

think ahead,

act now

General Election Manifesto 2016

Progressive, practical, and sustainable
politics for the 32nd Dáil



**green
party**

comhaontas glas

Introduction

The Green Party has a plan for Ireland's future

It is a plan based on a sound economic footing but which also takes account of the world around us and the greatest risks we face – as a country and as a global community.

As if the recent past were a far distant memory, some political parties are content to pull out the age old playbook and try to bribe the people with their own money. The people should be wary of these tactics and demand more than accounting tricks. They should demand and they deserve a vision, a real plan that will plot our path ahead.

Look around us, nothing is certain. Ireland is dangerously exposed: to instability in international markets, to the refugee crisis with which Europe is struggling to cope, to the economic and geopolitical fortunes of power blocs and to the dangers of climate change we know will happen and are now beginning to feel.

Climate change is with us. The people along the Shannon know this as much as the people of Bangladesh, Sudan and China. The US coast guard knows this as do global corporations who must plan ahead. Our collision course with nature is the greatest threat to our survival as a planet and a species, not to mention our economic prosperity. There can be no special pleading.

Any plan that does not have climate as a foundation stone is a plan that is bound to fail. It cannot do otherwise as it will wilfully ignore the clear and signposted dangers ahead. Any plan that relies on fossil fuels as the driver of an economy will see us falling behind, as the rest of the world switches to a cleaner renewable future. Any plan that thinks Ireland can set the course of our own destiny without an appreciation of global trends is fraught with risk.

The only plan that can succeed is a truly long term one.

Our new national plan puts proper spatial planning at its core. Where we think ahead and plan our public infrastructure so that people from all over Ireland can live and work where there are services and communities. Where we focus on what we can do best at home – in tourism, agri-food, energy, manufacturing and new digital services; where we restore the traditional values of banking to every part of the country so we support sustainable, well paid jobs.

Ours is an investment plan for the next generation.

This election debate is about much more than the fiscal space. It is about the public space.

Whoever is in power in the next Dáil will put resources into the areas that they value. So that's the question people need to ask of themselves and of politicians as we near polling day.

What do you value?

The Green Party values our natural resources – our water, our land, our environment. We will fight to protect them and to keep them in public hands. We value public transport, public energy and know we need public support to tackle climate change. We value our youth, and want to help them in the challenges that lie ahead.

We want to position Ireland so that we are in a position to take advantage of the new world order, not that we hide and pretend that nothing is changing until it is too late.

We are more than an economy. Yes, we are also a society but what people can forget is that both of these depend on the natural world. Neither economy nor society can thrive when the underlying ecology is imperilled. Ecology and social justice go together and we need creative enterprise to serve both these needs.

Ours is the long-term plan where we think ahead but crucially, act now.

We can make a start on this path by voting Green on February 26th.



Eamon Ryan

Green Party/Comhaontas Glas

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Domestic Context

Our economy is starting to grow again but the recovery remains fragile and is not shared evenly across our island. Our current rapid rate of economic growth has been supported by the weakness of the euro, low interest rates and a historically low price of oil. As a small open economy, these are all factors outside of our control and leave Ireland vulnerable to changes in global geopolitical and economic conditions.

We need to eliminate the boom and bust short term economic model of the past but also address the shortfalls in infrastructure and public services which are the greatest constraint on our future development. We need to get the balance right between making these necessary investments and at the same time ensuring that we adopt a counter-cyclical economic policy so that ongoing spending commitments can be paid for by a stable tax base.

Rather than committing to across the board tax cuts and spending increases we believe that priority should be given to investment in housing, transport, energy, water and communications infrastructure, where additional lending can be raised, outside the strict confines of the European Fiscal compact rules.

We are proposing a major increase in the provision of social housing,

using the new 'cost rental' financing model proposed by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) model. We believe that such lending, which is financed by future rental income streams, can be accounted for in a way which allows us to make a necessary increase in our overall capital budget.

The European Union has also outlined how member states can increase capital spending beyond the limits of existing fiscal compact rules, where investment is made in productive infrastructure as defined by the Juncker Investment plan, with the support of lending from the European Investment bank and from private sector funds.

We will revitalise the €30 billion clean energy investment programme involving semi state companies such as the ESB, Eirgrid, Ervia, Bord na Mona and Coillte which the Green Party in Government had initiated and started to deliver. Combined with investment by the private sector, this programme can help us make the necessary transition to a new low carbon economy, characterised by the delivery of a real growth in productivity, which is the best way of protecting our international competitiveness.

We also need to ensure that we are

more efficient in everything we do in the provision of public services in health, education and social welfare.

We need to reform how we deliver such services to get a better outcome for patients, students and parents and not just rely on putting ever increasing resources into a system that is in need of reform.

We heed the advice of the Fiscal Advisory Council of the need for caution in promising new spending commitments and believe the uncertain state of the global economy requires us to hold back on substantial commitments to reduce the tax base until we are certain that recent increases in corporate tax revenues can provide us a stable future income stream.

Within the constraints of our budget situation we believe there is a particular responsibility to target additional revenue streams we may have to the younger generation including parents of young children, who face particular difficulties in getting access to education, housing and essential care services.

We argue that the application of more transparent tax rules on corporate taxes on multinational companies can deliver us additional tax revenues of at least €1.5 billion within the lifetime of the next Government. We also argue that the transition from the existing property tax system to a system of site value taxation, which

includes tax on all development and commercial lands can also raise additional revenue of €100m per annum and that such a change will promote the development of the new building stock that we need.

Along with smaller additional revenue streams from measures such as the introduction of a 'sugar tax' there is the possibility of increasing the fiscal space as calculated by the Fiscal Advisory Council to an annual budget increase of €1.1 billion over existing spending commitments, with a necessary review of our position at the end of 2107, when the economic position will no doubt have changed.

We agree with the outgoing Minister of Finance that a further amount of €500m per annum can be allocated for a future orientated fund but argue that two thirds of that provision should be allocated to a National Citizens Trust Fund as proposed in this manifesto.

We argue that the remaining contingency fund should be orientated to providing for the adaptation we are likely to have to make to the increasing extreme weather events that we are already starting to see due to climate change.

Global Context

The only long term economic plan which will succeed is one that puts climate change at the centre of the risks we must manage, not in the distant future but right now. The greatest threat to any recovery will be the economic and human cost of climate change.

The World Economic Forum, for the first time since its foundation, has placed failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change as the number 1 risk to global economic stability in its 2016 forecast. It places climate change risk as higher than the spread of weapons of mass destruction, water crises, migration and a severe energy price shock.

The refugee and migrant crisis engulfing the world is likely to worsen. At least 22.5 million of the near 50 million refugees globally are fleeing natural disasters including storms, floods and droughts. International agencies warn that natural disasters are displacing an equal number of people as violent conflict.

As extreme weather events become more frequent and forceful, this number is expected to rise. Drought and environmental factors are causing famine and food shortages in the developing world leading to instability, violent conflict and in some cases for quasi-state terrorist groups to gain a foothold. Climate

change is undoubtedly a contributory factor in increased global instability and terror.

Failed states in the broader Middle East region, the rise of ISIS and increased global economic instability will see a rise in intra and inter-state conflict in 2016 and a dramatically more fragmented world than at any point since World War II.

Displacement of vast populations due to war and climate change is tearing the very fabric of the European Union. The rise of anti-immigrant rhetoric and far right parties has the potential to pull the EU asunder and is already a significant factor in Britain's re-negotiation and possible exit of the EU. Retreat to nationalism and the closure of borders is precisely the wrong direction for a Europe and a world that must recognise global interdependence and inter-relation of the challenges we must face together rather than alone.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as currently designed will be a major retrograde step. This was a deal designed for and by global corporations with little or no benefits for the citizen. TTIP threatens us with lower food standards, fracking in rural Ireland, and intervention by multinational corporations in our health and education sectors.

Fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals recently agreed by the UN, where Ireland played a central role, will be the greatest force for security and equality across the globe.

Ireland has a proud history in leading the fight against global poverty, acting as a champion for human rights and disarmament. We need to regain this spirit and this stance and act as an 'honest broker' in all our multilateral engagements.

Looking globally, we will:

- Legislate for binding targets on climate change in line with the Paris Agreement
- Lead the charge for the reform of the United Nations Security Council, in particular that in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity permanent members of the Security Council will no longer be able to exercise a veto
- Support the introduction of Humanitarian Visas which would permit the issuing of visas at embassies and consulates
- Increase the number of people under resettlement and relocation as part of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme
- Keep the number of relocated and resettled people under review with a view to increasing the number to a target of five thousand by 2017
- Support the suspension of the Dublin III regulations with Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia to reduce the unfair burden on the Mediterranean states of the European Union
- Continue and increase the involvement of the Irish naval and defence forces in search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean
- Stop Returns and Return Orders for countries with ongoing armed conflicts, except in cases where the individual poses a security threat, and provide mechanisms which would regularise the stay of nationals from those countries
- Support the creation of an EU Asylum service to centralise asylum claims to ensure all states play their part in addressing the refugee crisis
- Ensure Ireland's expenditure on Overseas Development Assistance reaches 0.7% of GNI by 2020
- Develop a tax and human rights policy for Ireland
- Mobilise against TTIP, in particular the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism as an affront to the democratic process

Citizen Trust Fund

For young people and their parents, the post-school or post college phase is fraught with difficulty, financial and otherwise. Many are unsure of the direction in which they want to take their lives. They may wish to pursue opportunities that appear beyond their and their family's financial grasp. Most of all they need life experience, travel, study or to be assisted with business ideas they may wish to pursue.

We want to assist young people in the 20–26 age group with gaining the experiences they need to make important life decisions which will determine their future. We want to encourage and facilitate learning and travel to create true global citizens who understand the wider world around them and their place within it. It would allow young people, regardless of background, to make decisions about their futures independent of their family circumstances.

In order to help young people get the meaningful and enriching life experiences to set them on the path of achievement and genuine contribution to society, we will invest €5,000 into a special fund for every child born in the state.

The NTMA would manage the fund. *For example*, with a 5/7% rate of return, by the time the child is 20 years of age their investment would mature to between €15,000/20,000.

67,472 babies were born in Ireland in 2014. If such a scheme were operational in 2014, the State would have invested €337.36m into the fund in this year.

The matured investment would be managed and accessible through the Department of Education and Skills. This fund could be drawn down only if the young person chose to pursue a route as set out by the Department.

This fund could be used for:

- A year of volunteer work with a registered charity in Ireland or with a recognised NGO working in the developing world
- An Erasmus or Socrates year abroad during their college studies
- One year postgraduate, professional or other course of further learning
- Seed funding for a business start-up / act as guarantee for loan for entrepreneurship
- Special resource or residential access for young adults with special needs

The fund will be voluntarily drawn-down and managed by the Department and not given to the young person in question. Fees, accommodation and travel costs would be paid directly by the Government or via vouched expenses.

1. A New National Plan

At the moment there is no plan to set out the future direction and development of our country. One of the first tasks of the new Government should be to set out a new plan which incorporates both a climate and a national spatial strategy.

The plan needs to set out where our population is going to live, the nature of the economy we seek to develop in each area, the infrastructure we will need to put in place and the way we manage our land and our environment.

Previous spatial plans have not worked because they only came as an afterthought to decisions that had already been taken on critical infrastructure and because they were corrupted by bad planning at a local level and by the excessive centralisation of the Irish administrative system.

We need to heed the lessons learnt from the Mahon tribunal and put in place a proper structure of regional and local governance so that there is widespread local involvement in the preparation and implementation of the plan.

The development of the plan has to be co-ordinated by the Department of the Taoiseach and involve all Government Departments. The proposed National Dialogue on

Climate change can be used as a vehicle for public consultation for the plan as the key infrastructural, land use and economic issues also have to be considered in our long term transition to a new low carbon future.

We need a new regional governance structure to shape and deliver this new plan. Rather than relying on the three regional authorities that the last Government put in place that have no real powers or strategic coherence, we will implement the recommendations of the Mahon



Tribunal and introduce directly elected authorities for five regional areas as set out in the map above.

We would introduce the direct election for a Mayor for the Greater Dublin area which will have direct responsibility for the coordination of transport and planning in the Dublin

region. Directly elected mayors in Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford would have similar responsibility to reverse the hollowing out of our city centres that has occurred over the last fifty years.

Central to the plan should be an ambition to return life to the centre of our villages, towns and cities so that people have easy access to their local schools, places of employment and community centres.

We need to restore greater powers to local government so that councils can deliver key aspects of the plan

in a flexible manner which allows for variation in policies to suit local circumstances.

We also need to resource a new community activism which sees local organisations managing poverty reduction and the protection and enhancement of the local environment.

We need the community to take a lead in deciding how local services are provided and give them a lead role in planning decisions, which are made in a more transparent, accountable and democratic way.

1.1 Our trading economy

Our country has grown on the back of our decision to become a very open trading economy with the rest of the world. Our trade is centred around six main sectors, three of which depend on the use of our natural resources and three of which have depended on our ability to deliver high quality manufacturing and international services.

Natural Resources

Our agriculture, fisheries and food industry employs over 230,000 people and we export some €9 billion of food produce to the rest of the world. In tourism and related hospitality services we employ 205,000 people and visitors bring €6 billion into our economy each

year. In construction and energy related industries 175,000 people are employed and we have the potential to eliminate our annual €6 billion fossil fuel import bill, if we make the switch to a new efficient and clean energy system.

The development of each of these three sectors provides the greatest opportunity for the development of our rural economy. We need to add a fourth employment opportunity in rural areas by providing high quality broadband to every part of the country, so that location is not a bar to participation in the new global internet economy. In each of these sectors Ireland has everything to gain by advancing a more sustainable business approach. The Green brand

is the right fit for our country and we can trade on a reputation for being sustainable in everything we do.

Public Banking

To enhance this new regional and rural green economy the Green Party is proposing to introduce a public banking model which can provide lending for small and medium enterprises from the use of deposits raised in a region in the same region.

We will introduce a new network of regional public banks with a specific remit of lending to the local enterprise sector to create jobs in the smaller towns in Ireland. Profits generated will be folded back into core capital with a portion for Local Authority common good projects. While demand for credit is not currently being met by our existing banks, Article 123(2) TFEU makes provision for the European Central Bank to lend to public banks. Germany has a long-established Sparkassen model of publicly owned regional banks, which would serve as a template.

This network of publicly owned regional banking institutions, would retain any profits to build core capital and interest earned from regional lending would re-loaned in that region only. They would be designed to take account of the distinct characteristics of the local region and to complement existing local saving institutions.

Manufacturing and traded services

Ireland has a deserved reputation in the manufacture of high quality bio-pharmaceuticals and medical technologies where over 75,000 people are employed. We will continue to support strategic investment in Science Foundation Ireland, advancing research and development capabilities to attract continuing inward investment.

Digital services

105,000 people work in the tech sector in Ireland, both in large international companies and in a vibrant start-up culture. We can make those numbers grow by making Ireland a test bed location for the development of new digital services that also help reduce our carbon footprint. We need to counter the threat that the development of the proposed Northern powerhouse in the UK presents with the co-ordination of our own tech corridor between Dublin and Belfast, which can be a suitable first test zone from these 'internet of things' digital services.

In rural Ireland we will initiate a high speed broadband to the farm service, which will allow farmers to monitor and share data about soil, water and other environmental and growing conditions. The sharing of such information could help make Ireland an advanced environmental monitoring centre, which can add to international understanding as to

what is happening to the climate in the North Atlantic.

Financial services

The financial, insurance and real estate sectors employ 100,000 people. We will relaunch the Green IFSC concept which was started in 2010 to expand environmental funds

management, project financing and trading platforms that have already established within the Centre. We will support the introduction of the Financial Transaction Tax being proposed in other European capitals in recognition that it will lead to a more responsible and less volatile financial services industry.

1.2 Housing

The Green Party's vision for housing in Ireland is for affordable homes, a strong private rental sector and a social housing system based on a cost rental model as proposed by the National Economic and Social Council. We want to build neighbourhoods that are people centred and include easy access to green spaces and community facilities.

The Green Party believes in focusing on housing for occupation, limiting the ability to use housing as a speculative asset.

In response to the severe housing shortages affecting large parts of the country, it is imperative that the Government take direct action to rectify the situation, rather than counting on small market interventions to solve the problem.

The Green Party in government would amalgamate the Housing Agency and the Housing Finance Agency to create the National Housing Authority, tasked with providing

7,500 units of social and affordable housing per annum. Further, this new authority would take the existing expertise developed within NAMA as that agency winds down.

These units would be delivered through open tender, and would be managed by local authorities. The National Housing Authority would borrow on the open market, secured against the future income streams of the housing stock to be provided.

The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) may allocate a certain portion of its funds to the development of social and affordable housing, by purchasing National Housing Authority bonds. It is estimated that the total size of this fund is approximately €7 billion. We would allocate 2% of the ISIF to these bonds.

In any pension fund there is at least a small allocation to fixed income bonds (usually sovereign bonds). We would allow a portion of this allocation

be held in National Housing Authority bonds rather than foreign bonds. It is estimated that the assets of Irish Pension Schemes total approximately €90 billion.

This proposed investment vehicle is

similar in principle to LPHAs which operate in Austria, which own 22% of primary residences in that state.

The following would ensure sustainable development and avoid a rerun of the property bubble.

On housing, we will:

- Hold a referendum to enshrine housing as a social right in the Constitution
- Create a National Housing Authority which, in conjunction with local authorities, would be responsible for housing, housing finance, planning, land development and construction in each local authority area
- Convert State controlled lands including some of those 800 sites identified by the Irish Council for Social Housing as being available into social and student accommodation use
- Restore the 80% rezoning windfall tax
- Replace property tax with a new tax levied annually at a progressive rate on the site value of lands suitable for building (Site Valuation Tax)
- Tackle the under-use and hoarding of derelict land by the state, semi-state and private sectors by reforming the Derelict Sites Act
- Promote higher urban densities in terms of housing design, particularly in public transport corridors, through a new National Spatial Plan
- Discourage unsustainable “one-off housing” sprawl, favouring villages or other traditional housing clusters in rural areas through a new National Spatial Plan
- Prioritise brownfields sites for new developments and preserve green field sites for recreational purposes and green infrastructure, through a new National Spatial Plan
- Target that 20% of all new houses should be passive standard, achieving the highest standards of energy efficiency and minimal impact on the environment
- Restore the Part (V) requirements for social housing provision in housing developments to 20%
- Limit the amount by which a landlord can raise rent in any year to 7%

- Allocate an extra €1m in funding to the Private Residential Tenancies Board, to ensure tenancy rights are being upheld
- Amend equality legislation to prevent tenants being rejected solely on the basis of receiving rent supplement
- Create an online portal to facilitate the transfer of social housing between tenants – ultimately handled by the local housing department

1.3 Transport

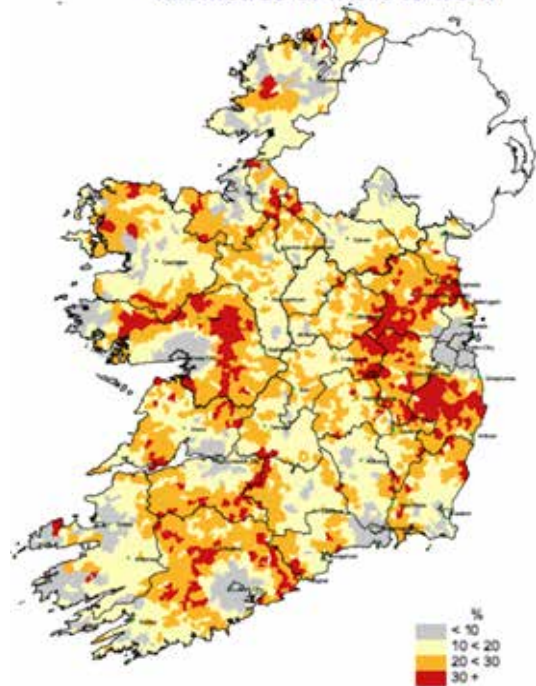
A Green Vision

For the last fifty years national transport policy has favoured the development of private car transport over walking, cycling and public transport alternatives. We closed our railway lines, turned a blind eye to air pollution and road deaths as we allowed our cities and towns sprawl out into the countryside. We have ended up in a situation where the average Irish worker now spends eight hours each week travelling 278km to and from work. That has a huge cost in time money and lives. Transport emissions are the fastest rising greenhouse gas emissions, leaving a terrible legacy for future generations.

We have reached the end of the road in this policy approach. All the motorways lead to Dublin and all that traffic is coming onto an M50 motorway which is about to gridlock. We know that we have to fully decarbonise our transport system if we are to live up to the climate change commitment we entered into in the Paris Agreement. We know we have

to build at least 20,000 new houses a year to meet the needs of our rising population. We cannot afford to build them in the wrong place and make it even more difficult for everyone to get about.

2006: Percentage of workers in each Electoral Division who travel 30 kilometres or more to work



The National Transport Authority must have a central role influencing the land use, planning and strategic direction that this plan sets out. It will have to concentrate new development in the centre of our

cities, towns and villages so that people have easier local access to their workplaces, schools, shops and other community facilities.

The NTA's target date of 2035 for implementation of its strategies for the Greater Dublin Area and Fingal/North Dublin must be brought forward, or at least be supplemented by interim targets for such as emissions, modal share, low cost non-infrastructure measures and minimising congestion.

To change the way we invest in transport systems if we are to move to a more sustainable future. The outgoing Government's Capital investment plan 2016-2021 allocated €5.9 billion on roads spending, €3.6 billion on public transport and had no budget for local investment in bus routes, cycling and walking. We will reallocate €1.6 billion of that roads budget to invest in more sustainable solutions.

Walking

Pedestrians currently account for 15% of all trips and there has been a 45% rise in pedestrian fatalities over the last two years. If a pedestrian is hit by a car travelling at 50kph they only have a 15% chance of surviving but if the speed is 30kph the chances of surviving rise to 90%. We will introduce a scheme of introducing 30kph speed zones in all residential and city centre areas.

The timing of pedestrian signals and the short crossing times is a

further problem. 30% of older people find themselves unable to cross the road in the allotted green time and pedestrians are often left waiting 90 seconds between pressing the button and getting a green man. We will introduce new regulations to reduce the waiting time to a maximum of 30 seconds and ensure that all pedestrians have adequate time to cross the road.

Over €4 billion of the roads budget is allocated for upkeep and maintenance. We will allocate €100m from this budget to implement a scheme of building new footpaths on the approach roads to Irish towns to improve the connection between houses on the edge of the town and the centre.

We support the establishment of a Freedom to Roam over mountain commonage and other areas of rough grazing. Routes walked without hindrance for 12 years should be designated as right-of-way.

30% of the journeys in morning rush hour involve the transport of children to school by car. We will reinstate a safe routes to school programme to make it safer for children to make their own way to school which will improve their health and reduce road congestion for everyone.

Cycling

The National Cycling Framework published by the Department of Transport in 2009 includes a target of 10% commuting by bike by 2020

but the current Capital investment plan up to that date has no provision for the measures that are needed to deliver such a target. We will allocate

10% of the overall capital transport budget for cycling including design and delivery of a network of urban cycling routes.

On walking and cycling, we will:

- 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 to improve the safety of bicycles on the road
- Ensure that every county and city council has a high quality cycling policy, to include infrastructural and promotional elements. The quality of its cycling provision must be graded it should have to perform an annual audit detailing the number and location of fatalities and injuries to cyclists and pedestrians and report it publicly
- Ensure that the top 50 most dangerous junctions in the country be identified and retrofitted within two years 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' (DMURS) at a minimum. Junctions to be retrofitted with, inter alia, 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 set out in the National Cycle Manual
- 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 with low volumes of traffic and specifically signed, as is the norm in most 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 most European countries
- Have traffic lights programmed to give cyclists a head start, where appropriate, and 'green waves' provided for cyclists on heavily cycled routes
- Require all trucks to be required by law to fit sensors, audible turning alarms, extra mirrors and side-safety bars to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians

Buses

Given that the introduction of large rail based transport systems is going to take more than five years to deliver we would allocate €1 billion of the transfer from the existing roads budget to the building of high quality bus rapid transport systems.

We believe that physical infrastructure such as roads, rail lines, airports, city bus stations and port facilities must remain in public ownership – but we are open to the involvement of private operators in the provision of transport services where appropriate.

We will conduct an independent review of all bus routes to ensure that the best possible service is provided.

The new bus routes will include the introduction of orbital routes which facilitate movement between suburbs to complement the existing radial routes which serve town centres and the introduction of local bus services for shorter trips.

We advocate increasing subvention to public transport operators. Furthermore, as fare pricing has a significant impact on public transport usage and consequently on revenue for operators, fares should not be allowed to increase beyond the point where overall revenues diminish.

Implementing our policies will require increased State subsidy for transport infrastructure and services for the common good.

On buses, we propose:

- A 5% reduction in fares could be achieved by increasing the subvention to operators by €40m which should be linked to fare reductions
- That PSO contract payments should be increased to 2013 levels to facilitate service improvements, at a total cost of €17m

To maximise connectivity between and within different modes of transport we need:

- More Park and Ride facilities on routes into cities that are not adequately served by public transport, as an interim measure
- Designation of principal stations as transport hubs linking with buses
- The simplification and integration of ticketing and fare structures
- A new bus station west of Dublin city centre, with access for private operators too

Rail

We favour greater investment in rail infrastructure as a more environmentally friendly and efficient alternative to road and air transport.

This requires:

- Giving priority to the completion of the Kildare Route Project Phase 2, and the Navan Railway Line (extension from M3 Parkway station to Navan)
- Advance the planning for the Interconnector (DART Underground) between Spencer dock and Inchicore and the Metro North from St. Stephen's Green to Swords
- Encouraging greater use of rail freight
- The extension of Luas to Finglas and development of light rail service for Galway
- Better station facilities for travellers, including restoration of neglected station buildings

Sea and Air Transport

We support the relocation of existing storage facilities on the South Docks in Dublin to make way for new residential development in the area and the development of other existing and new port services on the east coast to reduce the pressure on the Dublin Port.

We will lobby the EU to include the shipping and aviation sector in either

the Emissions Trading System or the Effort Sharing Decision and work with the UK and France to declare all waters surrounding Ireland to be a Sulphur Emissions Control Area (SECA).

The volume of ferry usage for passenger traffic can be increased by improving transport links to ports and making timetables more convenient for users of the various modes of transport.

1.4 Energy

Ireland must decarbonise its energy system in the next three decades if we are to play our part in meeting European and global efforts to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (2° C). To achieve this, Ireland needs greater consensus on the way we will achieve this policy goal. We have everything to gain from making the switch away from the use of fossil fuels. We currently spend over €6 billion each year on imported fossil fuels and over 3,000 die prematurely each year due to the air pollution caused by the burning of these fuels. By turning to our own power supplies we can create jobs, clean up our air, strengthen our energy security and stop propping up corrupt regimes.

The world is already starting to change and is switching to a renewable future. The cost of solar and wind power is falling and spending on renewable power is overtaken fossil fuel investment, even with the fall in global oil prices. We in Ireland have a chance to lead this energy revolution, we can combine the skills of our technology industries with our energy companies to be hyper efficient in everything we do. We can make sure that the transition is a just one which insures the ownership of new power supplies is held in community and public hands.

Moneypoint power plant and the three existing peat fired power stations should be closed in the lifetime of the next Government. We will establish a new marine energy centre in Moneypoint to avail of the transmission infrastructure in the area and institute a programme of retrofitting of buildings in the midlands to create employment to replace any jobs lost in the power stations.

We can power our country with a mix of renewable power, gas fired generation and interconnection in the short run as we ramp up the level of renewable power supplies. We are already on course to meeting 40% of our needs from onshore wind power and the next phase of development should see the extensive roll-out of solar and offshore wind power following an extensive national dialogue on the future power options for the country.

We will reintroduce a support mechanism to allow householders and businesses to sell their own solar generated electricity back to the grid. We will initiate a programme of introducing a photovoltaic panel on every suitable public building and introduce an auction process to allow for solar panels to be developed by farmers in their fields.

We will insure that new electricity interconnectors, due to be funded under the EU Juncker Investment plan are designed in a way that connects with offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea.

We will advance the development of anaerobic digestion to use municipal and farm waste and introduce greater incentives for the development of advanced wood fired combined heat and power plants within Irish industry.

By introducing a new market mechanism, centered around balancing variable power supplies and variable demand response measures we can switch to this renewable future without the need for subsidies for conventional renewable power supplies such as onshore wind power.

The marginal price of renewable power is near zero so the return for investors will be paid for the energy services these generators provide in providing capacity, frequency and voltage stability on this new balancing grid.

We need to initiate a new model of community ownership of renewable energy resources which can be based on the co-operative model already operating in Belgium Ecopower Co-operative which is both an energy provider and developer of new renewable power where members can join by taking out a small share in the enterprise.

The presence of so many technology companies in Ireland and our small size and high quality distribution grid will allow us become a test location for the development of new low carbon energy efficiency solutions.

We will introduce a support scheme for the promotion of renewable heat power and strengthen the advertising requirements for Building energy rating certificates to promote more efficient buildings.

We will set a requirement for all onshore wind farms to have at least a 15% requirement of community ownership in all new developments.

The presence of so many technology companies in Ireland and our small size and high quality distribution grid will allow us become a test location for the development of new low carbon energy efficiency solutions.

We will introduce a support scheme for the promotion of renewable heat power, strengthen the advertising requirements for Building energy rating certificates and encourage new passive house standards by local authorities.

Over one million houses in Ireland are heated by oil fired central heating systems. We will encourage the switch to heat pump and wood fired heating systems by expanding the SEAI Better Energy Warmer homes scheme, with an additional cost of €10m per annum.

We will support the introduction of a Dutch Energiesprong deep retrofit energy efficiency scheme in Ireland. We will seek European Investment Bank funding support for such an initiative with repayments on social housing coming from future fuel allowance payments.

We will advance the roll-out of electric vehicles by directing the Commission for energy regulation and the ESB to further advance the roll-out of

electric charging points.

We know that four fifths of known fossil fuels will have to remain underground if we are to have a chance of avoiding dangerous levels of global warming. Ireland should show a lead by committing to a ban on hydraulic fracking for oil or gas and by ending the programme for licensing for oil and gas exploration in Irish territorial waters.

1.5 Tourism

The success of the Wild Atlantic Way has demonstrated the potential for marketing Ireland as a clean green holiday destination.

We envisage a variety of ways of making and marketing Ireland as an eco-tourism centre.

These ways include:

- 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.
- Develop Food Trails to build on our reputation for high quality produce.
- Promote youth and child friendly water sports to encourage activity and awareness of our maritime heritage.
- Develop 'Proud Cities' with traffic-free areas and new parks to benefit residents and tourists.
- Designating at least two new national parks to attract tourism
- Connect Rosslare to Larne and Rosslare to Galway as two new tourist rail routes
- Keep VAT at 9% for the Tourism and Hospitality sector

1.6 Climate Change & Environmental Protection

The need to address long-term problems, such as climate change, is an overarching value of 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.

Global events related to extreme weather, such as storms and droughts, could compromise our food security and lead to increased forced migration into Ireland by 'climate refugees'.

Our climate policies include:

- By 2050, 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 need to establish ambitious but realistic binding national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for 2030 and aim for 100% decarbonisation of the power system and an 80% overall reduction in national emissions by 2050
- The development of a new national planning process encompassing both climate mitigation and adaptation is essential
- There should be a requirement for annual reporting on national climate action plans to the Oireachtas
- We support the development of local food production systems to decrease reliance on food imports
- There should be greater consideration on the asylum status of refugees fleeing environmental disasters in addition to armed conflict
- A massive increase in afforestation consisting of native and continuous cover woodlands to help offset our carbon emissions. Only 10% of land in Ireland is under forestry which represents the second lowest proportional percentage of any country in Europe

The systems for the protection of our environment need to be strengthened.

We would:

- Ensure greater coordination between, environmental regulation and planning control.
- Establish a National Environmental Action Plan
- Develop an all-island structure for environmental protection and enforcement
- Review the levels of fines and range of sanctions available to courts
- Allocate additional resources to the EPA, with a particular emphasis on investment in monitoring and enforcement activities
- Properly resource the enforcement division of the EPA so that it is able to prosecute serious offences on indictment rather than summarily.
- Provide in licensing conditions for the problems created by companies going insolvent
- Strengthen the role and membership of the EPA's Advisory Board to have more expertise and greater input into the agency's strategy
- Establish a forum of appeal for the Integration Pollution Prevention and Control license system
- Introduce annual audits of local authority environmental performance and invest in local government environmental enforcement capacity e.g. training, consistent approach to enforcement, minimum inspection criteria and best practice
- The Irish Constitution should be amended to recognise the intrinsic worth of the environment, such as the provision in the Ecuadorian Constitution acknowledging that Nature has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles

The Green Party supports the proposition that a crime of ecocide be created in international law, as a crime against nature, humanity and future generations, to be defined as 'the extensive damage to, destruction of or loss of ecosystem(s) of a given territory, whether by human agency or other causes, to such an extent

that peaceful enjoyment by the inhabitants (human and non-human) of that territory has been or will be severely diminished'; and that the proposed crime of ecocide be formally recognised as a Crime against Peace subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

1.7 Water

Conservation, investment, and fairness should be at the heart of our water services. Public confidence in Irish Water is badly damaged and needs to be repaired.

In Ireland, at present, over 50% of treated water is lost through leaks, raw sewage is discharged in 45 locations around the country, we only have capacity to treat 50% of the sludge produced by septic tanks, and 30% of private wells are polluted

with E. coli.

Significant investment is needed in our water and waste treatment infrastructure – investment that Irish Water is not delivering.

Despite the elaborate mechanisms designed to keep borrowing off the national balance sheet, investment in water infrastructure by this government has been less than half than in 2010, when the Green Party were in Government.

On water, we propose:

- A referendum to enshrine both the right to water and the public ownership of water infrastructure into the constitution
- A total overhaul of Irish Water, reducing the utilities role to overseeing and directing investment, like the National Roads Authority
- Tasking the new Irish Water with managing water infrastructure on a regional basis, based around river catchment areas, in conjunction with local authorities
- The continued installation of water meters to encourage conservation, and detect leaks. Smart meters are used to manage other utilities, such as electricity and gas, and can play a role in conserving water
- Allocating a generous free allowance of water to every citizen to meet their basic everyday needs while recognising that certain medical conditions would require more.
- Charge for excessive waste of water, and consistent breach of the free allowance
- Abolishing the “Water Conservation Grant”, instead offering tax relief on water efficiency measures, such as rainwater harvesting systems
- Investment should be provided via joint EU/Central exchequer funding along with charges for excessive use

1.8 Flooding

As climate change continues to lead to more turbulent weather activity, we need to be ready with a plan that will deal with the inevitable flooding that will come.

The Green Party has a plan for

flooding, one that combines 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 deal with flooding, we propose to:

- 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
- Adopt ecological measures to manage our river catchments to benefit communities who live and work near vulnerable areas. This is preferable to Kilkenny style Flood Relief Scheme due to costs and time pressures
- Develop land use management plans for each river catchment in the State and begin a process of utilising land to attenuate flood waters, build natural revetment barriers and plant broadleaf forestry and willow for coppicing.
- Prevent poorly regulated urbanisation which has led to construction on flood plains. This must end.
- End denudation of our upland and blanket bogs. Draining and farming practices must be better managed with flooding in mind
- Alter the GLAS Agri-Environment Scheme to fund local projects to give revenue to farmers and future proof their lands from degradation

1.9 Food and Agriculture

Public awareness of issues relating to food is increasing with regular discussion in the media of issues such as food security – threatened by our dependence on imports; the

related issue of food miles – very relevant to climate change; concerns about poor diet and obesity; and food waste. Agri-food is also Ireland's largest indigenous industry and the

main economic driver in many rural areas. There is still great potential to expand this sector by providing

premium quality food, more jobs and added value through lower intensity farming.

We need to:

- Promote organic food production, especially focusing on import substitution, to achieve a target of 5% of land in organic agriculture by 2021
- Keep Ireland GMO free. The consequences of these technologies are not fully understood, they promote monoculture and the patenting of seeds threatens public access to safe and nutritious food
- Develop publicly owned food markets in cities and towns to encourage more direct selling from producers to consumers
- Support the generally extensive, grass-based nature of cattle, sheep and goat production in Ireland – the planned increase in production under the revised CAP must be achieved without compromising that
- Support methods of adding value to beef production – such as finishing young bull beef and veal production at home – which can add value in the region of €300m and reduce live exports
- Give higher priority to habitat creation and protection in farming policy, rural environment schemes and development planning
- Scrap green/marked diesel regime in favour of a tax rebate payable to farmers or other persons now entitled to use marked fuel
- Encourage farmers to move to a polycultural grazing systems which reduce carbon emissions and help pollinators
- Encourage community involvement in food growing through community gardens, school gardens and allotments provided by local authorities at affordable rents
- Press for local food procurement policies to be allowable under EU and World Trade Organisation rules as well as compulsory labelling of country of origin – including main ingredients in processed food
- Support the development of a national soil strategy that prioritises soil protection and appropriate management practices
- Introduce schemes across primary and secondary schools aimed at educating children about all aspects of food (selecting, meal planning, preparing and growing your own)

- Introduce legislation to ensure that school vending machines only supply healthy snacks.
- Reduce food waste by working with producers to reduce supply chains and through public education programmes
- Promote the development of community supported agricultural systems and encourage access schemes for young farmers who do not have title to their own land
- Zero food waste – introduce legislation to ensure that all misshapen and still edible foodstuffs are donated rather than dumped (as is the case in France)

1.10 Forestry

In dealing with forestry, we recognise the ecological and social value of forests, the economic value of timber for construction, manufacture and

biomass, Ireland's superior climate for growing trees and the threats of climate change.

On forestry, we propose:

- Retaining the commercial forests of Coillte in public ownership and altering the aims and objectives of the company to recognise the vital role the company plays in providing public amenity, environmental protection, biodiversity and its commercial mandate.
- Planting of protection forests bordering rivers and lakes to protect water quality and assist in managing flood risks
- Promoting a graduated move to Close to Nature–Continuous Cover permanent forestry silvicultural systems and management (without clear felling) to ultimately create permanent biodiverse forests containing trees of all ages, provide a more sustainable flow of products and maintain the “capital” of mature and diverse forests to resist the threat and risks associated with climate change
- Regulation of imports in relation to illegally logged timber and timber traceability and certification
- Increase the planting of trees to 15,000 ha per annum by 2030 which will be provided for with €30m per annum additional forestry subsidies.

1.11 Waste

At present Ireland sends over 700,000 tonnes of waste to landfill each year. Landfill is now recognised as the last resort. Much of this waste

could be prevented, reused, recycled, recovered for energy or composted. Zero Waste To Landfill by 2030 can be achieved.

We can achieve this if we:

- Target at least a 70% recycling and composting target by 2025
- Make Ireland a leader in this sector by sponsoring post-graduate programmes and introducing PPP schemes to develop potentially cleaner alternatives to incineration such as gasification, pyrolysis, mechanical and biological treatment (MBT) and bio-refineries
- Continue to increase the landfill levy which has been effective at diverting waste from landfills
- Implement a levy on incineration and other waste treatment processes based on pollutant emissions
- Apply a carbon tax to all waste installations to encourage low carbon solutions
- Ensure that any incinerators built shall connect to district heating systems and lead to substantial greenhouse gas savings
- Set up expert panel to establish what infrastructure is needed and what changes manufacturers must make in order to meet the EU End of Life Vehicle and Battery directives for which targets are currently on course to be breached
- Introduce a ban on the sale of products containing plastic microbeads

2. Efficiency in Everything we do

The most equitable and productive investment of taxpayers' money is the provision of high-quality public services that can be accessed by

all on the basis of need. Additional revenues will be invested into public services and public infrastructure.

2.1 Education

What do we want for our children? Many children achieve impressive results in the Leaving Certificate but remain short-changed when it comes to the things that matter the most. According to the World Health Organisation depression is 10 times more prevalent than in the 1960s.

The average age for the onset of depression in the 1960s was 36. It is now 14 years of age. This is a wake-up call for us. We should work together to build a society and an education system that places the happiness of our children and our future adults at its heart.

Greater happiness increases productivity and reduces disease and disorder. A key factor in enhancing and sustaining happiness is identifying and tapping into inner strengths. Resilience is the ability to adapt to the challenges of life. Building resilience in our children will prepare them for the challenges ahead, and to have the toolbox of skills to cope in crisis.

We need an education system in which children will learn to recognise and nurture their own strengths. Rather than fitting our children into a rigid curriculum, education needs to be better matched to our children's needs. Education is not simply teaching "subjects": it is much more important than that. Children who learn resilience and confidence can make a difference: they can become the adults who will shape a more robust society.

How will we push to achieve this? We will establish a taskforce to explore and engage with experts worldwide to build initiatives focussed on developing life skills.

We will reform primary teaching away from the current overloaded curriculum requirements, to give teachers greater freedom to help children identify and develop their particular skills.

We will provide teachers with the continuous training to enable this.

We will propose changes at both second and third level that will reduce the emphasis on the importance of the grades received in the Leaving Certificate examinations. This will give greater freedom at second level to deepen understanding of both the subject areas and of the students' own strengths, instead of primarily teaching how to pass the exam. Third level education will also benefit, as students will enter with a less exam-focussed approach to advancing

their true education, developing the kind of skills that employers and society need.

This is an investment that Ireland has to make. A strong education system supports a sustainable and adaptable society capable of thriving in the face of multiple changes. Investment in education benefits all of us. We need to improve the conditions of pre-school, primary and secondary education.

We will:

- Plan to reduce staff-student ratios across all levels, allowing more small-group learning opportunities at primary and secondary
- Reintroduce ex-quota status of guidance provision in secondary schools with an investment of €32m a year. Guidance counsellors support the mental health of students and are an essential support for young people from disadvantaged and immigrant backgrounds in particular
- Make school dinners available for all school children as in other countries starting with initial funding of €25m per annum. This improves school performance and benefits health and wellbeing
- Invest in lifelong teacher training. At the primary level, this will focus on promoting mental resilience, scientific observation and enquiry, as well as outdoor and sports activities. At secondary level, it will additionally focus on developing critical thinking skills
- Reform primary level skills development and reduce emphasis on homework. International studies indicate that homework at primary level may offer little academic benefit and demotivate children. A new approach to homework should look at building children's strengths and confidence
- In transition year, provide for children from different schools to spend two weeks in a "learning in nature" scheme where they are involved in preparing and planting land for harvest later that year. It would be established on a pilot basis and expanded until every fourth year student could avail of the scheme. Initially with a €5m per annum budget

- Support junior cycle reform, but delay assessments until third year, since overemphasis on assessment in second year may be counter-productive
- Increase the proportion of our research budget supporting a greater number of PhD students. Investing in human capital drives the knowledge economy

Access to education in Ireland is still not as equitable as it should be. We have increasing student numbers at third level, and significant increases in primary and secondary level in certain geographic areas. However, poor planning in the face of well-

anticipated shifts in educational needs are creating problems now and will create problems in the future, unless they are tackled much more energetically. Removing barriers to education, at all levels, is a key priority.

The Green Party proposes to:

- End any discrimination at school entry on the basis of religion or special education needs
- Urgently review and tackle transport and housing costs of third level students
- Ensure that children in Ireland who find themselves in Direct Provision will have the right of access to third level education
- Support a second year of funded pre-school education, coupled with improved pre-school inspections
- Support rural schools, with continued funding for schools with less than four teachers, where student travel costs of time and money justify this
- Oppose any cuts to student grants or increases in fees
- Overhaul CAO third level entry and leaving certificate examination. Other skills in addition to memory work and exam technique will be increasingly assessed
- Increase third level student mobility between courses and institutions after entry. This gives students more options and reduces emphasis on leaving cert results
- Invest in online educational programmes to support more flexible education of students from home and abroad
- Increase direct state funding for third level by €300m per annum to prevent increases in registration fees

- Increase participation in Further Education, especially for disadvantaged communities.
- Increase the standard and scope of post-leaving certificate and vocational training, and remove the cap on plc places

These proposed changes are intended to enhance the well-being of children and students now. They are intended to develop the future generations that will be ready to take

on the challenge of leading Ireland into the middle of the twenty-first century and beyond. We believe they are worth the investment.

2.2 Health

Health is an important aspect of quality of life, which is linked to the environment we live in. Good health begins with exercise, good diet and a healthy lifestyle. By enabling people to live healthier lives we can reduce the cost of health care and improve the quality of everyone's lives.

Our goal is to develop patient-centred care, to prevent problems before they occur, and to create a world class health care system that is cheaper and more efficient.

Our healthcare system is in trouble. Too much emphasis has been put on short-term cost and the idea that competition will solve problems has meant that patients and their care has been left behind.

Sick people should not be viewed as

a market for making profit. We need to change this. We need to develop incentives for patients and those who provide health-care so that the whole system works together with the aim of doing the best for the patient. This concept is known as patient-centred care, where doctors, nurses, hospitals and clinics work with patients to help prevent problems before they become acute and need expensive treatment.

This will create a world class health care system that is cheaper and more efficient, and where decisions are made at the lowest possible level.

Patient Centred Health

The Green Party wants everybody to be able to access care as close to their home as possible.

This can be achieved with the following services:

- Public Health Nurses at an advanced level who would look after patients in their own home. These nurses would have the power to get extra services for patients based on medical need

- Telephone and Internet services to help patients deal with illness. These services would be provided by experienced nurses, doctors or pharmacists who would be able to arrange care for patients in the appropriate place, at the appropriate time. For example, some patients would be fast-tracked into hospital beds, while others could have appointments made for them with their family doctor at the earliest opportunity
- 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 pharmacy, so that some services could be provided working with family doctors, and taking the pressure off them
- Community “polyclinics” such as those found across Europe, where people could access a range of health and mental health services, on a drop-in basis
- More investment in family doctor (General Practice) services to allow for minor procedures and specialist services to take place outside of hospitals

Health funding

We recognise that the health-care we provide is costly to the state and to its citizens. More efficient patient-centred healthcare costs less because people are empowered to make choices that benefit them in the long term.

The correct incentives should also be in place to ensure that different services are integrated to deliver the best results.

The Green Party strongly disagrees with other parties who prioritise tax cuts over solving the crisis in the Health Service.

This approach appears to be costly in the short term, but when waste, duplication of services caused by competition and perverse incentives in the current two-tier system are removed, there will be significant savings.

The Green Party:

- Believes in 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 from general taxation
- Supports multi-annual budgeting, Activity Based Costing and blended Capitation Schemes to incentivise efficient targeted use of resources throughout our health system

- Supports the introduction of small charges for all medical services, to be paid at point of use of those services, subject to a person's medical need and their ability to pay
- Will phase out all tax incentives and public sector concessions for those who purchase or provide private health care services and private health-care insurance.
- Negotiate medication costs regionally based on EU procurement best practices, with specialist advice to ensure that we get the best medications at the most cost-effective price, without the risks of drug shortages
- Introduce a National Carers Register to provide a clear basis for the assessment and planning of services to meet their needs
- Supports the concept that health is considered in all policy decisions ("HIAP")
- Proposes that local authorities will play an important role in promoting health through the provision of safe walking / cycling routes, public parks, playgrounds, pitches, swimming pools and leisure centres
- Supports measures to ensure clear and meaningful labelling of foods so that people can make an informed choice regarding what they eat
- Supports targeted public programmes to improve education and practice related to oral hygiene and to improve access to dental care

The Health Service

The Green Party would replace the Health Service Executive with local community health organisations (CHOs) which will include a balance of community and patient participation advised by healthcare professionals.

These CHOs will find solutions to local needs, based on accurate information on outcomes from services provided and will be able to direct funding into the most cost effective providers. It also will enable transfer of service provision to the lowest level of complexity. Steps would be taken to ensure that patients and not local politicians would be involved in

decision making.

The Green Party supports regional and national centres for care of complex disease where there is evidence or a persuasive body of opinion that this results in better patient outcomes and more efficient service delivery

Health Performance Measurement and incentivisation of better outcomes in health services should be promoted in preference to reporting on structures and processes. This is a necessary part of ensuring that the health system is accountable to its citizens

Health information and marketing:

- We oppose any change to EU legislation, which would permit direct marketing of prescription drugs
- We support the International Obesity Task Force's "Sydney Principles" as a basis to restrict commercial marketing of foods to children
- We advocate 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
- We support minimum pricing for alcohol and a ban on advertising of alcohol on television and radio and in association with sporting events.
- We advocate greater restrictions on access to forms of gambling which appear to be particularly addictive or particularly attractive to children

Health choices:

- The Green Party supports the implementation of a Sugar Tax
- The Green Party supports conventional health care based on biological, psychological and social science as the principal model for health care delivery in Ireland and the integration of alternative/complementary health care into publicly funded health care systems
- Excessive "medicalisation" of life can create unnecessary fear and misdirect public policy emphasis towards drugs and treatments and away from the core of a sustainable health policy
- Subject to meeting a series of conditions including broad public support the Green Party would support a system of presumed consent for organ donation
- The Green Party supports a move away from a criminal-justice based approach to a health-based approach to Drug policy. The primary goal of our policy should be to minimize harm caused by drug use alongside demand reduction measures. The decriminalization of drug use is a good first step toward achieving this, but only a first step

Disability

The Green Party considers disability to be a natural part of the human condition, which some people may experience from birth and others acquire as part of life's journey.

Disability inclusion needs to be embraced by all Government departments and public bodies.

The Green Party supports:

- The ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which Ireland signed in 2007
- An Irish Sign Language Bill to accord it official recognition
- An increase in the Disability Allowance
- An increase in the budget for disability services, including Home Support and Personal Assistance
- Financial incentives for employers that employ an individual with a disability
- Making rehabilitation services quicker and easier to access
- Addressing the large unmet need for speech and language, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy
- Extending the funding supports for people with disabilities in education to part-time students
- Specific inclusion of the needs of people with disabilities in future housing policies
- Ensuring that new transport subsidy schemes provide for people with mobility needs, including those who would have been eligible for the Motorised Transport Grant and Mobility Allowance Schemes prior to their closure.
- A sufficient quota of the national taxi pool to be fully accessible and available to people with disabilities by 2017.
- The disability spending above will be provisioned by an additional €90m per annum

2.3 Mental health

- We would require the Department of Health to oversee the full implementation and resourcing at national level of the policies of 2006 'Vision for Change' into mental health care; the emphasis being on recovery as far as is possible and on facilitating full information and choice for patients around all forms of treatment including talking therapies
- Care in the community should be provided and adequately resourced where possible with hospital admission as a last resort
- Psychotherapy, Counselling and Psychology services should be regulated by an independent body (similar to the Teaching Council) attached to the Dept. of Health with guidance from the Psychological Society of Ireland and the IMO to ensure standards and minimum qualifications within these professions
- We support the integration of access to psychotherapy, counselling and social care services into all Community Mental Health Teams and primary care teams, including the Child and Adolescent service
- We should resource provision of early childhood and family interventions for families experiencing parenting difficulties
- The appointment of a Mental Health Promotion Officer in schools is needed to provide mental/emotional health programmes
- We support the adequate resourcing of Authorized Officers to implement necessary detention orders and the removal of section 9 (a) from the Mental Health Act 2001 which allows a family member to instigate involuntary detention
- We would support nationwide implementation of the SCAN crisis response service for suicidal persons
- Addiction services should be integrated with mental health care and social care.
- A full range of therapeutic services should be available to women during pregnancy and in the peri-natal period
- We will begin implementation of mental health reform with an additional €35m per annum

2.4 Childcare

Parents in Ireland struggle to meet most of the cost of childcare, with state support for parents lagging well behind our European neighbours.

The Green Party believes that the state must take up responsibility of sharing the cost of childcare with

parents and in the medium to long term parents should not have to spend more than 15 percent of their income on childcare.

The quality of childcare needs to be urgently addressed so that all children get the best start in life.

To help parents look after children both in the home and in childcare we will:

- Introduce six months paid parental leave, to be shared between parents during the first year after birth, in addition to existing maternity leave. There is strong evidence that children benefit most from spending the first year of their lives with a parent. This change should be introduced gradually over a five year period with an investment of €273m
- Provide the right to unpaid parental leave for both parents up to the child's third birthday, similar to that available in Germany, with appropriate requirements for providing notice to employers
- Introduce a 'childcare subsidy', where the state pays part of the cost of childcare for children under three before they are eligible for a pre-school place. This subsidy should be introduced in 2017 to initially benefit lower-income families, and should be expanded gradually to include all children in quality childcare. These supports would only be available to childcare providers that sign up to high quality curriculum and quality standards, based on the existing Aistear and Siolta framework, with provisions to ensure that fees are not excessive
- Make sure all children get the best start in life by ensuring that high quality pervades all aspects of our childcare provision. We will establish a comprehensive framework for the early education profession, including qualifications, professional development and remuneration. We will link qualifications to pay, ensuring that early education professionals are incentivised to stay in the sector after graduation
- Insist on new schools providing appropriate pre-school facilities to assist in transition and help parents avoid multiple drop-off points
- Ensure that all children with disabilities or who have other additional needs get support to access childcare, based on the recommendations in the second report of the Interdepartmental Working Group, including speech and language therapists and other appropriate early intervention

3. A Just Society

3.1 Justice

The justice system plays a vital role in creating a peaceful and safe society for citizens to enjoy. Citizens deserve to enjoy the rule of law in a fair and equal manner. The justice system

does not just refer to the Gardai and court system, however. For a truly fair society, justice must pervade every aspect of daily life.

With regard to the Garda Síochána, the Green Party will:

- Commit to funding the recruitment of 2,000 new Gardaí in the lifetime of the next Government.
- Support the resourcing of the Gardaí, particularly through the provision of new vehicles and safety equipment
- Increase the use of targeted burglary response units across the country and enhance the prosecution rates of those involved in these crimes by assigning them case managers as their offences move through the courts
- Seek to improve the newly formed Policing Authority by removing any political role in the appointment of the chair and the members, giving it a role in reviewing policing priorities and having it oversee the implementation of human rights by the Gardaí
- Enhance the resources available to the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) and give it a role in investigation disciplinary as well as criminal breaches

With regard to the justice system, the Green Party will:

- Create an independent sentencing council which will produce guidelines for judges to follow in implementing sentences. This council will bring together members of the judiciary, legal profession, and non-legal members. It will also have a public consultation and education mandate
- 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
- Introduce legislation to stop corporations devising corporate structures in

order to avoid paying debts and statutory obligations (e.g. Clery's case) and to prevent foreign registered companies hiding beneficial ownership from public scrutiny

- Provide a mechanism to fund necessary public interest litigation
- Introduce 'spent conviction' legislation that provides for the lapsing of certain offences from an individual's record after the passing of a set period of time

For victims of crime, the Green Party will:

- Fully Implement and resource the EU Victims of Crime Directive including the full provision of victim liaison officers
- Establish a system of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Victims' Charter
- Review the work of the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime and conduct an audit of the victims support services around the country in order to ensure greater coordination and cohesion between victims' caring groups
- Ensure widespread promotion of the National Crime Victims' Helpline
- Introduce legislation to criminalise the practice commonly referred to as "revenge porn"

On prisons, the Green Party will:

- Explore the possibility of developing an after prison support system, with one agency coordinating fully integrated supports for accommodation, education, employment
- Increase the age limit for the application of the Garda Youth Diversion to 18-24 year olds
- Enhance accountability within prisons and other places of detention through ratifying and implementing the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture

3.2 Immigration and Asylum

On asylum, the Green Party will:

- Dismantle the direct provision system and replace it with an efficient and humane system for determining the status of asylum seekers
- Grant asylum seekers the right to work after 6 months
- Create an independent appeals mechanism for asylum decisions and include the asylum and immigration systems within the remit of the Ombudsman and the Children's Ombudsman
- Ensure Ireland works closely with other EU member state to provide a fair and proportionate system of asylum provision for persons fleeing war-torn states and continues to support rescue mission in the Mediterranean. We would examine family sponsorship schemes that are successfully implemented in Germany and Austria

On immigration, the Green Party will:

- Introduce an Immigration Act to codify areas such as the right to family reunification, the rights of children and access to permanent residency in order to reduce the level of discretion left to the Minister for Justice
- Implement a regularisation scheme for undocumented migrants in Ireland
- End labour exploitation by creating sector-based employment permits so workers may move between employers and ensure that all migrant workers are able to access the Labour Court

3.3 Pay and Pensions

Minimum wage

The increase to the minimum wage recommended by the Low Pay Commission was welcome, but there needs to be a means whereby those on this level of pay have longer term certainty regarding what they should be paid. We would propose that, in order to reflect changes in the cost of living, the minimum wage rate

should be tied to Consumer Price Index inflation on an annual basis. There would be a base floor set at €9.15 per hour, meaning that even if the CPI dropped dramatically, the minimum wage would not drop below that figure.

We will introduce legislation which would link the hourly rate of the minimum wage to changes to the

Consumer Price Index, with a base floor of €9.15, below which the wage could not fall

The Green Party supports the integration of the social welfare and tax systems in a manner which provides income support in recognition of the importance and value of unpaid work.

This process of integration should begin with the introduction of a refundable tax credit for those people who do not take up their full tax allowance. This will be the first step to the adoption of the basic income scheme which would replace the current separation between the tax and social welfare system.

We believe that recent misguided

cuts to one parent family payments should be reversed which will require an estimated €12m increase in the budget for next year.

Pensions

Ensure that pension pots are taxed at an equivalent rate to ensure equity in the tax treatment of pensions.

Give workers options at the pensionable age, where they can choose to accept a full pension; choose to work part time and receive a part pension; or continue to work full time with a special tax relief.

Introduce legislation to limit public service pensions to a rate of no more than twice the average industrial wage, or €75,000.

3.4 Digital

A progressive development plan for digital rights and infrastructure will position Ireland to benefit from the wide variety of cultural, environmental, and economic possibilities afforded by the ever growing digital space. By forging a functional balance between

exploring these new opportunities and protecting the people who use the systems, we can set a leading example in responsibly and effectively engaging with the digital world.

The Green Party will:

- Extend infrastructure to provide guaranteed 100mb internet connection to farms, along with support systems to allow farms to benefit from modern agricultural IT technology
- 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
- Adjust defamation legislation to protect the creators and publishers of legitimate critical, satirical, and parody content

- Support the strengthening of fair use provisions in copyright law
- Protect the privacy of individuals by limiting data retention by ISPs and state bodies
- Oppose web blocking systems. They are largely ineffective, driving illicit content further underground, as well as such systems being open to abuse
- Protect the right to access to uncompromised encryption and other privacy tools
- Increase Garda capacity for dealing with reports of online misconduct
- Encourage foreign investment by providing explicit protection for personal data regardless of originating country
- Promote education of children about online safety, what their data rights are, and why it's important
- Support tech literacy education for all ages across the country, to allow people of all ages and backgrounds to benefit from IT

3.5 Political Reform

Ireland has not just faced an economic crisis in recent years; we have faced a profound crisis in public confidence in politics.

Any democracy worthy of the name depends on trust between elected representatives and the people they are accountable to.

The lack of accountability in our political system has actually worsened over the last few years even though this was a key factor behind the financial crisis. The

principle behind the reforms outlined below is to put people at the centre of decision-making.

The Constitution

The Green Party believes the Constitutional Convention generated proposals that deserve a more substantive response from government.

In addition to our call to reconvene the Constitutional Convention, the Green Party supports their proposals for referendums on the following issues:

- Allow citizens to directly initiate referendums to amend the Constitution, overturn legislation or even propose new legislation
- Allow citizens to nominate Presidential candidates
- Change to gender-neutral language and uphold equality between all genders
- Remove the prohibition on blasphemy
- Lower the voting age to 16
- Add a constitutional provision for economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights, particularly to pursue the universal provision of housing and healthcare – in the interim ESC rights should be strengthened by making them legally enforceable through the courts.

The Green Party also seeks referendums to:

- Prevent the privatisation or commercialisation of water services
- Insert a clause on environmental protection that would oblige stewardship of our island's ecosystem and all the life therein

Oireachtas Reform

The Green Party believes that the Oireachtas must be empowered to fulfil its constitutional role of holding the government to account. The Green Party acknowledges the work of the Working Group on Seanad Reform. However, we believe that

further reform to democratise the Seanad is needed for the institution to be meaningful.

To this end we propose that the Seanad be elected by universal suffrage among all voters eligible to vote in Dáil elections and would introduce a referendum to this effect.

The Green Party supports the following reforms for the Seanad:

- The Seanad should be elected using an open list system with d'Hondt distribution elected on the same day as the Dáil
- 56 members should be elected from four regions in the state proportionate to population (Dublin, Leinster, Munster and Connacht/Ulster)
- 4 members should be elected by Irish citizens throughout the world
- In order to maintain the independence of the Dáil and the Seanad (and prevent current abuses), a candidate for election to the Seanad cannot be a candidate for election to the Dáil on the same day

- Given the importance of European legislation, the Seanad should be given an enhanced role of scrutiny over EU legislation and affairs and the hearing of MEPs

The Green Party supports the following reforms for the Dáil:

- Fewer but bigger constituencies; set the minimum number of TDs per constituency to 5 and the maximum to 8 in order to improve the diversity of representation in the Dáil whilst curbing “parish-pump” tendencies in national politicians
- Introduce a more flexible whip system such as the three-whip system
- Appoint committee chairs and their memberships proportionally using the D'Hondt distribution method so that people's representatives are empowered to hold government accountable
- 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 is ejected from a party then the party should stop receiving funding for that TD or Senator)

We also see the government itself as in need of reforms, including:

- Ending the practice of the Economic Management Council within Cabinet
- Empowering the Oireachtas to oversee Ireland's policy towards the EU and Ministers' policy in Europe, along the lines of the model used in the Danish parliament
- Allow half of board appointments to be made by Oireachtas committees, as the Green Party did in legislation appointing board members to RTÉ and other bodies
- Have National Lottery monies allocated by State boards in order to end ministers' powers to allocate them at will
- Hold a referendum for a fixed-term Dáil, similar to the recent reforms in the United Kingdom, so that the date of general elections is not decided by the Taoiseach

Encouraging participation

The Green Party believes that voting is a fundamental right to be provided for. Registering to vote and the act of voting should be as accessible as

possible.

We foresee an Electoral Commission having a strong independent role in driving forward reform on these matters.

The Green Party believes that:

- Citizens should be placed on the electoral register automatically
- Elections should be held at weekends with provision for an absentee ballot facility for any eligible voters currently living overseas
- Persons with no fixed abode should also be accommodated by being allowed to register at an address that is convenient for them
- Along with reducing the voting age to 16, we support educational reforms that will engage young people in politics through school and community programmes
- Plastering our roads with election posters clutters our public space and wastefully bombards voters. Candidates, parties and referendum campaigns should be restricted to one poster each in designated areas such as outside shopping centres, libraries etc.

Local government

The Green Party would oversee a radical democratisation of local government in this country. There are currently too many county and city councils and none of them have

sufficient power to adequately serve local citizens. The most recent reforms to local government effectively abolished town councils but we see a role for smaller councils empowering communities on a local level.

The Green Party would:

- Restore Town councils as new district councils that encompass the rural hinterland of each town in such a way that every rural area is under a district council
- Establish a regional tier of government with significant powers to coordinate transport, planning and other services between counties
- Delegate many of the functions of central government to local and regional authorities including aspects of the administration of health, education and social welfare based on international best practice

- Replace the unfair property tax with a Site Value Tax as a localised means of raising funds for such services.
- Introduce directly elected mayors for the cities and regional assemblies.
- Introduce the facility to call a regional or local referendum through the collection of a certain percentage of voters' signatures (at a level set by legislation)
- Avail of the recent changes in local authority planning procedures that allow for participatory budgeting – Green Party councillors will take the lead in ensuring that it is implemented in their councils.

3.6 Northern Ireland

While restating deeply held 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 for the establishment of 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.

Such a political reform programme should be endorsed by a referendum put to the people of Northern Ireland.

3.7 International Affairs, Security and Defence

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. International Law and the institutions that uphold it should be respected and strengthened.

There should be no impunity for those who break international law.

The Green Party seeks:

- A national debate to discuss Ireland's role in today's international community given our tradition of neutrality and an independent foreign policy.
- A strengthening of the truly pan-European Organisation for Security and co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as well as the United Nations
- An end to the use of Shannon Airport by US military forces involved in wars or any other military forces involved in military action that is not mandated by the above mentioned bodies, or that we consider to be an illegal or unjust action
- To ensure that Ireland is not complicit in the illegal transport of prisoners by the CIA or anyone else
- Increase oversight and reporting requirements for Dual Use Export Licences, including refusing licences to export to countries with questionable human rights records.

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.

In co-operation with Green Parties in other EU states, we will continue to:

- Press for greater democratisation of the Union through increasing the powers of the European Parliament as against the Council of Ministers
- Improve Ireland's poor record of compliance with EU Directives, especially in the areas of social and environmental legislation
- Oppose the implementation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism is an affront to the democratic process while regulatory coherence is being used as a cover for the dismantling of environmental, health and precautionary principle standards

Terror

Terrorism can only be effectively tackled by dealing with the root causes. Our own experience in Ireland has shown us that there is no military solution to terrorism. Persistent interference by outside powers in the affairs of the Middle East has been the primary cause of global

terrorism. Draconian restrictions on basic freedoms in the name of the “war on terror” will only breed more terrorists. Until people are able to determine their own destiny democratically, there will always be fuel for terrorists.

To combat global poverty we propose:

- 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 for poorer countries in the system
- Fairer trade arrangements that will allow countries to pull themselves out of the cycle of poverty
- An approach that tackles the disease of poverty rather than the symptom of migration.
- The promotion of Fair Trade and local goods and we will bring that stance into Government purchasing policy
- Setting a firm deadline of 2020 to meet our UN commitment that Overseas Development Aid should be at least 0.7% of GNP

Defence

The contribution of all members of the Defence Forces and their families to the security and freedoms which

we enjoy in Ireland and the promotion of peace abroad should be properly recognised and valued.

To do this, we propose to:

- Develop a system whereby all citizens would be encouraged to follow a path of service that contributes to their communities and contributes to the promotion of peace and defence in the world without necessarily making a commitment to full time contracts but through the reserve or civil defence services instead
- Provide PRSI credits to employers who give unpaid leave for training or duty
- Underpin military courses with civilian accreditation from educational bodies, to allow employers to benefit from better qualified staff

3.8 Animal welfare

We have a responsibility as the dominant species on earth to protect the diversity, habitats and welfare of other species.

The Green Party is proud of our record on this issue in Government and we wish to expand on this.

To improve animal welfare, we will:

- Introduce measures requiring all pigs and poultry to be provided with adequate space, natural light and opportunities to carry out their natural behaviours
- Increase the numbers of officers authorised to enforce animal welfare laws, and provide additional resources to agencies, such as the ISPCA, whose inspectors have powers to investigate cruelty cases and initiate legal proceedings
- Ban fur farming of all species (mink, fox etc.) with a fair compensation scheme for existing fur farmers
- End badger culling by snares and shooting and support alternative measures to minimise the spread of TB, such as oral vaccination
- Ban all non-medical animal experiments
- Ensure that only circuses which do not use animal acts will be eligible for public funding.
- Support zoos in fulfilling a role in education and conservation, provided that they comply with the highest standards of animal husbandry and welfare

3.9 Social and Family Issues

Equality and Respect are core concepts within the Green Party constitution.

We will create a more equal Ireland where minority populations and the disenfranchised are given the full respect and support of the law.

We will:

- Legislate for fathers to have automatic guardianship of their child from the birth of the child
- Legislate to ensure the registration of fathers' names on the birth certificates of their child
- Promote recognition of the problem of domestic violence experienced by female and male spouses and partners and reverse the cuts to organisations dealing with sexual violence
- Provide forensic child protection services and sexual assault services delivered through close cooperation between the health service and An Garda Síochána throughout the country to ensure best practice in the protection of victims of abuse
- Commission an Expert Body to engage in consultations with the public and formulate a successor to the National Women's Strategy
- Reverse the cuts to the Lone Parent's Allowance
- Safeguard against bullying of gay and trans people in schools, workplaces and sports
- Recognise the Traveller Community as a minority ethnic group
- Initiating an audit of local authorities' delivery and implementation of Traveller accommodation plans

8th Amendment to the Constitution

The Green Party supports the repeal of the 8th amendment of the constitution and we seek this referendum on the repeal of the 8th amendment as soon as possible.

Upon repeal of the 8th amendment the

Green Party will support legislation that includes lawful termination in the cases of rape, incest, fatal foetal abnormality and risk to health of the mother, subject to the criteria given in our reproductive rights policy.

For older people, we seek:

- Targeted goals for the Implementation Plan for the National Positive Ageing Strategy
- To raise the upper age limits for health screening
- A transparent method of Trustee Appointment Schemes so that pensioners have an equal voice in all matters relating to their pensions
- An agreed process to trigger additional fuel allowance payments when the temperature drops below an agreed level
- Reciprocity with other EU countries for free or low-cost public transportation
- An increase in the limit on Rent-a-Room tax relief to €18,000 to encourage those with spare rooms to participate in this scheme

Youth

We aim to invest in our youth, particularly those aged between 18 and 26 for whom the recession took

a devastating toll. It is at this point that the State needs to redouble its investment in people to open up opportunities for their futures.

For young people, we will:

- Use NAMA and state lands including RTÉ and Dublin Bus to provide low-cost student accommodation to at least 5,000 students in Dublin, and identify similar lands in other cities
- Halve the cost of the student Leap Card to assist with the cost of living
- Invest €300m directly to 3rd level institutions to ensure no increase in university fees
- Lower the voting age to 16
- Fully implement the Aftercare Bill, which guarantees a right to aftercare assessment on turning 18 and leaving care and ensuring the resulting services are fully resourced

4. Culture & Community

4.1 Arts and Culture

The Green Party recognises the critical importance of the arts and the sciences for the flourishing of society, and the potential of cultural justice to contribute greatly to social justice.

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.

We believe in the promotion and preservation of our unique Irish culture, and that all citizens should have equal access to its enjoyment and appreciation.

The Green Party will continue to support the artistic community through the following measures:

- Increase current levels of funding to the statutory agencies for the arts, including Irish Film Board, Culture Ireland and the Arts Council by €30m
- Introduce multi-year funding for larger Arts organisations to allow for long term planning
- Maintain levels of funding to the National Museum and other cultural institutions to ensure no admission charges are necessary
- Ensure that contemporary art education is introduced at primary and secondary level to grow artists and audiences for the future
- Ensure the continuance of the Section 481 tax breaks for the industry
- 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, we will seek to form joint ventures between our enterprise and tourism bodies and our artistic and cultural organisations
- Restore Culture Ireland as an independent organisation
- Introduce a match-funding scheme for arts organisations, totalling €5m, rural and peripheral communities – whatever groups fundraise themselves the government will match 1:1, up to a maximum of €10,000, with a minimum

threshold of €2,500

- Review the national planning legislation to provide a minimum of 2% of space for artistic, cultural and creative space in all new large scale developments and cultural quarters
- Support the development of a partnership model by establishing a platform to allow for effective engagement between the artistic and creative communities and property developers, owners and businesses for the potential creation of public private partnerships to deliver long term provision of artistic studio, live and workspace
- Ensure the continuation and expansion of Culture Night nationwide for cultural activities
- Create an accurate register of existing and potential available properties nationwide
- Ensure the timely delivery of the Vacant Spaces levy to support the use of vacant space and to introduce rates credits for unused buildings that would be suitable for artist studios and production space, as a means to increase the supply of space for artistic and cultural activities both short term and long term for both emerging and established artists
- Establish Ireland globally as a creative, artistic and cultural hub that will attract international creatives to live and work here
- As part of the development of College Green, the new government will negotiate with Bank for the restoration of the House of Lords for uses including cultural activities
- Provision for the pedestrianisation for College Green

4.2 The Irish Language

The Green Party is fully committed to the development and support of a vibrant national approach to our first language. It therefore commits to initiatives at a range of levels:

- Enhance the status of Irish as an official working language of the European Union, and work to ensure that that status is implemented in full and that the derogation of that full status which is currently in place be lifted as soon as possible

- Investment is needed in Irish speaking communities and the Gaeltacht areas, particularly in the provision of employment in these areas
- The establishment of an Oireachtas Committee for the implementation of Irish language policy. The Committee would have the same status as other Oireachtas Committees
- Support the establishment of a national network of Irish Language Centres in every urban centre in Ireland which contains a substantial number of Irish speakers (based on Census data in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland). A wide range of Irish language services would be provided in each Centre, e.g., translation; advice on use of Irish in business; Irish language classes; homework clubs; advice on raising children in Irish, babysitting etc.
- Recognise that the Internet is as important a medium as television for language learning and that it is a very important tool for the future development of the language. We support the work of Foras na Gaeilge, Conradh na Gaeilge and other Irish-language bodies in the development of information technology in Irish
- Additional powers to be given to the Language Commissioner in order to ensure the rights of Irish language speakers are upheld and for example that all public signage in Irish is spelled correctly
- Develop two Irish language syllabi at post-primary level: 'Irish Language' and 'Irish Language Literature'. In the examinations of the course 'Irish Language', the pupils' spoken, written, understanding and writing skills would be examined, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning. The course 'Irish Language Literature' would be made available to pupils who show particular ability in Irish.

4.3 Community

The Green Party believes that a strong and vibrant community, voluntary and charitable sector can support and enhance the broad social, economic and environmental objectives of the State.

By promoting community development and activism, but also acting as a critical voice for social

inclusion, the goals of equality, access to justice, the equitable distribution of income and resources and environmental protection can be attained.

This is not to say that the community and voluntary sector should fill the gaps that the State fails to provide, but rather that it works in partnership

with the State, its agencies, and civil society towards building a fairer society. It is vital that the community and voluntary sector remains autonomous and independent of the State, however, and that it is free to criticise Government policies and not operate in fear that their criticism may lead to funding cuts or abolition. It is essential that the unique role of the sector is valued and cherished by the State as a key partner in the fight for social justice and equality.

The Green Party advocates the incremental restoration of the disproportionate cuts that the sector has endured since the fiscal crisis

began, as the economic outlook of the State improves.

Funding through the SICAP and LEADER programmes should not be politicised under the new local government structures. We need to enhance the value of local projects that support marginalised groups and help to build participative democratic structures where communities are central to decision making processes.

The Green Party believes that a citizen-centred and participative approach, led by a vibrant community and voluntary sector, will lead to a fairer, more equitable and sustainable Ireland.

We will:

- Work with the sector to produce a new 'Framework for Community Support' to guide and drive the development of the community and voluntary sector, fulfilling its role as a critical actor in creating and sustaining vibrant and viable communities throughout the country. As part of this development we will ensure that the responsibilities and leadership of relevant Government Departments are better aligned and configured
- Increase core funding of the sector, through relevant Government Departments, and ring-fence this funding for a minimum of five years to enable organisations to plan strategically and strengthen the services they provide, as well as fulfilling their advocacy role.
- Review the move of SICAP and LEADER programmes under local government structures and ensure that the sector plays a key role in the Public Participation Network structures.
- Review how the state supports the sector, and in particular how the move to commissioning is understood and implemented, so that the integrity and effectiveness of the sector and its unique role are respected.
- Ensure that the State's regulatory and administrative systems dealing with the sector act as effective supports, as well as fulfilling their oversight role

Costings

Expenditure

Item	Spend in first year (€ million)	Total spend over five years (€ million)
Citizen Trust Fund		
Citizen Trust Fund	330	1650
Climate change adaptation		
Climate change adaptation	170	850
Transport		
Public Transport fare reduction	40	200
Public Service Obligation	17	85
Student Leap Card	50	250
Energy		
Electric Vehicles	10	50
Heat Pumps	10	50
Increased Forest Subsidy	30	150
Health		
Increased Disability Support	90	450
Increased Mental Health Support	35	175
Education		
Guidance Counsellors	32	160
School Dinners Pilot	25	250
Direct Grant to 3rd Level	300	1500
Transition Year Schools	5	25
Family		
Lone Parent's Allowance	15	75
Parental Leave	55	275
Childcare Subsidy	156	780
Refundable tax credit	140	700

Expenditure (continued)

Item	Spend in first year (€ million)	Total spend over five years (€ million)
Justice		
Extra investment in An Garda Síochána	30	30
Overseas Aid		
Overseas Development Aid	40 (year one)	400
Arts Funding		
Arts funding	30	150
TOTAL	1589	8255

Income

Item	Revenue Raised (€ million)	Total Revenue Raised over five years (€ million)
Site valuation tax	100	500
Sugar tax	145	725
Corporation tax	300	1500
TOTAL	545	2725

The Green Party/Comhaontas Glas was founded 35 years ago on seven basic principles, which still guide the party today:

1. The impact of society on the environment should not be ecologically disruptive
2. Conservation of resources is vital to a sustainable society
3. All political, social and economic decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level
4. Society should be guided by self-reliance and co-operation at all levels
5. As caretakers of the Earth, we have the responsibility to pass it on in a fit and healthy state
6. The need for world peace overrides national and commercial interests
7. The poverty of two-thirds of the world's family demands a redistribution of the world's resources



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