribution of carers to Irish society by raising both the basic rate of payment of Carer's Allowance and the scheme's earnings disregard. This will allow carers to divide their time between working in the paid economy and the unpaid economy in a way that best suits their needs.
- › Supporting the move to a Total Contributions Approach for calculating eligibility for the State contributory pension that values the work of carers. We believe that the allowance for home caring should amount to at least 20 years' worth of care over the recipient's lifetime.
- › Providing adequate respite care places and staff in a flexible manner for families dealing with disability. We also reiterate our commitment to the provision of a statutory right to adequate levels of respite care for all Irish residents.

## 7.3 Parents and Childcare

Families throughout the State are struggling with the cost of bringing up the next generation – commuting long distances, working long hours that don't fit into a creche system and paying rent to private landlords well beyond the real cost of accommodation. Our children are paying the price, with rising child homelessness and mental health issues. We believe that the State needs to take a more active role in supporting the care of our children in order to ease the financial and logistical burden on parents and safeguard the well-being of children, bringing care back into the centre of our communities.

While parents and relatives remain the predominant form of childcare used in Ireland, formal childcare settings are becoming more prevalent, particularly in urban locations. The State has encouraged this change by penalising non-formal childcare while also failing to respond



adequately to support families with the cost of creches, leaving many families in limbo. For this reason, our policy seeks to balance benefits for parents who care for their children themselves, have relatives care for them or avail of formal childcare facilities. Specifically, our policy is to:

- › Bring Ireland into line with the EU average for childcare payments through an integrated scheme of direct subsidies to families and supported caps on costs through local authority provided childcare.

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- › Ensure that all children with disabilities or who have other additional needs get support to access early years support services.

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- › Establish a comprehensive framework for the early education profession including qualifications, professional development and remuneration ensuring that childcare workers are incentivised to stay in the sector after graduation.

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- › Require local authorities to conduct a review and support service for childcare buildings to ensure that all premises have the correct planning status, the appropriate space and services for childcare and that they meet all requirements for fire safety and air quality.

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#### **7.4 Lone Parents**

The responsibility of caring for children as a lone parent should be recognised by the creation of a suite of supports specifically available to that group. We propose to:

- › Implement the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection's report on the position of lone parents in Ireland.

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- › Restore the age limit for the One Parent Family Payment from 7 years of age to 18 years inclusive or until a child has left second level education.

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- › Make the Maintenance Recovery Unit in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection responsible for the collection of all maintenance payments needed for the processing of social welfare payments.

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8.

**A More  
Equal Society**

## 8.1 Older People

Far too many pensioners are living in poverty and isolation, unable to access basic care and social networks. We are committed to improving older people's lives by ensuring that their living standards are more secure and comfortable and that they have access to healthcare and services. To achieve these goals, we propose:

- › To implement the National Positive Ageing Strategy on a whole-of-government basis.
- › To eliminate outdated mandatory retirement laws and push for a flexible approach to retirement options.
- › To work towards the adoption of a universal State pension as part of our proposal for a Universal Basic Income.
- › To guarantee a right to 'age in place'. This is comprised of a right to housing and a right to home care.
- › An urgent review of Nursing Home Support (Fair Deal) Scheme and the upgrading, renovation and retrofitting of existing facilities ahead of bed closures.
- › To retain the Free Travel Scheme for people aged over-66 and to implement measures to counteract the negative impact on the availability of this scheme caused by the privatisation of routes. Particular focus will be placed on increasing access to rural areas.
- › That palliative care be further expanded, with training in the process of dying and universal palliative care to be required for all clinical, care and ancillary staff.
- › To ensure that the climate action necessary for a bright future does not disproportionately affect vulnerable older people.

## 8.2 People with Disabilities

Different abilities are a natural part of the human condition. Some people may experience disability from birth while others acquire them as part of life's journey. Policies must move away from treating disability as a 'sector' and towards compassionate, innovative, inclusive initiatives that support citizens of all abilities to live life as fully as possible. Similarly, disability inclusion must be embraced by all Government departments and

public bodies or we will continue to disadvantage our citizens and waste precious resources. People with disabilities are a vibrant and valued cohort within our society and public policy and funding must operate more effectively to support them. We detail the following policies to enable people with disabilities to flourish:

- › An urgent review and increase in resources in therapy service areas that impact many people with disabilities.
- › The implementation and adherence to the existing Disability Act which places a statutory obligation on the Health Service Executive to begin an assessment for disability within three months, and complete the assessment within another three months, of an application being made.
- › An urgent review of the private provision of Home Care to people with additional needs.
- › The continued development of an independent advocacy service for participants in daycare and residential services.
- › All government and healthcare buildings within the State to be fully accessible and considerate of the needs of persons with disabilities.
- › As part of our commitment to choice, and considering the significant number of young persons with disabilities currently residing in elderly care or nursing homes, we will provide more appropriate holistic and medical care to these people and their families through Community Respite Centres linked to primary care providers.
- › All public transport vehicles to be fully accessible to all users and an end to unmanned bus and train stations.
- › The creation of specific services for people with disabilities who live in rural settings in current and future budgets and transport policies.
- › The provision of suitable and accessible mental health support to people with disabilities in the education system.
- › The extension of funding supports for people with disabilities in education to part-time students.

### 8.3 Gender Rights

The Green Party supports the amendment of the Gender Recognition Act 2015 to include recognition by self-declaration for non-binary and non-gendered individuals; to make recognition for trans people aged 16 and 17 equal to that already enjoyed by those over 18; and to introduce a system of gender recognition for children under 16. To further advance gender rights, we propose:

- › The addition of protection for transgender and intersex people to existing hate crime legislation and its inclusion in any new legislation.
- › To promote the installation of gender-neutral public toilet facilities for those who prefer/need to use them (separate from existing accessible toilets for people with disabilities).
- › To improve education for young people in SPHE/RSE classes to reduce transphobic bullying both in schools and after leaving school.
- › To increase the availability of support and medical services e.g. hormone replacement therapy, gender confirmation surgery, psychological services, and funding for support groups.

### 8.4 Reproductive Rights

Reproductive justice involves the complete physical, mental, political, social, and economic well-being of pregnant people, based on the full achievement and protection of the human rights of the pregnant person. Reproductive justice incorporates rights to housing, social welfare, and structural actions by Government to erode inequality. To progress reproductive justice we will:

- › Strengthen current sexual health education and make all elements of the curriculum mandatory.
- › Offer all forms of contraception and related GP visits free of charge. This would ensure that costs are not a barrier to family planning decisions.
- › Require that those providing counselling services related to people's pregnancies or the termination of their pregnancies be recognised under the Health and Social Care Professionals Council.

- › Extend paternity leave and increase flexibility, including by incorporating the circumstances of premature babies and providing additional financial support, where necessary, for the families of premature babies.

- › Support informed consent during maternal care and develop publicly funded primary health care services to support home birth for those who choose this option.

### 8.5 Women

Working in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030, we celebrate that Ireland is ranked in the top 10 countries for gender equality. However, progress is not inevitable, and we acknowledge that there is significant work still to be done. The economic structure of society has seen higher income groups benefit disproportionately from economic growth. Within this structure, we recognise that women are at a higher risk of poverty. To improve gender equality in Ireland, we will:

- › Carry out a review of taxation that is gender informed to address the problem that women are unequally affected by consumer taxes.
- › Introduce of a mandatory gender quota of 30% on the executive boards of all large companies registered in Ireland.
- › Progress legislation to require companies to publish aggregated data on pay by reference to the gender of their employees.
- › Ensure that a critical mass of each sex of at least 30% is adhered to in all political and policy decision making bodies.
- › Allow people to receive contributory pension credits throughout their working life, including times when they are outside of the paid economy because of caring duties.
- › Increase the level of paid parental leave to allow men to share with women in caring for children or relatives and running homes.
- › Rearrange political structures such as meeting times and Dáil/County Council session times so that family life for all politicians is better accommodated.

- › Conduct a comprehensive review of the decision-making criteria for public representations of important Irish figures. We recommend that the naming of new public buildings, statue placement and public representations of historically important Irish figures reflects the important role of women in Irish history.

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- › Provide teacher training to encourage more girls to pursue technical subjects, and ‘non-traditional’ areas of study, such as engineering, science and politics.

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- › Provide women with a real choice of home or hospital/nursing home birth. This includes the provision of mental health services post birth and proper recourse for complaints during maternity care.

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- › Prioritise funding to complete the National Maternity Strategy Implementation Plan on time.

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- › Include a free post-natal dental and physiotherapy check-up for mothers under the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme, in keeping with the holistic approach to health.

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- › Pay particular attention to the specific health needs of marginalised women such as travellers, HIV carriers, women on low income, women with disabilities and asylum seekers/refugees.

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## 8.6 Migrant Integration

In recent decades Ireland has benefited immensely from increased cultural, social and political diversity brought about by the arrival of a new generation of Irish migrants. Despite the value these people bring, some migrants and people from migrant backgrounds still face socio-economic disadvantage, discrimination and racism. Our vision is for an Ireland free of racism, hatred and marginalisation of migrant communities. To work towards that end, we will:

- › Develop a new Whole of Government Migrant Integration Strategy, and ringfence funding for its effective implementation.

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- › Separate to the new Migrant Integration Strategy, publish a National Action Plan Against Racism.

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- › Work towards ending Direct Provision and replacing it with a not for profit system based on accommodation provided through existing or new approved housing bodies. At the same time, implement all the recommendations of the McMahon Report to improve conditions for Asylum Seekers currently living in the system.

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- › Ensure that asylum applicants are given access to early legal advice, to improve the asylum process for both applicants and the State.

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- › Provide better support for women and children who are in the direct provision system to guarantee their wellbeing, including an adequate allowance, access to appropriate facilities and clarity in the law to prevent child trafficking.

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- › Support a path for regularisation of undocumented migrants, broaden access to family reunification and allow easier access to the labour market.

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- › Establish a new independent National Expert Body for Minority Ethnic Communities, Integration and Interculturalism.

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## 8.7 Travellers

We will take a whole of government approach to improving social and economic outcomes among the Traveller Community. We will:

- › Instruct the Department of Education and Skills to draft and implement a Traveller Education Strategy.

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- › Commit to developing a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Strategy with a robust implementation and monitoring plan, and to ensuring that Travellers and Roma are included in key mainstream policy initiatives related to employment, including the forthcoming Pathways to Work Strategy.

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- › Publish and implement the long delayed National Traveller Health Action Plan.

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- › Develop and implement a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Mental Health Strategy.

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An aerial photograph of a vast agricultural field, likely a cornfield, with rows of crops stretching towards the horizon. The image is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent white number '9' and a dot, positioned in the upper left quadrant. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green, from vibrant to dark, creating a textured and layered appearance.

9.

# Looking After Our Land

## 9.1 Agriculture

We believe that the agricultural sector, its outputs, supporting structures and stakeholders are at the heart of creating a sustainable society and a successful national economy. At the core of this sector, which is so fundamental to our national identity, is our farming community. We believe in viable livelihoods for those that farm the land. In an era of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, volatile international markets, product competition and new climate change agreements, the following policies will support farmers to craft a more secure future for their farm holdings, their local areas, their trade networks and the country as a whole.

The generational nature of Irish farming should be nurtured and protected, while providing opportunities for new farmers and producers to enter the sector in a financially viable way. Irish agricultural policy should support farmers to diversify away from an over reliance on dairy and beef production for commodity export markets. We want to develop a thriving horticultural sector to produce grains, vegetables, fruit and nuts, and other plant-based products aimed primarily at the Irish market. This move must help to refocus the sector to support Ireland's reduction of emissions as part of our EU climate change commitments. A shift away from an industry-led model to one which puts Irish farmers at the centre, is a must. The following are among the main points in our agricultural policy.

- › Unequivocal support of reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy to reward farmers for sequestering carbon, restoring biodiversity and producing clean energy. We believe that these reforms should seek to help small farmers rather than large scale agricultural enterprises. They should also encompass a transfer of funding from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2 to support results-based outcomes. We support the convergence of CAP funding.
- › Use of CAP funding and State agencies to develop more profitable routes to market.
- › Our significant reforms of Irish Agri-Food policy will involve an assessment of the remit and funding of State agencies such as Teagasc and Bord Bia.
- › An extensification of the animal agricultural model, one which places emphasis on biodiversity, habitat creation, carbon sequestration and soil health, and animal welfare.
- › An increase the land being farmed organically to 20% by 2030.
- › An expansion of the Organic Farming Scheme to support producers of cereals, fruits, vegetables, legumes and other plant-based outputs.
- › A substantial increase in funding for sustainable horticulture to support the development of opportunities in this sector.
- › Support for the development of agroforestry/ silvopasture on Irish farmlands.
- › Redirection of grant funding towards all farm-to-fork supply chain activities and measures that help farmers transition to sustainable farming practices.
- › The launch of a major marketing initiative to encourage consumers to buy locally-grown, pesticide free food.
- › Support for the establishment of local food processing facilities for local food producers.
- › The establishment of an 'Energy Efficient Farming' scheme to include a farm efficiency rating overseen by the SEAI, educational support and grant subsidies for onsite renewable energy options and the promotion of energy efficient technology for farm use.
- › Setting up a Government Task Force on Farming and Biodiversity with representation from all relevant stakeholders from the agricultural and ENGO community.
- › Increasing the proportion of Irish land that is farmed according to the principles of High Nature Value farming.
- › The establishment of a National Action Plan on Biodiversity in Agriculture to promote strategies for companion planting and polycultural growing methods in previously mono-cultural crops.
- › The publication of a National Soil Strategy that prioritises soil protection and appropriate management practices.
- › The prioritisation of research funding to examine carbon sequestration mechanisms



in farming and to examine the impacts of pesticides, slurry and fertilisers on soil health.

- › Assisting young farmers in getting access to land and introducing legislative, legal and financial mechanisms to facilitate lease agreements between farmers.
- › Ensuring that agricultural education courses include adequate training in the areas of biodiversity and climate and environmental protection.
- › Keeping Ireland GMO free at this time.

## 9.2 Animal Welfare

Animals should be recognised as sentient beings to be protected from maltreatment and abuse at the hands of humans, and to live in accordance with their natural instincts and needs. The exploitation of animals should be avoided as far as possible, and to the extent that it occurs, should be carried out humanely and with respect for animals' natural behaviours and needs. To make this case in Ireland, we will:

- › Adopt higher welfare standards for all farmed animals and press for measures under the CAP which will support those implementing higher welfare standards.
- › Support a significant increase in funding for animal welfare organisations.
- › Improve pig welfare, and uphold the EU Pigs Directive, which prohibits mutilations such as tail docking, and we will support the development of a high-welfare outdoor-reared pig sector.
- › Improve the welfare of poultry by supporting a ban on all types of cages for laying hens.
- › Ban the live export of livestock for slaughter to non-EU countries and phase-out the live export of unweaned calves by exploring other market opportunities.
- › Support a Bord Bia funded bonus for 'zero-movement' beef bred cattle which are born, raised and slaughtered from the farm of origin.
- › Support the introduction of 'honest labelling' for animal products, which would include details such as methods of rearing and production.

- › End badger culling by rolling out badger vaccination.
- › Phasing out of public funding to the greyhound racing industry.
- › Stop the hunting of wild animals with hounds and end coursing with live hares.
- › See through the government's commitment to phasing out fur farming of all species.
- › Promote responsible pet ownership through the school curriculum.
- › Improve the welfare of animals in zoos and wildlife parks by upholding the EU Zoos Directive.
- › Ban all non-medical animal experimentation and support the three R's – reduction, refinement and replacement.
- › Support the introduction of regulations on the species and type of animal that can be bred, kept, sold or supplied.
- › Ensure that tougher sentences are applied to those found guilty of animal cruelty.
- › Support stronger regulation on dog breeding and stronger enforcement of relevant legislation.

## 9.3 Food and Drink

Safe, fresh, nutritious food is a basic right for all and is essential for the wider health and wellbeing of our society. Quality food production drives the national economy and is an important source of employment, especially in rural areas. We must ensure that our food production and distribution systems safeguard the environment and our reputation for high quality food. We believe that government must address issues of food security at the individual, local, national and global level. We advance the following policy positions in the area of food and drink.

- › The formation of publicly owned community markets in all towns nationwide, which should showcase local produce and provide revenue for local farmers and food producers.
- › The encouragement of community involvement in food growing through allotments and community and school gardens.

- › Tax incentives for farmers to rent land to communities wishing to obtain land for allotments and growing.
- › Introduction of a food module to the primary school curriculum dealing with all aspects of food, from its growth and production, to its nutritional content and how to cook it.
- › Linking local farm produce to schools through the School Meals Programme.
- › Improving the quality and nutrition of food served in other public-sector areas such as schools, hospitals, government buildings, local authority premises, etc., and pushing for local food procurement policies for the public sector.
- › Reducing food waste which currently costs the economy €100 million per year.
- › We propose to introduce a levy similar to the sugar tax on palm oil.
- › Initiatives such as peer-led cooking clubs should be encouraged at local-level, allowing knowledge sharing and contributing to vibrant communities.
- › Support supply chains in a post Brexit economy with consideration for small and medium enterprises in the food and drinks industry.
- › We propose the nationwide provision of between 6,000 and 8,000 public water fountains that will provide free water to users who bring their own bottles.

## 9.4 Forestry

Trees and forests store carbon, clean the air, mitigate water movements, prevent soil erosion, provide habitats for flora and fauna and provide amenity for the public. Most of these services have not been valued, but in the case of carbon capture, Irish forests planted since 1990 store 4 million tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, at the same time saving Irish tax payers €44 million per annum in Kyoto penalties alone.

We want to make a fundamental change in Irish forestry policy away from a narrow vision of 30 year clear-fell cycle to a permanent woodland approach that would provide greater and more diverse social, environmental and economic benefits to society as a whole. We aim for a target of 30% tree coverage by 2050.

To achieve these aims, we will:

- › Implement a forestry policy that will move away from large-scale monoculture of fast-growing species such as Sitka spruce on 'marginal land' towards mixed, diverse forestry, with a wider range of services, benefits and forest products.
- › Set a minimum target of 20,000 ha of afforestation per year over the next decade.
- › Develop a new afforestation programme which will start with the payment of a special planting grant to 120,000 farmers around the country for the planting of one hectare of woodland on their farm which will act as a carbon store, help promote wildlife corridors and provide a future fuel source for the household.
- › Retain the commercial forests of Coillte in public ownership.
- › Establish a new mandate for Coillte which will deliver multiple benefits including environmental and community objectives, as well as the production of high-quality timber.
- › Promote a move to Close to Nature-Continuous Cover forestry systems to ultimately create permanent biodiverse forests containing trees of all ages.
- › Engage local authorities and local communities in a radical expansion of urban tree planting and neighbourhood and community forests.
- › Plant 'protection forests' along rivers and lakes to protect water quality and assist in managing flood risks.
- › Facilitate the regeneration of natural woodlands through the promotion of more rigorous management plans for invasive species and overgrazing.
- › Increase investment in higher and further education and training for foresters.
- › Insist on full compliance with the Forest Consent System, the Bird and Habitats Directive and the catchment management approach of the Water Framework Directive.
- › Propose that importation into Ireland of illegally logged timber must be subject to immediate regulation and that Ireland must implement the Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade FLEGT.

## 9.5 Fisheries

Our sea area is ten times the size of our land area and its ecological status is in crisis because of climate change and the unsustainable fisheries policies that have continued for decades. We can restore habitats and increase the ability of the marine system to abate the worst effect of climate change by designating large marine protected areas.

- › We will designate 50% of Irish territorial waters as Marine protected areas to heed the advice of the Ecologist E.O. Wilson that half of the natural world needs to be protected in this way. The selection and management of the areas will be informed and combined with a major scientific survey, assisted by all relevant State agencies, of the changes that are taking place in the North West Atlantic due to climate change.
- › We propose that any increase in real fishing outputs must correspond to commitments to sustainable strategies for the sector.
- › We support an end to the licensing of offshore salmon farming and a switch to closed loop onshore salmon farms.
- › We propose that all processing plants and boats over an agreed size should be Marine Stewardship Council certified.
- › We will ban the practice of Pair Trawling in Irish coastal waters.

## 9.6 Rural Regeneration

We have to protect all our people in the move away from a high carbon lifestyle. A failure to invest by recent governments means that many people in Ireland are dependent on cars and fossil fuel energy. We believe in ensuring that Ireland has a network of vibrant rural communities, towns and villages that are economically independent, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable. We are working towards an Ireland where people of all ages can contribute positively towards a living countryside. Many people who live in rural Ireland are striving to be part of the climate action movement but are experiencing fuel poverty, restricted access to services and poor public transport. For many this means that living in a carbon neutral way is even more difficult. We propose several policy measures to reach out to those groups and provide options that will enrich our way of life and strengthen our communities.

Specifically, we will:

- › Expand the Rural Transport Programme and supplement it with more scheduled bus services.
- › Reverse the policy to charge families for the Primary and Post-Primary School Transport Schemes and seek to expand them and improve ease of access.
- › Facilitate the regeneration of town centres. We believe that more attractive living options in town centres, including above shops, would greatly enhance rural life.
- › Increase funding to address mental health/ isolation issues in rural communities.
- › Propose a proactive approach to licensing local bus services by the licensing authority and the direct support of existing routes. The basis of contracts to transport providers, including those for school transport, should require that bus capacity is appropriate to route requirements.
- › Begin both the nationwide plan for building retrofit and installing EV charging infrastructure in rural regions.
- › Propose to have local authority planning procedures that allow for participatory budgeting.
- › Ringfence funding to Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) for a period of five years to allow the community and voluntary sector to develop strategic plans, based on sustainable guaranteed funding of LEOs.
- › Implement the National Broadband Plan and support the development of working from home initiatives in the public and other State services.
- › Include cycle and walking paths in all road planning assessments across Ireland, where appropriate.
- › Support the development of more on-farm opportunities in the tourism sector.
- › Promote co-ops and market gardening; artisan food; small-scale poultry, farm-gate enterprises and farmer markets.

## 9.7 Water

Water is one of our most precious resources and every human has a basic right to sufficient, safe, and affordable water. We will support a constitutional referendum on the provision of water to every resident of the nation and use that opportunity to consider wording which enhances the rights of the environment in our Constitution. Today, some of our communities in Ireland do not have a safe water supply, with ongoing boil notices and up to 140,000 households across the country receiving their water through lead pipes. Anticipated increases in population and agricultural growth could put greater pressure on our water supply. Therefore, conservation, investment, and fairness should be at the heart of our water services.

- › We will amend the Constitution to insert a provision prohibiting the privatisation of public water supplies and promoting the protection of our natural world.
- › We will reform Irish Water, with much of the day to day operation of the water supply being run on a regional basis, based around river catchment districts and vested within the local authorities in each catchment area.
- › Our policy will be to continue the free allowance of water to every citizen to meet their basic everyday needs and provide an extra free allocation for people with specific health needs. There will continue to be a charge for excessive use and disposal of water over this amount. Further assistance should be given to low income households for the installation of water efficient appliances.
- › Our water infrastructure needs investment to optimise the supply of drinking water and protect our waterways. An upgrade of lead pipes and the fixing of leaks will be one of our top priorities.
- › We will carry out a feasibility study on installing local treatment systems so that each area can be responsible for its own waste and reduce the volume of water entering the treatment system through use of local soakage systems, limiting blanket concreting of roads, paths, driveways in housing estates. Increased tree planting and establishment or renewal of wetland areas to absorb rainwater.

- › In conjunction with the EPA we will support a review of the effects of the nitrates derogation and, if deemed necessary, we will phase it out.

## 9.8 Flooding

There is no single answer to preventing flooding. Rather we propose a combination of solutions: using local knowledge of past flooding and water movements, restoring floodplains, using existing bogs as soakage areas as well as replanting some of them, planting native woodland in appropriate areas, and water management. We have a plan for flooding, one that combines a short-term coordinated response to the crisis with long-term planning of our cities and towns. The devastation of flooding doesn't have to be inevitable. To implement this plan, we will:

- › Create a single Emergency Response Agency involving local authorities, government departments, Gardaí, Defence Forces, Civil Defence and emergency services in coordinated planning and response to emergency situations, particularly in relation to the Shannon Basin.
- › Adopt ecological measures to manage our river catchments to benefit communities who live and work near vulnerable areas.
- › Develop land use management plans for each river catchment in the State and begin a process of utilising land to attenuate flood waters.
- › Prevent poorly regulated urbanisation which has led to construction on floodplains.
- › Carry out an immediate review of the flood protection plans for Cork City and commission a study into the costs and benefits and best engineering solutions for the introduction of the tidal barrage in the Cork Harbour area to protect the city from future sea level rise.
- › End denudation of our upland and blanket bogs and introduce a nationwide scheme to rewet and restore all of our raised and blanket bogs. This will help in flood prevention and biodiversity restoration and is also one of our most effective climate mitigation measures.
- › Upgrade infrastructure to enable it to take on higher levels of rainfall, be it roads, bridges, culverts, and better equip the Civil Defence, Fire Brigade and other rescue services.

## 9.9 Waste and the Circular Economy

We strive to gradually move Ireland from a linear economy to a circular one. This will be done by developing a stronger recovery industry, reducing imported goods, and developing an associated manufacturing industry. Ireland must set a recycling and composting target of at least 80% by 2030. Austria has already achieved 63% and Germany has achieved 62%. We estimate that there is the potential to create 4,500 jobs through increased recycling.

- › We propose the immediate implementation of our Waste Reduction Bill to reduce the use of single use plastics and provide a nationwide deposit and return scheme for beverage containers.

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- › We do not regard mass burn incineration as a sustainable technology. We therefore propose to discontinue plans to build incinerators anywhere in Ireland. This method of waste treatment simply creates an incentive for waste creation and a centralisation of operation, neither of which are sustainable.

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- › We will seek to balance landfill levies with incineration levies to ensure the highest rates of waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Only in this way can society move towards a circular economy which is the basis for a truly sustainable future. We would seek to end reliance on incineration by 2040.

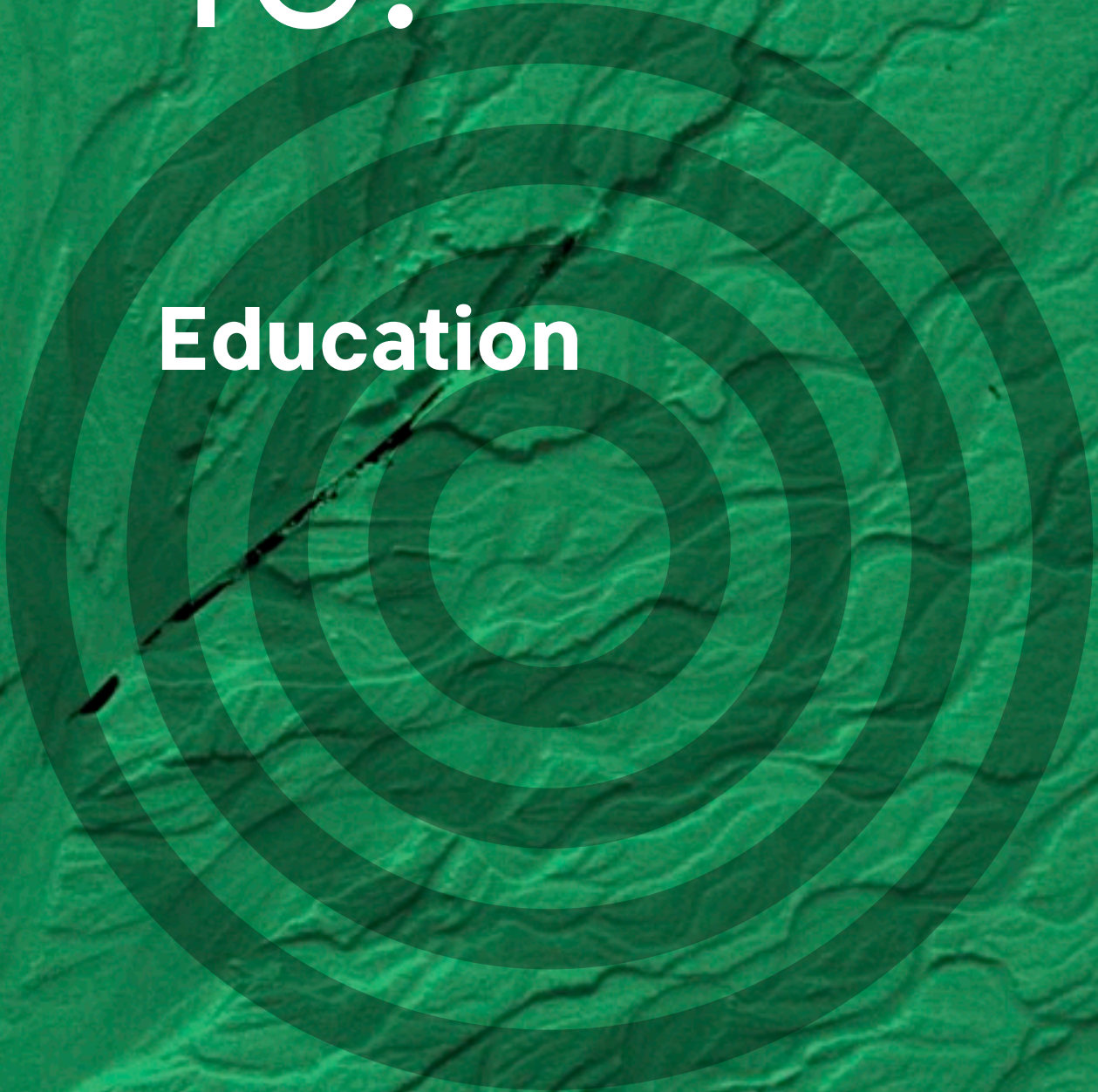
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- › We propose that services to repair and reuse consumer goods be exempt from VAT.

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- › The effort and intention of consumers in recycling their waste should always be respected. Therefore, waste management legislation should be amended to prohibit and criminalise the intentional incineration of household and commercial waste which is suitable for recycling and has been separated with this intention, implicit or explicit.

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10.

**Education**



Education is fundamental to supporting an enlightened, fair and democratic society. Our aim is to support and develop a high-quality, inclusive education system that strengthens communities, contributes to the economy, cherishes the environment and adds to the health and wellbeing of all learners.

While Ireland's education system has historically been held in high esteem, the knowledge and skills required of learners in a much-needed green revolution are no longer the same as those of the industrial age. We will reform our education system to support all learners to meaningfully and creatively engage with the world around them and prepare them for the challenges and successes of the future.

### 10.1 Excellence in Education

Schools, college and universities should build creative and nurturing environments, where students learn how to meaningfully engage in civic, community, environmental, technological and economic ways. We will support excellence in education by:

- › Reducing pupil-to-teacher ratios at first and second level with a particular focus on DEIS schools.
- › Addressing teacher shortages for subject-specific and substitute teachers.
- › Reinstating the school capitation grant to pre-2010 levels for all schools.
- › Reviewing primary and secondary curricula to meet the needs of the 21st century.
- › Funding third level and further education to prepare students for the society and economy of the future.
- › Exploring the phasing out of homework in primary schools.
- › Providing one administrative day every week for teaching principals.

### 10.2 Equality in Education

Everyone who takes part in education deserves to be treated equally. We will support equality of access and opportunity in education by:

- › Eliminating pay inequality for teachers who joined the workforce since 2011.
- › Establishing nationwide book schemes and ending voluntary school contributions in publicly funded schools.
- › Prioritising supports for homeless students, students in direct provision and students from disadvantaged areas to help them stay and progress in education.
- › Extending funding of the SUSI grant scheme to more third-level students.
- › Providing permanent contracts to key administrative school staff, including school secretaries and caretakers.

### 10.3 Inclusion in Education

Inclusion in education is recognised as a basic human right and is the foundation for a more just and equal society. We will support inclusion in education by:

- › Funding specific resources (particularly Special Needs Assistants) and special classrooms for children with Special Educational Needs to meet local demand.
- › Mapping school catchment areas to ensure enrolment for all learners at primary and post-primary levels.
- › Enacting the Oireachtas education committee recommendations in relation to relationship and sexuality education, particularly related to the well-being and inclusion of LGBTQ+ students.
- › Ensuring that students' ethnicity and religion (or non-religion) are not barriers to their enrolment and participation in school.
- › Recognising school as an important environment for young people which supports their mental health and well-being, as well as recognising the importance of the positive mental health of teachers and staff.
- › Developing and implementing a strategy for adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

## **10.4 Education as a Key to a Greener Future**

The structures within our education system have the potential to contribute to a flourishing and diverse environment. We will ensure that education contributes to a greener future by:

- › Increasing the availability and awareness of green apprenticeships.

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- › Investing in safe cycle and walking routes to school, school transport infrastructure and free public transport for students – including school health zones which would move car drop off points to a safe distance from schools.

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- › Conducting a review of how schools are planned and designed to consider the safety and sustainability of schools.

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- › Developing an Irish cultural studies subject which values the heritage, language, nature, biodiversity and culture of Ireland in the global landscape.

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- › Equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to prepare for and tackle the global climate crisis, through extended youth platforms and additional supports for green community projects and research.

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Given the need to re-evaluate the outcomes of education and the necessity for structural changes at all levels in our education system, we propose a national Citizens' Assembly for Education (CAFE). Given the successes of previous Citizens' Assemblies, this assemblage of students, parents, educators, policy makers, researchers and other experts would provide an opportunity to consider the philosophy, values and purposes of education for the 21st century.



11.

**Arts, Heritage  
and Culture**

## 11.1 The Arts

We recognise the critical importance of the arts for the flourishing of society. We also recognise the diversity of artistic and creative activities in Ireland and the significant economic value of our creative culture both nationally and internationally. To enable the arts to continue to prosper in Ireland, we will:

- › Introduce multi-year funding for larger arts organisations to allow for long term planning.
- › Provide art education at every stage of primary and secondary level and expand and mainstream the Creative Schools Programme to develop artistic talent and audiences for the future.
- › Continue the Section 481 tax incentives for the industry beyond 2024. We will also engage with key stakeholders on these incentives to ensure they operate efficiently and in the best interests of the country.
- › Ensure that Local Authorities allocate sufficient funding to allow the fulfilment of long-term strategic cultural and arts planning.
- › Recognising the role that technology and innovation will play in the future of our artistic and cultural life, seek to form joint ventures between our enterprise and tourism bodies and our artistic and cultural organisations.
- › Introduce a match-funding scheme for arts organisations totalling €5m per year in rural and peripheral communities. Whatever groups fundraise themselves will be matched by government on a one-to-one basis, up to a maximum of €10,000, with a minimum threshold of €2,500.
- › Propose that planning legislation should make room for artistic, cultural and creative space in all new public developments.
- › Provide affordable insurance options to arts and culture groups by introducing a State backed indemnity scheme.
- › Review and revise the current licensing legislation to facilitate late night openings for bars and venues across the country to enhance and revitalise our night time culture and economy.

- › Provide the supports needed to appoint Night Mayors for our major cities.
- › Develop multipurpose accessible venues nationwide to accommodate both daytime and night-time cultural and creative activities.
- › Invest in the physical infrastructure needed by artists and makers to create their work such as studios, work spaces, recording studios, and places to showcase their work such as galleries, theatres and markets, all of which are currently lacking.
- › Continue and expand the social welfare reform pilot and examine the possibility of a guaranteed basic income for up to four years within a ten-year period to allow all arts workers to pursue their careers with dignity.
- › Bring funding to the Arts Council back up to 2008 levels of €82 million, with a view to doubling investment in the Arts Council to a total of €130 million over the next six years. This will bring Ireland in line with the EU-28 average.
- › Publish a detailed road map for how overall investment in the arts and culture will be doubled by 2025.

## 11.2 An Ghaeilge

The Irish language is one of our most important cultural resources and must be conserved for future generations. We are fully committed to supporting a vibrant national approach to the development of our first language. We will therefore:

- › Fully implement the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.
- › Support the full implementation of the Official Languages Act in the Republic and the Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland.
- › Propose the establishment of an Irish Language Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach.
- › Call on public bodies to actively publicise their bilingual services and for the Language Commissioner to be granted additional powers to ensure that public signage in Irish is error-free.

- › Conduct a comprehensive review of the teaching and learning of Irish at primary and post-primary level, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland.

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- › Propose that one subject in addition to Irish be taught through Irish to every child at primary school and that two Irish language syllabi be developed at post-primary level: 'Irish Language' and 'Irish Language Literature'.

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- › Provide Irish-language services for children with learning difficulties and establish a national system of scholarships to enable young people to attend Irish language summer schools.

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- › Commission Foras na Gaeilge, in cooperation with stakeholders such as the Languages Centre in NUI Maynooth, to accredit a national adult education system for Irish.

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- › Increase the grant for TG4 and RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta.

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- › Provide Irish language classes, free of charge, to all immigrants who request them, as is the case with English language classes at present.

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- › Recognising the importance of Gaeltachtaí as the heart of a living language, increase funding to Údarás na Gaeltachta to stimulate employment and sustainable industry in Gaeltacht areas.

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- › Pilot an Irish Language childcare scheme in our cities, to support families raising their children through Irish.

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- › Continue to support the enhanced status of Irish as an official working language of the European Union and work to ensure that the status is implemented in full and that the derogation of that full status which is currently in place be lifted.

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### 11.3 Built Heritage

We recognise that conserving the visual fabric of a community is more complex than maintaining buildings featured on the national list of protected structures. Social significance, historic resonance, folklore, community usage and even plot size are all currently undervalued and under reported in current planning decisions. We advance a broader policy, with the following key points:

- › The above-mentioned aspects of planning should be given increased significance in the new local authority housing and planning departments.

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- › Funding should be increased for the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Historic Structures Fund, and the spectrum of buildings included should be broadened with a particular focus on our modern and industrial heritage.

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- › We propose to create a national skills apprenticeship programme within the sustainable construction sector with a focus on heritage disciplines and crafts.

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- › We will support every local authority through dedicated funding to appoint full time and qualified architectural conservation officers.

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### 11.4 Sports and Recreation

Participation in sport and physical activity has the potential to achieve many of the health, social and environmental outcomes that are valued by the Green Party. We believe that it is the State's job to improve the quality of life of the public. This means providing people's basic needs such as education, health care, housing and social protection but it also means promoting community development, recreation and fun. Our sport and recreation policy is based on four principles: improving our health, developing our communities, participating in nature, and enhancing social inclusion. We advance the following policy positions.

- › Providing an environment to engage in physical recreation is one of the immediate benefits of protecting our natural environment. Our policies, elaborated on elsewhere in this manifesto, will ensure that people have safe greenways to cycle on, bright native woodland to walk through, and clean water to swim in.

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- › We will oversee the nationwide roll out of successful initiatives run by or in conjunction with Local Sports Partnerships. These include the likes of the 'Men on the Move' project which attempts to tackle social isolation among men, and the 'Go for Life Games' which promote physical activity among older people.

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- › We will undertake a review of inclusiveness and participation in all funded sports to ensure that gender, ethnicity and culture are not a barrier to involvement.

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  - › We support the 20x20 movement to encourage female participation in sport.

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  - › We propose to work with representative groups from the disability community to improve access to local sporting infrastructure.

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  - › Our strategy for keeping children in sport will be centred on low-stakes participation. We will encourage National Governing Bodies to limit score-keeping and record taking in underage sport. This will promote continued participation into adolescence and adulthood, leading to improved elite performance outcomes.

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12.

Health



The mismanagement of the health service has been one of the most damaging failures of the outgoing Fine Gael led government. Overruns in spending, delays in the delivery of the National Children's Hospital, and ever-increasing waiting lists have seriously harmed the welfare of patients and service users, as well as hitting people in their pockets. Addressing the healthcare problem is complex. We need to make sure that people get treated outside of hospital as much as possible. That means doing minor procedures in primary care centres and treating recovering patients in community step-down facilities and in their homes as much as possible.

### 12.1 Health Reform and Sláintecare

Like in many policy areas, we believe that health policy is best addressed through cross-party consensus. We therefore support the Sláintecare plan and commit to adequately funding healthcare reform through that framework, as healthcare demands continue to increase with an ageing population. Some of the most important features of the plan are the following.

- › A single-tier health system based on need rather than the ability to pay. The fairest and most progressive way to achieve this is by funding it from general taxation.
- › Multi-annual budgeting, activity-based costing and blended capitation schemes to incentivise efficient targeted use of resources throughout our health system.
- › A fully funded, national service of Public Health Nurses at an advanced level who would engage with patients in their own home and who could refer patients as appropriate.
- › Increased numbers of advanced paramedics who could treat patients in their own homes, so that they would not need to come to hospital.
- › Extended services in community pharmacies to increase the support for general practice services.
- › More investment in general practitioner services to allow for minor procedures and specialist services to take place outside of hospitals.
- › Reforming the Health Service Executive and setting up local Community Health Organisations which will include a balance of community and patient participation as advised by healthcare professionals.
- › In addition to the provisions in Sláintecare, we will ensure that all patients with a terminal diagnosis are automatically provided with a medical card if they request one.
- › We will review drug procurement policies to ensure that the Irish taxpayer is getting value for money by switching to generic medicine procurement or 'biosimilars' when practicable (such as when patents of more expensive drugs expire).

### 12.2 Public Health

We believe that the government has a major role to play in promoting positive health outcomes among the public. A healthy lifestyle is one of the foundations of a better quality of life, and we aim to facilitate this through the following measures.

- › Supporting the International Obesity Task Force's 'Sydney Principles' as a basis to restrict commercial marketing of foods to children.
- › Requiring school children to participate in at least half an hour of physical education every day, including in exam years.
- › Improving the long term immunity and health of the population of Ireland by increasing support, protection and promotion of breastfeeding in maternity, paediatric and community health care settings.
- › Setting planning restrictions on outlets selling high calorie 'junk-food' and beverages within or adjacent to schools and a ban on their sale in schools and other public buildings frequently used by children.
- › Introducing legislation to mandate that vending machines in schools can only supply healthy snacks.
- › Designing a system of presumed consent for organ donation.
- › Removing VAT on a number of health choice products including sunscreen and reproductive health goods.
- › Ensuring that as many public workplaces as possible have adequate shower and changing facilities installed. This will encourage people to cycle to work and to exercise on their lunch breaks.

- › Introducing comprehensive e-cigarette legislation covering advertising and flavouring.
- › Fully enacting all provisions of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act.
- › Opposing any change to EU legislation which would permit direct marketing of prescription drugs.

### 12.3 Mental Health

We will improve Ireland’s mental health by building more compassionate communities where the natural supports available (ordinary individuals who show concern for the welfare of others) are strengthened and appreciated, and where a range of evidence-based supports can be easily accessed, when required. Individuals who find themselves in crisis will always have someone to turn to. Communities will be supported to address real stresses that impact on their well-being. People who are most vulnerable, especially people with severe and enduring disorders, will be empowered to live a life that makes sense to them, rather than becoming marginalised and forgotten. The voices of all mental health service users, especially young people who are marginalised and seldom heard, should be heard and included in all aspects of service planning and development. In all of the above, digital media will be used creatively to educate and signpost people in relation to their mental health needs. To protect and promote mental health in Ireland, we will:

- › Improve access to the appropriate level of mental health care in a timely manner and institute clear referral pathways across and between services. To make the most of available resources, we will ensure that mental health services provided by non-governmental organisations, such as Pieta House and Jigsaw, are integrated with a system of care that includes local statutory and community services.
- › Support the provision of ‘safe spaces’, which help people to access support locally in places not normally associated with mental health provision, including community spaces, sporting facilities and facilities for mental health services.
- › Review and amend the Mental Health Act, 2001, which currently does not grant young people, aged 16-17 years old, the right to consent to treatment for their mental health. For many years, people aged 16-17 years old

have had the right to consent to treatment for their physical health, but not their mental health. This situation is seriously out of compliance with international human rights standards.

- › Ensure that there is an adequate geographical coverage of mental health services, particularly supports relating to suicide and crisis.
- › Support the implementation of full Community Mental Health Teams, as outlined in *A Vision for Change*, and an improvement in the manner in which these services can be accessed and exited seamlessly.
- › Continue to recognise the importance of a variety of ‘talk therapies’ in helping to relieve distress and address challenges in our lives. We also believe that providers of these services, psychotherapists, counsellors and psychologists should be regulated by an independent body (similar to the Teaching Council) attached to the Dept. of Health.
- › Recommend the appointment of a School Mental Health Officer to ‘mental health proof’ the culture of every secondary school so that all staff feel confident to teach children with mental health needs in a supportive way and know clearly how and where to refer those who may be in crisis.
- › Implement cost effective prevention and intervention measures. The earliest form of intervention for young people is intervention at the level of support for parents, guardians and carers. This support should extend from the prenatal period right through the period of youth. Help for parents should begin from pregnancy and families should be supported throughout their journey. We propose to resource the provision of early childhood and family interventions for families experiencing parenting difficulties.
- › Consider the needs of new parents who may develop mental health issues in the delivery of pre- and post-natal services.
- › Roll out a national e-Mental Health strategy to further develop online services that provide a positive framework of activity for people between visits to their healthcare professionals.

- › Encourage and promote investment in mental health research to help us to identify what prevents mental health difficulties from becoming entrenched and what improves outcomes.
- › Adequately resource Authorised Officers to implement detention orders.
- › Support nationwide implementation of the SCAN crisis response service for suicidal persons.
- › Immediately reverse Women's Aid funding cuts and increase from the base of 5% per annum.
- › Supporting drug law reform at an international level.
- › Rescheduling cannabis and its derivatives from a Schedule I drug to a Schedule IV drug.
- › Decriminalising the possession of small quantities of cannabis products and plants.
- › Allowing prescription of cannabis-based medicines through pharmacies.

## 12.4 Drugs Policy

The criminalisation of drug consumption is a counter-productive policy that perpetuates business models of organised crime and fails to address the public health impact of drugs. A more compassionate policy based on international best practice can be introduced within existing constraints under international law. In government, we would shift drugs policy from a criminal justice approach to a public health approach by introducing these following reforms.

- › Removing criminal penalties for possessing less than a week's supply of a scheduled drug.
- › Reviewing the status of all scheduled substances for medical potential, allowing for controlled cultivation as deemed appropriate for research purposes.
- › Pardoning and releasing non-violent, minor, drug offenders.
- › Supporting dual diagnosis so that the health system can address issues behind drug abuse.
- › Expanding low threshold residential stabilisation services for holistic treatment.
- › Increasing and supporting drug quality testing services, particularly at festivals and nightclubs.
- › Allowing medically-supervised safe injection facilities for the phased withdrawal of heroin and other substances as deemed appropriate by the Minister for Health.



13.

**Our Nation and  
Government**

Ireland has not just faced an economic crisis in recent years; we have faced a profound crisis in public confidence in politics. The principle behind the reforms outlined below is to put people at the centre of decision-making.

### 13.1 The Constitution

To ensure that our Constitution is fit for a modern Ireland, we will prioritise the following constitutional reforms:

- › Inserting a clause on environmental protection that would oblige stewardship of our island's ecosystem and all the life therein and a right to water and public ownership of our municipal water supply.
- › Guaranteeing a right to a home.
- › Amending the constitutional clause on a woman's place in the home to both remove sexist language and to reflect the importance of all forms of care and of those being cared for.
- › Allowing citizens to directly initiate referendums to amend the Constitution.
- › Lowering the voting age to 16.

### 13.2 Northern Ireland

While holding deep concerns about the nature of so called 'normal' adversarial politics and endorsing all parliamentary methods that promote consensus decision making, we support the call by our elected representatives in Northern Ireland to establish a recognised opposition within the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Northern Ireland Executive should be formed by post-election inter-party negotiations that should also agree a programme for government. Both the executive ministers and the programme for government should be subject to endorsement by the Assembly by a 66% majority.

Such a fundamental change to the principles underpinning the Good Friday Agreement should be part of a wider political reform programme tackling other legacy issues arising from the Good Friday and St. Andrew's Agreements. This political reform programme should be endorsed by a referendum put to the people of Northern Ireland.

### 13.3 Seanad and Dáil Reform

The rules governing how the Oireachtas operates should be reformed to allow our democracy and

public debate to continue to thrive. To guarantee the integrity, quality and representativeness of national-level policy making, we will:

- › Set up an electoral commission to provide independent oversight of elections and referendums.
- › Implement the Manning report and the report of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on Seanad reform early in the new Dáil term so that every Irish citizen has a vote in Seanad elections.
- › Amend standing orders to prevent government abuse of 'money messages' to prevent opposition bills from progressing through the Oireachtas.
- › Amending the constitutional clause on a woman's place in the home to both remove sexist language and to reflect the importance of all forms of care and of those being cared for.
- › Establish fewer but bigger Dáil constituencies. We will work to set the minimum number of TDs per constituency to 5 and the maximum to 8 to improve the diversity of representation in the Dáil while curbing 'parish-pump' tendencies in national politics.
- › Extend Dáil voting rights to Irish citizens living abroad for up to five years and to EU citizens living in Ireland for five years or more.
- › Revise the portion of public funding that political parties receive for TDs and Senators yearly so that it reflects on the actual number of TDs and Senators each party had in that year (e.g. if a TD or Senator leaves a party then the party should stop receiving funding for that TD or Senator).
- › Allow half of State board appointments to be made by Oireachtas committees.
- › Have National Lottery monies allocated by State boards to end ministers' powers to distribute them.

### 13.4 Local Government and Your Participation

We believe that local residents and citizens ought to be the basis upon which local government is conducted. The powers of local government should be enhanced, public spending at local level

should be increased from 8% to over 23% (in line with our EU counterparts), and local authorities should have greater fiscal autonomy. To allow this to happen, we will:

- › Hold a Citizens Assembly on a directly-elected executive mayor of a new regional authority for Dublin, followed by a plebiscite within the four Dublin local authorities, so that the new executive Mayor of Dublin can be in place immediately after the 2024 local elections.
- › Following the narrow rejection of the plebiscite for a directly-elected mayor with executive powers in Cork, hold a Citizens Assembly on local government arrangements in Cork City Council as the State's second city.
- › Propose the full reinstatement of the five Borough Councils abolished in 2014.
- › Seek to establish an EU Unit in every local authority to partner on climate and energy projects with other municipalities.
- › Continue the programme of reform emerging from the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the full implementation of the OGP National Action Plan for Ireland.
- › Undertake a review of the specific functions assigned to local government in Ireland compared to other EU countries and a review of the role of the chief executive in local authorities.
- › Conduct a root and branch review of the current scheme for the setting and collection of both property tax and commercial water rates.
- › Legislate to grant local government the powers to raise and collect a bed levy on tourists, similar to many major European cities.
- › Enable our local authorities to raise municipal bonds to help fund long term infrastructure projects.
- › Propose the implementation of participatory budgets across all local authorities.
- › Push for elections to be held at weekends with provision for an absentee ballot facility for any eligible voters currently living overseas.
- › Accommodate persons with no fixed abode by allowing them to register at an address that is convenient for them.

- › Reduce election posterage. Candidates, parties and referendum campaigns should be restricted to designated areas such as outside shopping centres, libraries etc.
- › Create family friendly policies within all structures of local government to provide access to maternity and paternity leave, affordable childcare and breastfeeding facilities to all participants.

### 13.5 Community Development

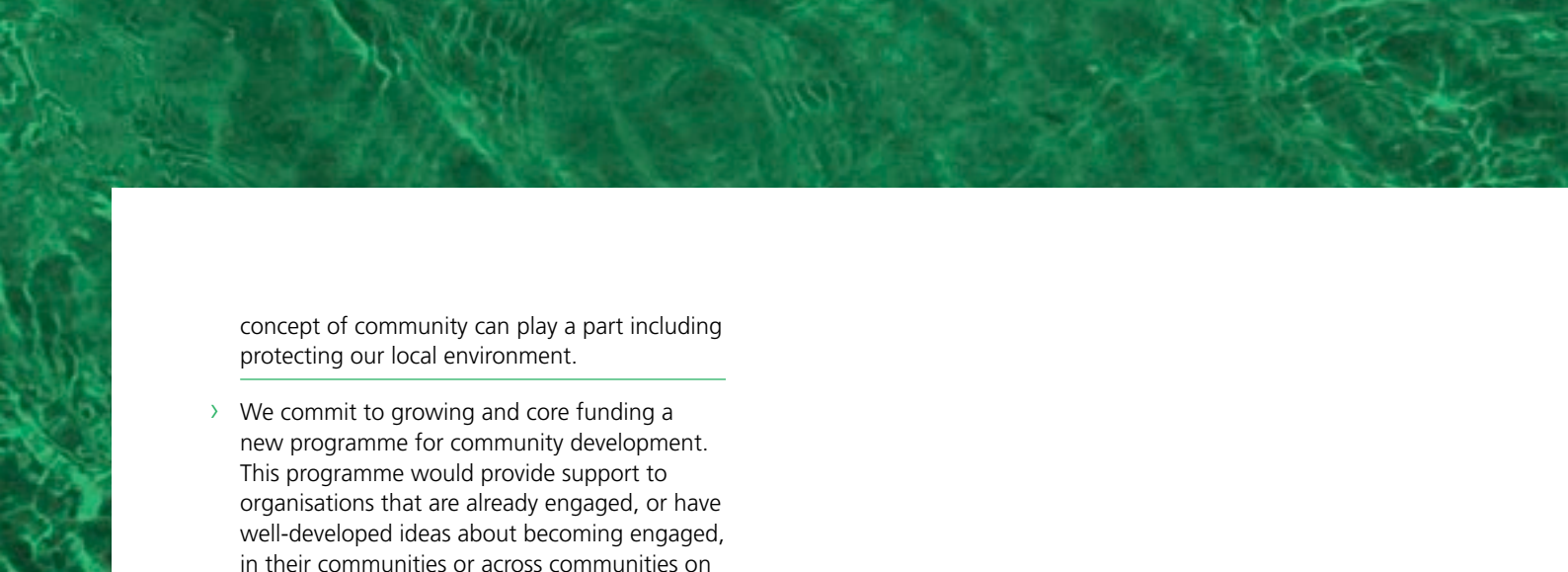
Community development is primarily about the development of people. It is about building the confidence, the competence and the commitment of people to maximise their involvement in, and their contribution to, a response to their own needs and those of their communities.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's Ireland developed a very successful model of supporting local leadership and community development, particularly in attempts to address poverty and to help disadvantaged areas. Unfortunately from the middle part of the last decade onwards this successful model was gradually eroded in favour of a more bureaucratic approach, where the State was more involved in delivering and overseeing community services itself, rather than working in creative partnership with local groups and leaders.

The local and community centred approach has been effectively obliterated in favour of the more centralised and prescriptive approach, marking a clear preference for product delivery over involvement and engagement. We need to reform community development funding so that we can properly support grassroots groups to identify the problems they face and the solutions that work in their own areas.

We envision a strong, autonomous community sector in Ireland that can contribute in an ecologically and socially sustainable way to enhance the social, environmental, cultural, physical, and economic wellbeing of its citizens. We envisage national and local government playing a constructive, enabling role and that the sector is genuinely respected for its contribution.

- › We will work to redress the imbalance that has developed under this government-supported community development approach. We promote a local rather than a centralised focus and will prioritise anti-poverty work as well as supporting other initiatives in which the



concept of community can play a part including protecting our local environment.

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- › We commit to growing and core funding a new programme for community development. This programme would provide support to organisations that are already engaged, or have well-developed ideas about becoming engaged, in their communities or across communities on specific issues.

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- › We will assist these projects through a small number of support agencies providing technical support and training in community development approaches.

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- › We will update the legislation governing the dormant accounts fund to ensure that it can be used to fund social enterprises that contribute to environmental protection or climate action.

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14.

**Justice**

We believe that the prevention and detection of crime and addressing the needs of victims of crime are of equal importance. The justice system plays a vital role in creating a peaceful and safe society for citizens to enjoy. Citizens must be confident that the rule of law will be applied in a fair and equal manner. Ireland is ever changing, and we will work to ensure that legislation is amended or replaced to counter emerging crimes.

### 14.1 The Gardai

We support the work of the Gardai as fundamental to the operation of the State and see them as a key stakeholder in creating safe and secure communities. We propose to:

- › Implement the proposals contained in the Report of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland, with a particular emphasis on the move to greater community policing, the provision of accurate and open data on crime and rigorous oversight on the implementation of the Report's recommendations.
- › Relocate basic training modules at cadet level to existing third level institutions around the country and limit training delivered in the Templemore facilities to physical training and Continued Professional Development.
- › Increase investment and the number of Gardai working in Community Policing, as one of the ways of countering gangland crime.

### 14.2 The Courts

An independent impartial judiciary plays a critical role in guaranteeing the efficacy of environmental regulation and other laws of our country. To ensure that our courts can fulfil this function, we will:

- › Ensure Irish law is brought into full compliance with the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.
- › Set up a separate Planning, Environmental and Climate Justice Law Court managed by specialist judges and adopting the practice and procedure, efficiencies and work ethics of the existing commercial court.
- › Establish a dedicated family court within the existing court structures, to ensure that matters

dealing with family law and child law are always dealt with separately to the general list.

- › Provide a mechanism to fund necessary public interest litigation.

### 14.3 Action on Domestic Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour

Everyone in Ireland should be able to live and work without facing physical, psychological or emotional threats or violence. To clamp down on abuse and anti-social behaviour, we outline the following actions.

- › Pressing for the implementation of a mandatory three-point risk assessment protocol by Gardai for all domestic abuse call outs whether or not they result in an arrest or further action of any kind.
- › The national implementation and funding of the High Risk Support Project and a parallel review of the Garda Domestic Abuse Intervention Policy.
- › Dedicated support services for domestic abuse at all operable Garda stations, annual reviews of service efficacy and detailed data collection.
- › Providing more funding and administrative support to the community policing model and youth engagement programs.

### 14.4 Victims of Crime

We recognise that anyone can become a victim of crime at any time. Becoming the victim of an offense can cause immense emotional, physical and financial stress. To prevent people from being affected by criminal activity, and to help those who are affected, we will:

- › Enact legislation to address the practice commonly referred to as 'revenge porn' that will specifically criminalise the sharing of sexually explicit images without consent.
- › Establish a Digital Safety Officer to review the operation of social media companies in this regard on an ongoing basis.
- › Introduce legislation to criminalise hate speech and update incitement to hatred legislation.
- › Fully implement the EU Victims of Crime Directive including the full provision of victim liaison officers.

- › Adopt and implement a comprehensive strategy to combat trafficking of women and girls.
- › Establish a system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Victims' Charter.
- › Ensure widespread promotion of the National Crime Victims' Helpline.

### **14.5 Penal Reform**

We believe that correctional action taken against criminals should be focused on rehabilitation and preventing repeat offence. Preventative measures should target the root causes of crime, which often lie in disadvantage and lack of opportunity. Our penal reform policy seeks to:

- › Review the existing functions, powers, appointment procedures and reporting processes for prison visiting committees and make necessary legislative changes.
- › Increase the age limit for the application of the Garda Youth Diversion Programme to 24.
- › Provide an independent complaints process which prisoners can avail of.
- › Enhance accountability within prisons and other places of detention through ratifying and implementing the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture.
- › Bring forward legislation providing for an agreed cap to prisoner numbers in all institutions and a review of current out-of-cell time for prison populations.
- › Improve access to medical services, drugs and alcohol treatment and in particular, mental health services for prisoners.
- › Review the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act with a view to broadening the range of convictions which can be 'spent'.

15.

**Foreign Affairs**



While Ireland needs to meet its own climate and environmental commitments, we are firmly of the view that international cooperation and coordination will be needed to address the challenges that lie ahead. We are therefore committed to playing an active role on the European and global stage.

### 15.1 Europe

We recognise that Ireland has benefited enormously from our membership of the European Union. Our aim is to create an ecologically sustainable, socially just and peaceful Union. European Union policy and practice must prioritise the rights of the vulnerable over the interests of multinational companies. Our EU policy includes the following key points.

- › Pressing for greater democratisation of the Union by increasing the powers of the European Parliament relative to the Council of Ministers.
- › Improving Ireland's poor record of compliance with EU Directives, especially in the areas of social and environmental legislation.
- › Furthering the aim of providing access to 'free at the point of service' education to all the residents of the EU.
- › Proposing that the EU increase its support and funding for research and technology innovation, with a focus on environmental innovation.
- › We believe the EU should lead the way in transforming member State economies to circular, sustainable models and that this evolution should include a just transition strategy for employees, a fair deal for businesses and a reduction in the trade of certain products such as arms.

### 15.2 Brexit

We, as an all-island party, believe that the decision of the UK to leave the EU will cause lasting damage to the people of these islands. We are determined to minimise the environmental, economic and social disruption that it will inevitably cause. We commit to supporting rural communities and the sectors of the economy that will be most affected and will work to avoid a regulatory 'race to the bottom' as the details of

the future relationship between the EU and the UK are negotiated. To mitigate the worst effects of Brexit we will:

- › Work to secure a comprehensive free trade agreement between the EU and the UK which protects existing social and environmental standards.
- › Engage with the UK government to facilitate their continued involvement in the North Seas Countries Offshore Grid Initiative and to maintain existing energy security agreements between the two islands.
- › Work through our diplomatic channels to assist the UK Government in seeking a successful conclusion to the COP26 climate meeting in Glasgow later this year.
- › Ensure regulatory alignment in the protections provided by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) following their exit from the Union.
- › Ensure that marine conservation and pollution control measures are protected in any future relationships.
- › Maintain a completely open border on the island of Ireland and promote an all-island approach to land use planning and river basin management plans, to stop cross border pollution and deliver a common approach to the climate and biodiversity crisis.

### 15.3 Ireland's Neutrality, Peace and Globalisation

Green Party principles assert that the need for world peace and justice overrides national and commercial interests. There is no place for violence or threat of violence in the democratic political process.

- › We advocate a strengthening of the pan-European Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as well as the United Nations.
- › We will oppose the expansion of the Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and Defence (PESCO) into areas that are not compatible with Ireland's non-aligned and peacekeeping defence tradition.
- › We propose the establishment of regular random spot checks on all aircraft landing in

Shannon and other Irish airports to ensure that no such flights are carrying weapons, engaged in the rendition of individuals, or in breach of the terms of the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation or the provisions in place to protect Irish neutrality.

- › We will increase oversight and reporting requirements for dual use export licences, including refusing licences to export to countries with questionable human rights records.
- › We support reform of the World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund and World Bank to make them accountable, transparent and democratic and to give a stronger voice and power to poorer countries in the system.
- › We will continue to resist international trade agreements involving the European Union which involve a lowering of the environmental and social standards that the Union upholds.
- › We support an immediate recognition of the State of Palestine and an end to arms trading with Israel, a ban on settlement goods, an end to the use of military detention for children and an end to the blockade and closure of Gaza.

#### **15.4 The Defence Forces**

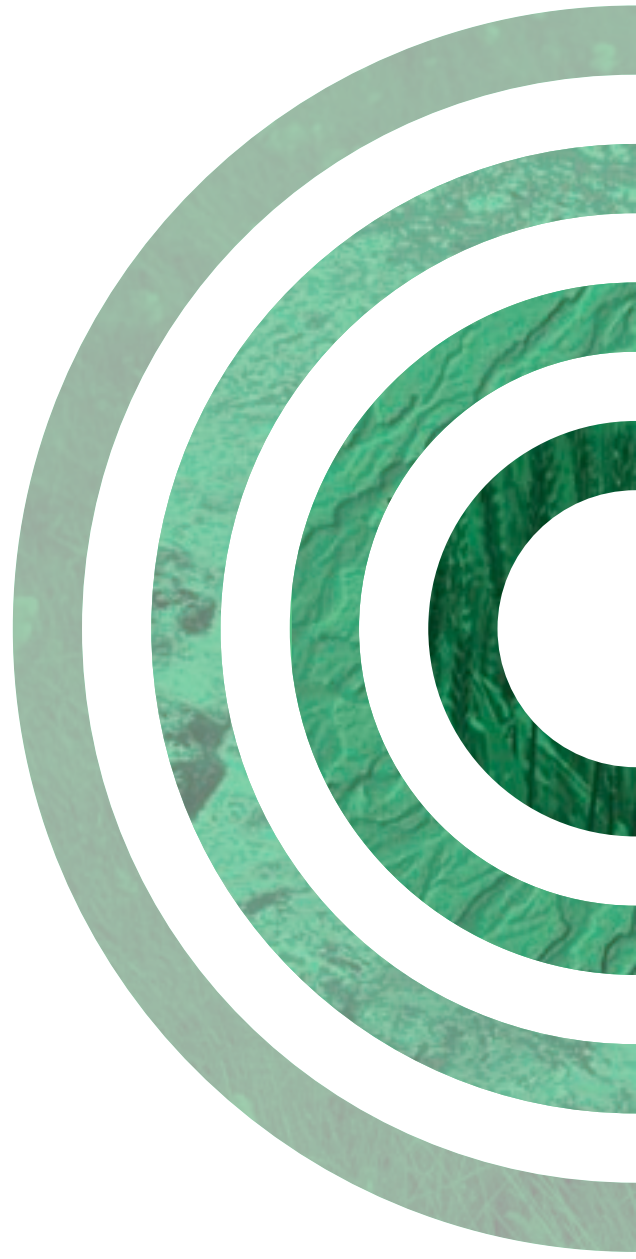
The contribution of all members of the Defence Forces and their families must be recognised and appropriate salaries put in place. Following years of underinvestment and a lack of support from government we propose to revitalise our Defence Forces as a key component of our nation's neutrality.

- › We will improve the pay and conditions of the armed forces recognising the valuable work they do.
- › We advocate for a complete review of infrastructure, equipment, institutional land holdings, and building quality in the Defence Forces.
- › We will provide PRSI credits to employers who give unpaid leave for training or duty.
- › We will underpin military courses with civilian accreditation from educational bodies.

#### **15.5 Overseas Development Aid**

Ireland has a proud record of delivering high quality and targeted aid, which has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of the world's most needy people, while also contributing to global stability and sustainable development. Ireland can contribute to a safer, more positive and better world through doing what we do best, helping people around the world help themselves secure a more sustainable and prosperous future. All EU countries committed to spend 0.7% of GNI by 2015 – some have reached this target, others have detailed plans to do so. Ireland committed 0.6% of GNI in 2008, but only 0.3% in 2019.

- › We propose to increase Ireland's Overseas Development Aid contribution to 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2025 through the creation of a multi-annual plan of increases.
- › All Irish aid must be spent in a way that is in full compliance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- › We will resist attempts to tie aid to trade and will ensure that a poverty alleviation focus remains at the heart of Irish Aid's work.
- › Aid directed towards the ongoing refugee crisis in the Mediterranean should be coordinated with the EU, with refugee housing funding a priority.





**Green Party**  
**Comhaontas Glas**  
**Working for a better Ireland**

16/17 Suffolk Street,  
Dublin 2, Ireland  
T: +353 1 679 0012  
E: [press@greenparty.ie](mailto:press@greenparty.ie)