



The State needs to intervene and use RTE, Dublin Bus and NAMA lands to address housing crisis – Green Party

NAMA must deliver on the social dividend that was written into its mission statement.

The Green Party today unveiled a proposal to address the housing crisis, stating that State owned lands in Dublin hold the key to solving the problem.

Green Party leader Eamon Ryan said today “We need the state to directly intervene and use RTE, Dublin Bus and NAMA lands to address our growing housing crisis. At the start of its existence there was a clear agreement that NAMA's mission was to progress a social as well as economic return for the state. It is now time for them to deliver that social dividend.

“By reserving a suitable site in Dublin City centre for a new RTE complex we could free up the 30 acres in Montrose and provide housing for up to 5,000 third level students. Half of the RTE lands are underused at the moment and a switch from Dublin 4 to Dublin 1 could be good for the broadcaster and good for both sides of the city.

“Moving bus garages out of the city centre would also be a win-win solution for both transport and housing policy. It makes no sense for bus drivers to have to come in early each morning to bring a bus back out to the start of their route on the edge of the city. Far better to build purpose built garages on the edge of the city and use the vacant lands for new housing developments that would be located in some of the best sites in the city.

“NAMA should also take a proactive role with the sites that they already control. The Irish Glass Bottle site has been deserted for years and is the perfect location for a major new housing development. The Government has just raised a fifteen year bond at 1.8% interest rate. There is no reason why we should not be able to commit future rental income from student and social rents to be able to raise a similar long term bond to pay for these developments. All that is missing is the right political will and vision for how we could do things differently.”

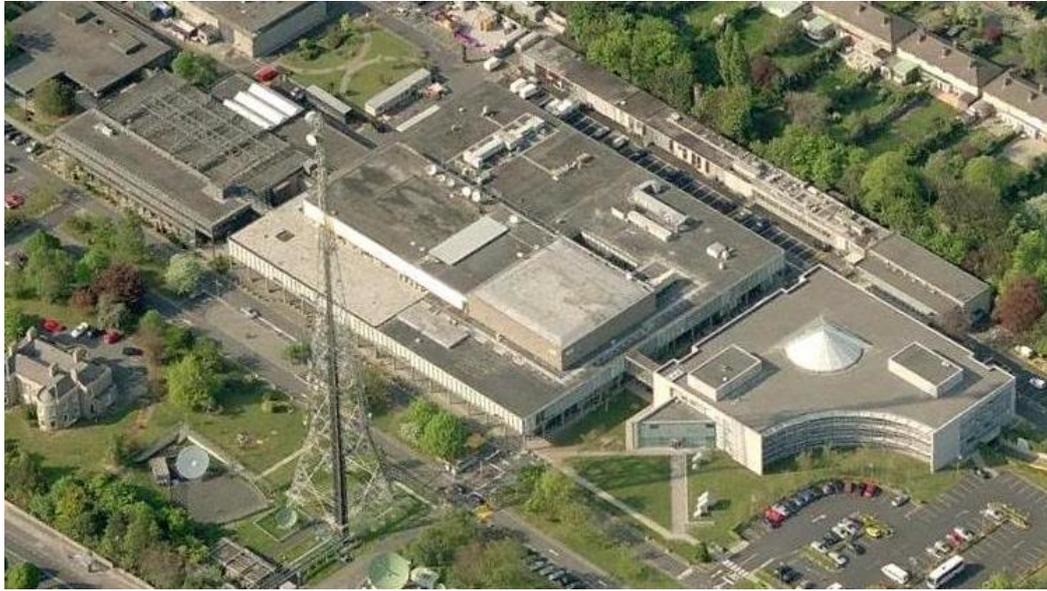
Cllr Catherine Martin, Deputy Leader of the Green Party warned that future development must consider facilities when being planned: “We need to protect recreational spaces at the same time that we build new housing developments close to the centre of the city. Using these for higher density and high quality housing will allow us to protect other local green spaces to create a really attractive local living environment.”

Cllr Claire Byrne added: “NAMA needs to change its approach. What we are seeing down in the Docklands is a return to an old developer lead model which does not deliver the mix of commercial, housing and retail developments we need. We should be using the glass bottle site as a model for a whole new form of social, affordable, and sustainable mixed development.”

ENDS



RTÉ



RTÉ's Montrose campus covers 30 acres in Donnybrook, Dublin 4, with much of it underutilised. A report carried out by the NTMA showed that, of the 30 acres, 20% was completely undeveloped, while a further 21% consisted of car parking. The report also highlights that, due to RTÉ's staff reductions in previous years, as much as 20% of the office facilities are also underutilised. It's reasonable to say that the site in Montrose is being used less than 50% efficiently.

The report raises the prospect of disposing of the land to raise funding. We propose that RTÉ completely vacates the campus in Montrose, moving instead to a City Centre premises. The Government should instruct NAMA to source appropriate lands for a new RTÉ centre.

Alternatively, a new television centre could be developed on the site of DIT Aungier Street, which will be vacated as the college moves to its new dedicated campus at Grangegorman.

With foresight, NAMA assets on Moore Street, which have now been sold to with planning permission granted for a new shopping centre, could have been retained and developed into a new, 21st century centre for RTÉ adjacent to the GPO, from where the broadcaster originated.

The land at Montrose would be developed for high density student accommodation, ideally located to serve both UCD and Trinity College. Based on current student developments currently under construction on Patrick's Street, the suit could house up to 4,800 students, including facilities. This would relieve significant pressure on the housing rental market in South Dublin.



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With an existing abundance of shopping facilities in the City Centre and given the fact that renowned institutions like Clerys and Boyers in trouble in that area, we question the need for and the viability of constructing yet another shopping centre.

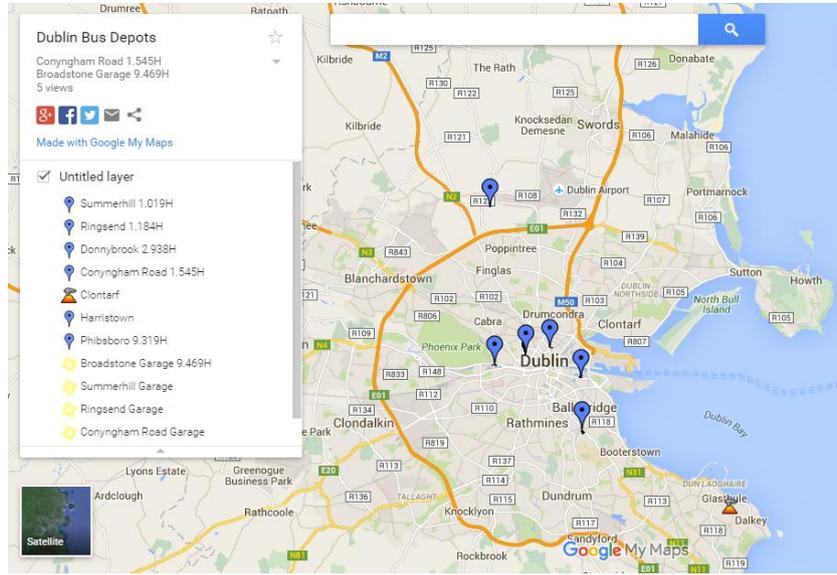
Glass Bottle Site, Ringsend



The Glass Bottle site in Ringsend is testament to the excesses of the Celtic Tiger. It occupies an area of approximately 25 acres. We propose that, instead of NAMA trying to dispose of this asset for a price that will be a miniscule fraction of the price paid for it, the site is developed for high density housing to alleviate the pressure on housing in the city. The Glass Bottle site could house up to 2,000 people comfortably. The site has been available for rental, with no success, for the last 3 years.



Dublin Bus Sites, Various Locations in Dublin



Dublin Bus maintains a network of garages and depots throughout the city, including at Donnybrook, Broadstone, Conyngham Road, and Ringsend.

These depots are of various sizes, but add up to a substantial area. Broadstone covers an area of 26 acres, and Donnybrook covers 10 acres.

We propose moving this array of bus depots out of the city, to a purpose built site on the M50. Barcelona moved their bus depots to a specialised suburban location some years ago, to great effect. The Dublin Bus sites could then be developed, and add significant stock to Dublin's housing supply.

Irish Transport Research Network NUI Galway, 27th August, 2015

Finally, the study has given rise to a number of considerations and insights into the efficiency or otherwise of the wider bus network and garaging infrastructure. Such procedures can likely be extended to the city-wide bus network at large and merit further consideration. Dublin Bus could provide layover facilities to private service, ideally at a minimal or very competitive rate. This would provide a revenue stream to Dublin Bus and make professional, industry-standard driver rest and vehicle maintenance facilities fully available to private operators.



With thanks to DIT Community Links Partner, the Irish Georgian Society and 2015 3rd Year BSc Spatial Planning Students Transport & Mobility Module students



How do we achieve it?

Eamon Ryan: The financing of this project can start with the issuing of a long term bond which is secured on future rental income. The Universities have built student accommodation using a similar approach in the past and their funds could allow RTE pay NAMA for the city centre site and their move to the city centre. This is a three way transaction involving different public bodies, all it requires is some joint up thinking to make it happen.