

PEACE

EQUALITY

JOBS

UNITY



2010 Westminster Election Manifesto

SÍOCHÁIN

COTHROMAS

FOSTAÍOCHT

AONTACHT

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TEACHTAIREACHT Ó GEARÓID MAC ADHAIMH A MESSAGE FROM GERRY ADAMS

A message from Gerry Adams

This election is about leadership. It is about peace. It is about equality. It is about jobs and it is about unity.

It is about which party can deliver for this society going into the future. It is about who people want as their political leaders.

And there is a clear choice.

Sinn Féin provides experienced political leadership that is unmatched and which has been tested through years of political struggle, through successful negotiations and through providing a positive way forward for this country and its people.

Tá imní ar dhaoine go bhfuil roinnt iarrachtaí ag dul ar aghaidh chun próiseas na síochána a chur ó mhaith.

Tá siad buartha faoin teip nach bhfuil roinnt páirtithe agus ceannairí polaitiúla ábalta éirí os cionn leas a pháirtí féin - agus an dúshlán a chomhlíonadh le tógáil don todhchaí.

Mar sin, tá an toghchán seo faoi ag tabhairt ceannaireachta.

In February 2010, Sinn Féin concluded an agreement at Hillsborough with the DUP on the way forward. Many thought this couldn't happen. But it did. This was a hugely important moment.

Sinn Féin did this by making the two governments and the DUP face up to their political responsibilities. As a result, policing and justice were transferred in April.

By the end of the year there will also be the transfer of powers from London to Belfast to deal with the issue of parades. More powers moving from England to Ireland.

Outstanding issues including Irish language rights will also be delivered on and there is additional funding for the language. It is another staging post on the road to a United Ireland and it is proof that change is possible.

Sinn Féin achieved all this by being bold and by being focused. By standing up for ourselves. By standing up to the governments. By standing up to the DUP. By standing up for the rights of citizens in a continuous process of change. By mapping out a strategy and sticking at it until we succeed.

Sinn Féin is interested only in making a positive difference to the lives of the Irish people. Those who say that this isn't possible should look to what is emerging from our efforts in the Six County Executive.

The benefits of Sinn Féin's equality agenda in helping to drive anti-poverty initiatives are obvious. This includes tackling fuel poverty; it means free travel for the over 60s; the ending of prescription charges; and the freezing of the regional rate.

Sinn Féin Ministers have introduced classroom assistants in every P1 and P2 class. We have invested in schools, in jobs, in infrastructure. We have staved off water charges, and brought forward funding to tackle rural poverty and social exclusion.

Everything that Sinn Féin has done is rooted in the equality agenda. That is why some of the big initiatives, particularly on education, have met such resistance. The opposition to the removal of the 11-plus is mainly class driven and arises from the desire of a small minority to protect an unequal system.

Parents want the best for their children. So do we. We understand the importance of protecting academic excellence. Our job is to make it available to all children.

Our commitment is to ensure that every school is a good school and that every child has full equality of opportunity. That means measuring how inequalities exist and compensating accordingly through targeting public resources and policies on the basis of objective needs.

I am absolutely convinced that this will be the outcome. Already influential sectors – including the trade unions and the Commission for Catholic Education – are taking important steps which will support our positive programme of transformation.

The equality agenda is also central to our determination to ensure that a proper and effective Bill of Rights for the north is established. We will oppose any effort by the NIO to undermine the anti-discrimination and pro-equality rights established by the Good Friday Agreement.

Sinn Féin is a proud Irish Republican Party. Our primary political goals are an end to partition and a new Ireland, a United Ireland.

The key to building this new Ireland, democratically shaped by the people, is to start now.

The Proclamation of the Republic sets out our goal – ‘to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts’.

And it commits this new republic ‘to religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens’; and to ‘cherishing all the children of the nation equally’.

Not just the rich and wealthy; the healthy and the young, but every citizen irrespective of age or gender or ability or disability or race or religion or belief.

The key to achieving this is leadership.

The key to making progress; to building a new future; to making change irreversible, is leadership.

And Sinn Fein has that leadership.

A tried and trusted leadership, with the experience of years of struggle, and of successfully charting a way forward for the peace process.

Sinn Féin demonstrated that leadership at Hillsborough in March.

We have demonstrated that leadership at every stage of the evolving peace process.

By standing up to the governments. By standing up for the rights of citizens.

And by making clear to the unionist parties that while we are a partner in government, we are no push over.

We want to work with unionists.

We take seriously our republican heritage which embraces the radical Presbyterian tradition of the United Ireland Movement. And we are serious also about developing normal human relationships based on tolerance, respect and equality.

While others talk about a United Ireland, Sinn Féin has a strategy to make it happen.

Sinn Féin has the leadership, the right ideas, the right policies and the right political strategy to build a new future.

In this election you have the opportunity to endorse this strategy for positive change; to build a better future for all our people but especially our young people. And to advance the goal of Irish reunification.

Vote for real change. Vote for positive leadership. Vote for the only party that deliver for citizens.

Teachtaireacht ó Gearóid Mac Adhaimh

Tá an toghchán seo faoi cheannaireacht. Tá sé faoi shíocháin. Tá sé faoi chomhionannas. Tá sé faoi fhostaíocht agus tá sé faoi aontacht.

Tá sé faoi inar féidir le páirtí a sheachadadh don tsochaí seo ag dul isteach sa todhchaí. Tá sé mar gheall ar dhaoine ar mian leo mar a gceannairí polaitiúla.

Agus tá rogha shoiléir ann.

Soláthraíonn Sinn Féin an cheannaireacht pholaitiúil gan chomparáid agus a ndearnadh tástáil orthu trí bliana de streachailt polaitiúla, trí idirbheartaíocht rathúil agus trí sholáthar ar bhealach dearfach chun tosaigh don tír seo agus dár muintir.

Tá imní ar dhaoine go bhfuil roinnt iarrachtaí ag dul ar aghaidh chun próiseas na síochána a chur ó mhaith.

Tá siad buartha faoin teip nach bhfuil roinnt páirtithe agus ceannairí polaitiúla ábalta éirí os cionn leas a pháirtí féin - agus an dúshlán a chomhlíonadh le tógáil don todhchaí.

Mar sin, tá an toghchán seo faoi ag tabhairt ceannaireachta.

I mí Feabhra 2010, chríochnaigh Sinn Féin ar chomhaontú ag Hillsborough leis an DUP ar an bhealach chun tosaigh. Shíl go leor daoine nach bhféadfadh sé seo tarlú. Ach tharla sé. Nóiméad thar a bheith tábhachtach a bhí ann.

Rinne Sinn Féin amhlaidh toisc gur chinntigh siad go raibh ar an dá rialtas agus an DUP aghaidh a thabhairt ar a gcuid freagrachtaí polaitiúla. Mar thoradh air sin, aistríodh na cúramaí póilíneachta agus ceartais i mí Aibreáin. Faoi dheireadh na bliana seo beidh aistriú cumhachtaí ó Londain go Béal Feirste chun déileáil le ceist na mórshiúlta. Níos mó cumhachtaí ag bogadh ó Shasana go hÉirinn.

Comhlíonfar ar cheisteanna eile nár réitíodh go fóill, cearta Gaeilge san áireamh agus beidh maoiniú breise le haghaidh na teanga.

Is céim eile é ar an bhealach go dtí Éire Aontaithe agus cruthúnas gur féidir rudaí athrú.

Bhain Sinn Féin an méid seo amach as bheith cróga agus as bheith dírithe. Ag seasamh an fhóid dúinn féin. Ag seasamh an fhóid in aghaidh na rialtais. Ag seasamh an fhóid in aghaidh an DUP. Ag seasamh an fhóid thar cheann cearta saoránaigh i bpróiseas atá ag athrú go leanúnach. Leag muid straitéis amach agus chloígh muid leis go dtí go raibh rath orainn.

Tá Sinn Féin tiomanta chun difríocht a dhéanamh i saol pobail na hÉireann. Iad siúd a deir nach bhfuil sé seo indéanta, ba chóir dóibh breathnú ar an méid atá ag teacht chun cinn as ár gcuid iarrachtaí i bhFeidhmeannas na Sé Chontae.

Tá sé soiléir go bhfuil na buntáistí a bhaineann le clár oibre chomhionannais Sinn Féin ag cabhrú le tiomáint tionscnamh frith-bhochtaineacht. Ina measc seo tá dul i ngleic le bochtaineacht breosla; ciallaíonn sé taisteal saor in aisce le haghaidh daoine thar 60í; deireadh leis na muirir oideas; agus calcadh ar an ráta réigiúnach.

Thug Airí Sinn Féin isteach cúntóirí ranga do gach Rang 1 agus Rang 2. Chuir muid infheistíocht i scoileanna, i bpoist, i mbonneagar. Táimid tar éis na dtáillí uisce a chur ar ceal, agus maoiniú a thabhairt ar aghaidh chun dul i ngleic le bochtaineacht tuaithe agus le heisiamh sóisialta.

Gach rud atá déanta ag Sinn Féin, tá sé fréamhaithe sa chlár oibre chomhionannais s'againn. Sé sin an fáth le cuid de na tionscnaimh mór, go háirithe maidir le hoideachas, gur bhain siad friotaíocht den sórt sin.

Tá an cur in aghaidh an '11 móide' bainte den chuid is mó le cúrsaí aicme agus eascraíonn sé as an dúil atá ag mionlach beag córas míchothrom a chosaint. Ba mhaith le tuismitheoirí an rud is fearr dá gcuid leanáí. Ba mhaith linn amhlaidh.

Is é an tiomantas atá againn chun cinntiú go bhfuil gach scoil ina scoil mhaith agus go mbíonn comhionannas deiseanna iomlán ag gach leanbh. Ciallaíonn sé sin tomhas a dhéanamh ar neamhionannas agus dá réir sin a chúiteamh trí dhíriú ar acmhainní an phobail agus ar na beartais ar bhonn riachtanais oibiachtúil.

Tá mé go hiomlán cinnte go mbeidh sé seo ar an toradh. Cheana féin, tá earnálacha cumhachtaí - lena n-áirítear na ceardchumainn agus an Coimisiún um Oideachas Caitliceach - ag glacadh céimeanna tábhachtacha a thacóidh lenár gclár de chlaochlú dearfach.

Tá an clár oibre comhionannais chomh lárnach dár gcinneadh le cinntiú go mbunófar Bille um Chearta don tuaisceart atá cuí agus éifeachtach. Beidh muid ag cur i gcoinne aon iarracht ón OTÉ chun cur faoi na cearta grúpa frith-idirdhealaithe agus ar son comhionannais arna mbunú ag Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta.

Is Páirtí Poblachtach bródúil é Sinn Féin. Is iad na príomh spriocanna polaitiúla atá againn ná deireadh a chur le críochdheighilt agus Éire nua, Éire Aontaithe a thógáil.

Is é an rud is tábhachtaí maidir le hÉirinn Nua a thógáil, ar mhúnla daonlathach cruthaithe ag an phobal, ná tús a chur leis anois.

Leagann Forógra na Poblachta amach sprioc s'againn - 'chun séan agus sonas a lorg don náisiún uile agus do gach cuid de'.

Agus tiomnaíonn sé an phoblacht nua seo 'chun saoirse creidimh agus saoirse shibhialta, cearta cothroma agus comhdheiseanna, dá saoránaigh uile'; agus chun 'páistí uile an náisiúin a chothú' ar bhonn cothrom.

Ní amháin an saibhir agus na rachmasaigh; na folláin agus an t-aos óg, ach do gach saoránach is cuma cén aois nó inscne nó cumas nó míchumas nó cine nó reiligiún nó creideamh.

Is é ceannaireacht an eochair chun é seo a bhaint amach.

Is é ceannaireacht an eochair le dul chun cinn; le todhchaí úr a thógáil; le hathrú a dhéanamh do-athraithe.

Agus tá an cheannaireacht sin ag Sinn Féin.

Ceannaireacht atá oilte is cruthaithe, agus le taithí na mblianta coimhlinte, agus a d'éirigh leis an bhealach chun tosaigh a rianú maidir le próiseas na síochána

Léirigh Sinn Féin an cheannaireacht sin ag Hillsborough i mí Mhárta.

Tá an cheannaireacht sin taispeánta againn ag gach céim den phróiseas síochána agus é ag teacht chun cinn.

Ag seasamh an fhóid leis na rialtais. Ag seasamh an fhóid do chearta saoránaigh.

Agus ag soiléiriú do na páirtithe aontachtacha cé go bhfuil muid mar chomhpháirtí acu sa rialtas, ní dream sobhogtha muid.

Ba mhaith linn a bheith ag obair le haontachtaithe.

Glacann muid dáiríre an oidhreacht phoblachtach s'againn a chuimsíonn an traidisiún radacach Preispitéireach de Ghluaiseacht na nÉireannach Aontaithe. Agus táimid dáiríre ar mian leo chomh maith mar gheall ar a cairde a dhéanamh le haontachtaithe agus caidrimh a fhorbairt gnáth duine atá bunaithe ar an chaoifhulaingt, an meas agus le comhionannas.

Cé go bhfuil daoine eile ag caint faoi Éirinn Aontaithe, tá straitéis ag Sinn Féin chun é a bhaint amach.

Tá an cheannaireacht sin ag Sinn Féin, na smaointe cearta, na polasaithe cearta agus an straitéis pholaitiúil ceart le todhchaí nua a thógáil amach anseo.

Sa toghchán seo tá an deis agat an straitéis seo le haghaidh athrú dearfach a dheimhniú; le todhchaí níos fearr a thógáil dár bpobal iomlán ach go háirithe dár ndaoine óga. Agus an sprioc atá againn athaontú na hÉireann a chur chun cinn.

Vótáil le haghaidh fíorathrú. Vótáil le haghaidh cheannaireacht dhearfach. Vótáil don aon Pháirtí amháin a sheachadann do shaoránaigh.



ACHOIMRE FHEIDHMNEACH EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FORBAIRT RÉIGIÚNACH | REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- » Deliver a new Active Travel Strategy which includes key actions to provide alternatives to the private car and include investment in cycling, walking and public transport
- » Introduce 20 new trains into the rail network
- » Continue to overhaul our water and sewerage services and ensure that the best governance and management of these services is secured
- » Introduce a Rapid Transit system in Belfast city, with initial pilot routes including west Belfast connecting to the east of the city
- » Start the construction of the A5 and A8 major roads schemes and on the A6 Derry to Dungiven by-pass
- » Seek to secure City of Derry Airport's long-term future working with Derry City Council and the Executive

TALMHAÍOCHT AGUS FORBAIRT TUAITHE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

- » A new rural white paper with equality and all-island development as key elements
- » Intensified 'rural-proofing' of all public policies
- » Development of a new Planning Policy Statement 21 that protects the wider rural community
- » Almost £400 million to be invested in fishing and rural communities over the next three years
- » Fight for a fair outcome in the reform of Common Agriculture Policy and Common Fisheries Policy to ensure the single farm payment is maintained and capped at £100,000 and there is more local control over future development of fisheries
- » Bring forward a new Forestry Bill and aim to double forest cover across the Six Counties over the next 50 years
- » The expansion of allotments and development of community farms/gardens

OIDEACHAS | EDUCATION

- » Continue the radical restructuring of education with the twin aims of equality and excellence
- » Extend the entitlement to free school meals for children
- » Continue to cut back on bureaucracy and ensure that more resources are put into frontline services
- » Build more new schools on the basis of area needs
- » Continue working for the harmonisation of the two education systems on the island
- » Continue to oppose fees for full-time students
- » Push for improvements in the function, quality and accessibility of apprenticeships

SLÁINTE | HEALTH

- » Lobby the newly formed Public Health Agency to tackle social inequalities earlier and more effectively
- » Implement 'Investing for Health' grounded in the achievement of measurable outcomes and improvements based on an objective assessment of current inequalities and projected needs
- » Implement proposals of Bamford Review and raise awareness about mental health issues
- » Pursue implementation of an all-Ireland suicide prevention strategy

- » Support the 'card before you leave' system to provide vulnerable patients at Accident and Emergency units with advice, contact numbers and follow up appointment details
- » A new system to provide dedicated perinatal mental health services on an all-Ireland basis, ensuring that pre-natal and post-natal patients can be cared for with their new-borns when this is required
- » Ensure equality in cancer care facilities across the island, particularly in terms of the north-west and urgent delivery on the Health Department's existing commitment to address this need
- » More funding for child cancer care services
- » Qualifying criteria for the winter fuel payment should be expanded to include cancer sufferers
- » Measures to ensure that carers get better and more equitable access to the benefits system. Sinn Féin believes carer's allowance should be a standalone benefit
- » Effective programmes to address poverty-related patterns of ill-health
- » Prompt and widespread access to effective drug and alcohol treatment services, including community-based services
- » Ensure implementation, as fully as possible, of the report and recommendations of the recently published Assembly inquiry into obesity

CEARTAS COIRIÚL | CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- » Continue to be proactive in setting the agenda on policing and delivering fully representative, accountable, routinely unarmed civic policing with the community.
- » Continue to enhance the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system;
- » Ensure that local policing plans genuinely meet community needs;
- » Continue to challenge both abusive and negligent or unprofessional policing;
- » Work constructively to overcome resistance to change within the PSNI and Gardaí, as well as among elements of the policing oversight structures;
- » Press for the total ending of any use of plastic bullets which are lethal weapons.
- » Politically driven organisations such as M15 and the Serious and Organised Crime Agency have no place in Ireland and must go. All criminal investigations must take place under the authority of the policing service.
- » Support efforts to build upon efficient, transparent and accountable restorative justice programmes.
- » Root and branch reform of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS)

AN FHÍRINNE | TRUTH RECOVERY

- » Continue to campaign for a fully independent, international comprehensive truth recovery process.
- » Work to ensure that all forms of politically-motivated discrimination faced by ex-POWs are ended and made unlawful.
- » Demand a full independent public inquiry into the murder of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane.
- » Support those families who have still not been granted full inquests, in breach of the British government's obligations under Article 2 of the ECHR.

AN GHAEILGE

- » Campaign for Acht na Gaeilge in conjunction with Gaeilgeoirí and language activists
- » Campaign for maximum compliance by the British government with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

- » Support the continued development of the Irish medium sector in education
- » Promote the use of Gaeilge in signage and place names, street names, personal names and in the names of organisations
- » Work with the Irish government to further develop the all-Ireland approach to language revival, including strengthening and expanding Foras na Gaeilge and supporting the implementation of the twenty-year plan
- » Press for an Irish language radio fund with a focus on developing Irish language community radio on a wider basis

IDIRNÁISIÚNTA | INTERNATIONAL

- » While no two conflict resolution processes are identical, Sinn Féin has ensured that our experience of the Irish peace process is widely available to others
- » Continue to offer our assistance to those trying to secure meaningful conflict resolution processes in the Middle East and the Basque Country
- » Oppose the ongoing Cuban blockade and campaign for the release of the Cuban Five
- » Continue to call for the immediate halt by Israel of any further building of the Separation Wall as a first step to its ultimate demolition; the ending of settlements and occupation in the West Bank; and the promotion of basic humanitarian conditions and respect for human rights throughout Gaza and the West Bank
- » Continue to raise the issue of the undocumented Irish in the United States, working in tandem with Irish-America, the Irish government and US legislators

COMHIONANNAS | EQUALITY

- » A strong, inclusive, broad, fully enforceable Bill of Rights for the north, including enforceable economic and social rights, as required under the Good Friday Agreement
- » An all-Ireland Charter of Rights as required under the Good Friday Agreement
- » Strong Gender Equality policies and legislation
- » Support for measures to achieve equality of representation both in political life and in all public appointments
- » Strong legislation and policies to tackle sectarianism, racism, hate crime, homophobia and to tackle discrimination based on disability, age, gender
- » Positive measures to end the pay gap between men and women
- » A properly-resourced Commissioner for Older People to be appointed within this Assembly term
- » Full implementation of recommendations requiring the public sector to promote equality for those with disabilities
- » Support for a public inquiry which would investigate the extent of historical institutional and clerical abuse here. We fully support the right of survivors to seek redress

GEILLEAGAR LÁIDIR – CÁILÍOCHT BEATHA NÍOS FEARR A STRONGER ECONOMY AND A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

- » Job creation and retention will be key to ensuring economic growth. In our strategy document 'Getting Ireland Back to Work', we set out over 80 various proposals to retain and create jobs
- » Public investment and capital build projects must be underpinned by social objectives to ensure that maximum jobs are created and targeted towards the long-term unemployed and apprenticeships. Sinn Féin ministers are already leading the way with this innovative approach
- » Public procurement processes can be used to expand the opportunities for small and medium sized, and social, enterprises – something to which Sinn Féin is committed

- » Ireland cannot afford partition. All-Ireland development and harmonisation should be advanced in a planned way
- » Fiscal sovereignty including the transfer of powers from Westminster to vary taxation and set financial policy including on issues like the minimum wage
- » Bring the Six Counties into the eurozone to create a single island currency
- » The Executive should develop an affirmative policy for the sustainable dispersal of public sector jobs
- » Promoting equality and targeting objective need must become part of the fabric of economic decision-making on a routine basis
- » Sinn Féin believes that an enforceable right to housing should be enshrined in domestic law across the island, as well as in a legally enforceable Bill of Rights for the six counties
- » Sinn Féin wants greater investment in community arts
- » Harmful emissions must be reduced by at least 30% from their 1990 level by the year 2020 and by 80% or greater by 2050. That requires rates of reduction of at least 3% per annum. We also believe that an increased focus needs to be placed on zero or low carbon, good quality, well-insulated, energy efficient, affordable housing. Similarly high standards should apply to all new build, public buildings and other structures

AONTACHT | UNITY

- » Amend British Government policy from upholding the union to becoming persuaders for Irish unity
- » Continue to identify steps and measures to promote and assist a successful transition to a united Ireland
- » Secure a referendum on Irish unity to be held simultaneously, North and South
- » Press Irish government to significantly increase its practical planning for Irish unity
- » Engage with unionists about the type of united Ireland they want to live in
- » Pursue Six County representation in the Oireachtas
- » Campaign internationally to promote Irish unity
- » Practical steps in every elected forum to promote increased all-Ireland integration
- » Systematically build the opportunities for expansion in the all-Ireland Ministerial Council
- » Broaden and expand all-Ireland co-ordination and integration in economic development, service provision and planning
- » Establishment of the All-Ireland Parliamentary and Consultative Civic Fora and completion of the Review of the All-Ireland Implementation bodies with particular consideration of case for additional bodies

ACHOIMRE FEIDHMIÚCHÁIN

FORBAIRT RÉIGIÚNACH

- » Straitéis nua do Thaistil Gníomhach a sholáthar, lena n-áirítear na príomh-ghníomhartha le roghanna eile a chur ar fáil seachas an gluaisteán príobháideach agus infheistiú sa rothaíocht, sa choisíocht agus san iompar poiblí san áireamh
- » 20 traenacha nua a thabhairt isteach sa líonra iarnróid
- » Leanúint le hathchóiriú a dhéanamh ar na seirbhísí uisce agus séarachais agus a chinntiú go ndaingnófar an rialachas agus bainistiú is fearr ar na seirbhísí seo
- » Córas Luasiompar a thabhairt isteach i gCathair Bhéal Feirste, le bealaí píolótacha tosaigh chun (i measc eile) Iarthar Bhéal Feirste a nascadh leis an taobh thoir den chathair
- » Tús a chur le scéimeanna móra bóithre A5 agus A8 agus ar an seachbhóthar A6 ó Dhoire go Dún Geimhin
- » Féachaint le todhchaí fadtéarmach Aerfort Chathair Dhoire a shlánú ag obair le Comhairle Cathrach Dhoire agus an Feidhmeannas

GNÓTHAÍ TALMHAÍOCHTA AGUS TUAITHE

- » Páipéar bán nua tuaithe le comhionannas agus forbairt uile-oileánda mar phríomheilimintí
- » Dlúsúil a choinneáil ar na polasaithe poiblí uilig le cinntiú go bhfuil 'tuaithe – phromhadh' déanta orthu
- » Forbairt ar Ráiteas nua Polasaí Pleanála 21 go gcosnófar an mórfhobal tuaithe
- » Beagnach £ 400 milliún le hinfheistiú san iascaireacht agus sa phobail tuaithe thar an trí bhliana amach romhainn
- » Ár ndícheall a dhéanamh chun cinntiú go mbíonn toradh cóir ann in athchóiriú an comhbheartais i réimsí na talmhaíochta agus na iascaigh, agus le cinntiú go leanfar leis an íocaíocht feirme aonair le go raibh sí coinnithe agus í srianta ag £ 100,000; agus níos mó smachta áitiúil i bproiseas forbartha na hiascaireachta a chinntiú don todhchaí
- » Bille Foraoiseachta nua a thabhairt chun cinn ag súil le dúbláil i líon foraoise ar fud na Sé Chontae thar an 50 bliain seo romhainn
- » Leathnú plásáin agus forbairt ar fheirmeacha agus ar ghairdíní phobail

OIDEACHAS

- » Leanúint ar aghaidh le h-athstruchtúrú radacaí an oideachais leis an dá chomhaidhm de chomhionannas agus de bharr feabhais
- » Cur le teidlíocht do bhéilí scoile saor in aisce do pháistí
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh ag gearradh siar ar an mhaorlathas agus cinntiú go bhfuil níos mó acmhainní curtha isteach i seirbhísí túslíne
- » níos mó scoileanna nua a thógáil ar bhonn na limistéar riachtanais
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh ag obair i gcomhair comhchuibhiú den dá chóras oideachais ar an oileán
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh ag cur i gcoinne táill le haghaidh mic léinn lánaimseartha
- » Brú chun feabhsuithe ar fheidhm, caighdeán agus inrochtaineacht i bpríntíseachtaí

CEARTAS COIRIÚIL

- » Leanúint ar aghaidh le bheith réamhghníomhach i mbun chlárchaepadh maidir le hobair ar phóilíneacht agus cinntiú go soláthrófar seirbhís atá go hiomlán ionadaíocht, agus freagrach, agus é bunaithe ar cur chuige de ghnáthphóilíneacht chathartha neamharmtha i gcomhpháirt leis an phobal

- » Leanúint ar aghaidh le feabhas a chur ar chuntasacht, ar thrédhearcacht agus ar éifeachtúlacht an chórais cheartais choiriúil
- » Cinntiú go mbeidh pleananna póilíneachta áitiúla ag freastal i ndáiríre ar riachtanais an phobail
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh ag tabhairt dúshláin do phóilíneacht atá nó a d'fhéadfadh a bheith maslach, faillíoch nó neamhphroifisiúnta
- » Obair go dearfach in aghaidh aon chur i gcoinne an phroiseas athrithe laistigh den PSNI agus den Gharda Síochána, agus i measc eilimintí de na struchtúir mhaoirseacht póilíneachta
- » Brú le haghaidh críoch iomlán ar aon úsáid de philéir phlaisteacha, atá ina n-airm marfacha
- » Níl aon áit in Eirinn d'eagraíochtaí atá tiomáinte ag clár polaitiúil cosúil le M15 agus an Áisíneacht um Choirpeacht Thromchúiseach agus Eagraithe agus caithfidh said imeach. Ní mór do himscrúduithe coiriúla go leir bheith ar siúl faoi údarás an seirbhís póilíneachta
- » Tacú le hiarrachtaí chun tógáil ar bhealach trédhearcach agus cuntasach cláir ceartais aisiríoch
- » Athchóiriú agus athleasú ó bhun go barr den Seirbhís Ionchúisimh Poiblí

AISGHABHÁIL na FIRINNE

- » Leanúint leis an fheachtas le haghaidh próiseas fírinne atá idirnáisiúnta, cuimsitheach agus iomlán neamhspleách
- » Cinntiú go bhfuil gcuirfear deireadh agus go ndéanfar neamhdleathach aon chineál idirdhealaithe in éadán iarchimí polaitiúla atá spreagtha ag clár polaitiúil
- » Fiosrúcháin phoiblí iomlán neamhspleách ar dhúnmharú Pat Finucane aturnae i mBéal Feirste, a éilimh
- » Tacú le teaghlaigh nár deonaíodh ionchoisní iomlán dóibh go fóill, aineoinn go saraíonn sé seo ar oibleagaidí rialtas na Breataine faoi Airteagal 2 den CECD

AN GHAELIGE

- » Feachtas a reachtáil, maidir le hAcht na Gaeilge, i gcomhar le Gaeilgeoirí agus gníomhaithe teanga
- » Feachtas a dhéanamh le haghaidh cur chuige uasta ó Rialtas na Breataine maidir le Cairt na hEorpa um Teangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh
- » Tacú leanúnach d'fhorbairt leanúnaí ar earnáil an Ghaeloideachais
- » Úsáid na Gaeilge i gcomharthaíocht, i logainmneacha, sráidainmneacha, ainmneacha pearsanta agus ainmneacha eagraíochtaí a spreagú
- » Comhoibriú le Rialtas Bhaile Átha Cliath chun tuilleadh forbartha a dhéanamh ar an chur chuige uile-Éireann chun an Ghaeilge a athbheochan, lena n-áirítear neartú agus leathnú ról Fhoras na Gaeilge agus trí thacaíocht a thabhairt do chur i bhfeidhm an plean fiche bliain
- » Brú a chur chun ciste raidió Ghaeilge a bhunú, leis an bhéim ar fhorbairt raidió pobail na Gaeilge ar bhonn níos leithne

IDIRNÁISIÚNTA

- » Cé nach ionann ar fad aon phróiseas réiteach coimhlinte lena chéile, tá Sinn Féin ag cinntiú go bhfuil ár dtaithe ar an phróiseas síochána in Éirinn ar fáil go forleathan do dhaoine eile
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh lenár gcúnamh a thairiscint dóibh siúd atá ag iarraidh próiseas fuascailt coimhlinti a bhfuil brí leo a bhaint amach sa Mheán-Oirthear agus I dTír na mBascach
- » Cur in aghaidh an imshuí leanúnach ar Chúba agus muid fosta i mbun feachtais chun saoirse a bhaint amach do 'Chúigear Chúba'
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh ag iarraidh go gcuireann Iosrael stad láithreach ar aon tógáil breise ar an Deighiltbhalla mar an chéad chéim i dtreo a leagán síos go buan; brú ar aghaidh ag iarraidh deireadh leis na lonnaíochtaí agus imshealbhú ar an Bhruach Thiar; agus ag éilimh go gcuirfear chun cinn coinníollacha bunúsacha daonna agus go dtugtar aird cuí ar chearta an duine ar fud Gaza agus an Bhruach Thiar
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh le ceist a ardú maidir leis na hÉireannaigh gan cháipéisí sna Stáit Aontaithe, ag obair in éineacht le Gaeil-Mheiriceá, Rialtas na hÉireann agus údaráis reachtúla Stait Aontaithe Mheiriceá

COMHIONANNAS

- » Bille Chearta a lorg don Tuaisceart atá láidir, leathán agus iomlán infheidhmithe, lena n-áirítear cearta eacnamaíochta agus sóisialta infheidhmithe, mar a éilítear faoi Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta
- » Cairt uile-Éireann um Chearta mar a éilítear faoi Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta
- » Reachtaíocht agus polasaithe láidre um Comhionannais Inscne
- » Tacaíocht a thabhairt do bhearta chun comhionannas ionadaíoch sa saol polaitiúil agus i ngach ceapacháin phoiblí a chinntiú
- » reachtaíocht agus polasaithe láidre a lorg chun dul i ngleic le seicteachas, ciníochas, fuath-choireacht, Homafóibe agus chun dul i ngleic le hidirdhealú atá bunaithe ar mhíchumas, ar aois, agus ar inscne
- » Beartha dearfacha a lorg chun deireadh a chur leis an bhearna pháighe idir fhir agus mhná
- » Coimisinéir um Dhaoine Scothaosta, le dotháin acmhainní, a cheapadh laistigh de théarma reatha an Tionóil seo
- » Cur i bhfeidhm iomlán na moltaí a cheanglaíonn ar an earnáil phoiblí chun glacadh le chur chun cinn comhionannas do dhaoine ata faoi aon mhíchumais
- » Tacaíocht d'fhiosrúchán poiblí chun imscrúdú a dhéanamh ar mhéid na mí-úsáide institiúideach agus cléireachais stairiúil a tharla anseo. Tacaímid go hiomlán le ceart na níobairteach a tháinig slán chun sásamh a lorg

GEILLEAGAR NÍOS LÁIDRE AGUS CAIGHDEÁN MAIREACHTÁLA NÍOS FEARR

- » Beidh cruthú agus sealbhú fostaíochta ríthábhachtach chun fás eacnamaíochta a chinntiú. In ár doiciméad straitéise 'Ag cur Éireann ar ais chun oibre', leagaimid amach os cionn 80 moltadh éagsúla a chinnteoidh cruthú agus sealbhú fostaíochta
- » Caithfear spriocanna agus cuspóirí sóisialta bheith mar bhunús le haon infheistíocht poiblí agus le haon dtionscadal tógála caipitil chun cinntiú go gcruthaítear a oiread postanna agus is féidir atá dírithe orthu siúd atá dífhostaithe go fadtéarmach agus chun oibriú i dtreo breis printíseachtaí. Tá airí Shinn Féineacha chun tosaigh cheana féin maidir leis an chur chuige nuálaíoch seo
- » Is féidir na próisis soláthair poiblí a úsáid chun deiseanna a oscailt d'fhiontair beaga agus meánmhéide, agus d'fhiontair sóisialta - rud a bhfuil Sinn Féin tiomanta
- » Ní féidir l'Éirinn costas an chríochdheighilt a iompar. Ba cheart forbairt agus comhchuibhiú Uile-Éireann a thabhairt chun cinn ar bhonn pleanáilte
- » Ba cheart go raibh ceannasíocht fíoscach ann, lena n-áirítear aistriú cumhachtaí ó Westminster chun ráta cáin a réiteach agus chun polasaí airgeadais a cheapadh lena n-áirítear beartais maidir le saincheisteanna cosúil leis an pá íosta
- » Ba choir an 6 Chontae a thabhairt isteach sa limistéar Euro chun aon chorás airgeadra a chruthú don oileán
- » Ba chóir don Fheidhmeannas polasaithe dearfacha a fhorbairt le haghaidh seachadadh inbhuanaithe na poist atá san earnáil poiblí
- » Caithfear comhionannas a chur chun cinn agus díriú ar riachtanas oibiachtúil bheith mar chuid den phroiseas cinneadh eacnamaíoch a dhéanamh ar bhonn rialta
- » Caithfear an chéad chéim eile de cur i bhfeidhm 'Infheistíocht do Sláinte' a bheith bunaithe le torthaí a bhaint amach agus feabhsúcháin intomhaiste ar mheasúnú oibiachtúil de neamhionannas reatha agus riachtanais réamh-mheasta
- » Tacaíonn muid go láidir leis an chóras 'chárta sula bhfágfaidh tú' a chur ar fáil d'othair leochaileacha ag Aonaid Timpiste agus Éigeandála le comhairle agus uimhreacha teagmhála agus sonraí coinní leanúint suas
- » Creideann Sinn Féin gur chóir go mbeadh an ceart infheidhmithe chun titíocht cumhdaithe sa dlí intíre ar fud an oileáin, mar aon le Bille um Chearta infheidhmithe go dlíthiúil, do na sé chontae
- » Tá Sinn Féin ag iarraidh níos mó infheistíochta sna healaíona pobail
- » Ní mór laghdú de 30% ar a laghad ar astuithe dochracha ó leibhéal 1990 roimh 2020 agus de 80% nó níos mó roimh 2050. Éilíonn seo rátaí de laghdú 3% ar a laghad in aghaidh na bliana. Creideann muid freisin go bhfuil gá le fócas méadaithe a chur ar nialas nó íseal charbóin, thithíocht inacmhainne atá ar dhea-caighdeán, inslithe go Maite agus tíosach ar fhuinneamh. Ba chóir na caighdeán arda chéanna bheith in áit maidir le gach tógáil nua, foirgnimh phoiblí agus struchtúir eile

AONTACHT

- » Leasú ar pholasaí Rialtais na Breataine as tacú leis an nasc le Sasana agus bheith mar áititheoirí ar son aontas na hÉireann
- » Leanúint le bearta a aithint agus polasaithe a chur chun cinn agus cuidiú le haistriú rathúil chun Éire aontaithe
- » Reifreann a dhaingniú ar athaontú na hÉireann, le titim amach go comhuaineach, Thuaidh agus Theas
- » Rialtas na hÉireann a bhrú go mór ar phleanáil praiticiúl d'athaontú na hÉireann
- » Díospóireacht a spreagadh le haontachtaithe faoin chineál Éireann aontaithe a bheidh siad sásta maireachtáil inti.
- » Leanúint ar an éileamh d'ionadaíocht do na Sé Chontae san Oireachtas
- » Feachtasaíocht go hidirnáisiúnta ar chur chun Aontú na hÉireann
- » Céimeanna praiticiúla a aimsiú i ngach fóram tofa le níos mó a chomhtháthú uile-Éireann a chur chun cinn
- » Tógáil go córasach ar na deiseanna maidir le leathnú ar an Chomhairle Aireachta uile-Éireann
- » Leathnú agus méadú ar bhonn uile-Éireann comhordú agus comhtháthú i bhforbairt eacnamaíochta, i soláthar seirbhíse agus i bpleanáil
- » Bunú Fóraim na Parlaiminte Uile-Éireann agus Comhairleach Cathartha agus an Athbhreithniú ar Forais Forfheidhmithe Uile-Éireann a chur chun cinn agus fiosrú faoi chomhlachtaí breise
- » Leanúint ar aghaidh leis an ailtireacht polaitiúl uile-Éireann a dhaingniú agus méadú leanúnach ar na forais uile-oileánda, ag tógáil ar Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta

SLÁINTE

- » Go ndéanfar stocaireacht ar an Ghníomhaireacht Sláinte Poiblí nuabhunaithe le dul i ngleic le neamhionannas sóisialta níos luaithe agus níos éifeachtaí
- » Go gcuirfear i bhfeidhm 'Infheistiú do Shláinte' bunaithe ar thorthaí intomhaiste agus feabhsúcháin a bhaint amach agus feabhsúcháin, bunaithe ar mheasúnú oibiachtúil ar neamhionannas reatha agus riachtanais réamh-mheasta
- » Go gcuirfear i bhfeidhm moltaí ón 'Athbhreithniú Bamford' agus feacht ar shaincheisteanna sláinte mheabhrach a thógáil
- » Go leanfar le cur chun feidhme straitéis uile-Éireann le féinmharú a chosc
- » Go dtacófar leis an chóras 'chárta sula bhfágfaidh tú' a chur ar fáil d'othair leochaileacha ag aonaid timpistí agus éigeandála le comhairle, le huimhreacha teagmhála agus le sonraí choinne leantacha
- » Go gcuirfear ar fáil córas nua tiomnaithe ar sheirbhísí sláinte imbheirthe mheabhrach ar bhonn uile-Éireann, le cinntiú gur féidir le hothair réamhbheirthe agus iarbhreithe iar-cúram a fháil lena naíonán nuabheirthe nuair is gá
- » Go n-áirítear comhionannas i saoráidí cúram ailse ar fud an oileáin, go háirithe i dtéarmaí an taobh thiar thuaidh agus seachadadh práinneach ar an tiomantas reatha na Roinne Sláinte chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar an riachtanas seo
- » Go gcuirfear ar fáil tuilleadh maoiniú do sheirbhísí leanaí faoi chúram ailse
- » Ba chóir critéir cháilithe le haghaidh íocaíochta breosla gheimhridh a leathnú dóibh siúd a bhfuil ailse orthu
- » Go gcinnteofar bearta go bhfaighidh cúramóirí rochtain níos fearr agus níos cothroime, ar an chóras sochair. Creideann Sinn Féin gur chóir go mbeadh liúntas cúramóra ina leas saorsheasaimh clár éifeachtach chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar phatrúin bhochtaineacht a bhaineann le drochshláinte
- » Go gcuirfear ar fáil rochtain phras agus forleathan le seirbhísí cóireála éifeachtach ar dhruaí agus alcól, lena n-áirítear seirbhísí pobalbhunaithe, chomh hiomlán agus is féidir, bunaithe ar an tuarascáil agus na moltaí ón fhiosrúchán a foilsíodh le déanaí ar mhurtall

TAIFEAD SHINN FÉIN SA RIALTAIS

SINN FÉIN'S RECORD IN GOVERNMENT

SÍOCHÁN | Peace

- » Over the last 20 years Sinn Féin has led the way in the peace process and Ireland has been transformed. The progress made must now be secured and built upon.
- » In February 2010, Sinn Féin concluded an agreement at Hillsborough with the DUP on the way forward.
- » The result is working political institutions and key political powers transferred from London to Ireland on policing and justice. The transfer of powers to deal with parades is to follow by the end of the year.
- » An additional £800 million financial package was also negotiated.

COMHIONANNAS | Equality

- » Equality at the heart of government with new laws with the power to promote equality and tackle discrimination including equality proofing of the Executive budget. This will make a real practical difference to communities that have suffered decades of discrimination.
- » Transforming education - Ending the 11+ and introducing new guidelines. This transformation policy is already paying dividends – more children are staying in school and GCSE and A level results are improving.
- » Extension of free bus and rail travel to 60-64 year olds.

POST | Jobs

- » Sinn Féin run departments are maximising the impact of public sector expenditure on job creation, particularly in the construction sector. There has been substantial investment in schools buildings, infrastructure and in the farming sector.
- » Insertion of a social clause in public contracts requiring the employment of long term unemployed and apprentices on major projects.
- » Introduction of new legislation, such as Michelle Gildernew's Forestry Bill, to overhaul the management and regulation of our forests in a way that creates significant recreational, environmental, tourist and sporting employment.
- » Encouraging investment from US pensions funds to create jobs and promote economic equality.
- » Hundreds of millions invested in rural development programmes, rural broadband, farm modernisation.

AONTACHT | Unity

- » Sinn Féin is the only party with a strategy for Irish unity.
- » The British Government of Ireland Act is gone and key political decisions are now taken by elected representatives in Ireland.
- » The all-Ireland agenda is being expanded every day through the work our Ministerial Departments and the All Ireland Ministerial Council.
- » Conor Murphy's A5 Ballygawley to Derry dual carriageway project is being jointly supported financially by the Irish government.
- » Michelle Gildernew's 'Fortress Ireland' approach to stopping foot and mouth disease and bluetongue made a impact across rural Ireland.

AN GHAEILGE | The Irish language

- » Actively campaigning for the introduction of an Irish Language Act.
- » Working to repeal the 1737 Act which prohibits the use of Irish in the courts.
- » Securing millions of pounds of direct investment in the Irish Medium Education sector.
- » Ensuring funding for the Irish Language Broadcasting Fund into the future and working to ensure permanent funding similar to broadcasting funds in Wales and Scotland.
- » Secured funding from the British Government at Hillsborough for the development of Irish Language infrastructural projects throughout the north of Ireland.
- » Co-ordinating our work in the Assembly, Leinster House, Europe, local Councils, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Foras na Gaeilge with the appointment of a Sinn Féin Irish Language co-ordinator.



CEANNASAÍOCHT SA RIALTAIS LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT

MARTIN McGUINNESS

Ceannasaíocht sa Rialtais | Leadership in Government

As joint leader of the Executive in the six counties, I am humbled to represent Sinn Féin as one of the leaders of government on the island of Ireland. I do so alongside a representative of unionism, Peter Robinson. He and I have equal power and equal authority. This is the political and legal reality.

Sinn Féin is a party of government. We are committed to public service and motivated by public good. Everything we have achieved over the recent past is evidence of our commitment to those values. We believe that Irish unity will be good for all of our people.

Government has the potential to provide huge transformation for our society, north and south. But the blight of partition means we have two governments on this island, leading to needless duplication of systems and scandalous dissipation of outcomes.

Sinn Féin is in government delivering for citizens. We are taking the hard decisions. We are doing a good job. We are working in conjunction with tens of thousands of public servants whose contribution is immense.

We are delivering real change, in the Executive, in education, in regional development, in agriculture and rural affairs and in the all-Ireland Ministerial Council.

We are not sloganising. We are organising. Real change is happening because Sinn Féin is providing real, decisive and strong leadership. The old-guard unionist establishment in the six counties, which was grounded in elitism and inequality, is now crumbling because of Sinn Féin.

This election is hugely important. It is the electorate's opportunity to endorse the new dispensation and to keep moving forward.

This election is about the future direction of Ireland.

The work of the peace process has brought Irish unity and national reconciliation closer than ever before.

A vote for Sinn Féin is a vote to fulfill that destiny.

One of the biggest scourges facing our society is continued sectarianism and racism. I have ensured that a renewed focus is being brought in my own Department to the job of tackling sectarianism by prioritising a new strategy for a better future. Some have criticised us for taking time to finalise this strategy. I reject such criticism. Previous strategies from the direct rule administration were fundamentally flawed because they sought to airbrush structural social inequalities from the debate – preferring to blame the poorest communities for sectarianism.

Any strategy not based on equality is not going to work and is not acceptable to me or to Sinn Féin. I am pleased that our new draft strategy recognises that the promotion of equality must be the policy basis for good relations, and that no action to promote good relations can prejudice the primary statutory duty to promote equality. Equality is the only way forward.

Equally important has been the renewed focus on tackling poverty that Sinn Féin has brought to the Executive. We have campaigned for urgent measures on a range of issues, including childcare provision, benefit uptake, fuel poverty, and regulation of money-lenders.

In each of the Sinn Féin Departments, our anti-poverty priority has been visible, from Caitríona Ruane increasing and extending school uniform grants for the most needy, to Michelle Gildernew putting in place new transport for vulnerable rural dwellers, to Conor Murphy extending free bus and rail travel to all over-60s.

We also led the establishment of a cross-sectoral forum on the economy, bringing together trade unions, community and voluntary representatives, business leaders, politicians, the public sector and others to monitor and advise on the Executive's approach to dealing with the economic downturn.

Sinn Féin's peace strategy has transformed the political situation across the island.

Since becoming the joint leader of the Executive, I have repeatedly sought to develop a positive relationship with all sections of this society, especially unionism, while making clear Sinn Féin's determination to stand firm against inequality and injustice and sectarian politics. The recent historic agreement at Hillsborough represents not just another hugely significant breakthrough for Sinn Féin negotiators but for the entire community.

Powers on policing and justice have been transferred. Powers on parading will shortly follow. We can resolve the issue of contentious parades, if we come at it on the basis of equality and the right of everyone to freedom from sectarian harassment.

This agreement is about improving on what is currently there. What we have agreed is a renewed focus by everyone to facilitate resolution – the key in this will be dialogue and persuasion.

Dialogue should begin immediately. And we have agreed to improve the existing adjudicating framework for the small number of contentious parades. And no one should feel nervous about this – this is about resolving issues not about creating them.

The outworking of the Hillsborough Agreement will not be easy. But already it is compelling even the most negative elements of unionism to confront the reality that the isolationism of the north hinders our society's development. Already it is compelling them to address the inevitability that the direction of politics on this island is taking us towards Irish national unity.

That is the outcome which offers the greatest protections and the greatest hope for all of society in the north.

The lesson of the peace process is that a stronger Sinn Féin means a better outcome for all.

The old ways are gone. They will not return. We will not let them. The future is unity and equality. The future is Sinn Féin - making change, making history, making peace.

FORBAIRT RÉIGIÚNACH | REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sinn Féin's Regional Development Minister Conor Murphy has delivered much needed public investment in the public transport system, water and sewerage services, ports and maritime, and the strategic roads network. This has at all times been underpinned by the constant objectives of developing stronger all-island development, promoting equality (including tackling decades of structural regional inequalities particularly between east and west of the Bann), public ownership of strategic infrastructure, and public provision of essential services on the basis of equality.

Prior to Sinn Féin taking the Regional Development portfolio in May 2007, the prospect of a double taxation on household water and sewerage services – under plans led by the previous the direct rule administration - was imminent.

Sinn Féin's opposition to double taxation on water is not only based on our principled promotion of the equality agenda, but also on the practical implications for the poorest and most socially disadvantaged in Irish society. Sinn Féin has ruled out the privatisation of our water and sewerage services, which will remain in full public ownership. We have prevented the introduction of double household water charges and we will oppose any proposition to introduce such charges now or in the future.

Conor Murphy's recent ministerial intervention aimed at ensuring rigorous standards of corporate governance in NI Water resulted in four members of the Board leaving. Sinn Féin will continue to enforce strong Ministerial and political leadership to promote accountability, transparency, effectiveness and equality.

Sinn Féin in government has delivered change. Through the Department for Regional Development we have achieved many positive outcomes for wider society, including:

- » Reversal of the previous ban on investment in the Derry railway line
- » Extension of free bus and rail travel to 60-64 year olds in the north
- » Introduction of separate sustainable public transport funding packages of £78 million for walking/cycling, £450 million for buses and £6 million for rail, and £1.8 billion for traffic management and roads up to 2015
- » Extension of proposals for a new bus-based rapid transit system in Belfast, to include the west of the city – not simply the east
- » Provision of door-to-door transport services for people with disabilities
- » Introduction of the new high-speed Rathlin Island ferry and Executive policy for the island
- » Completion of the £104 million M1/Westlink upgrade in 2008 – 13 months ahead of schedule
- » Completion of the £20 million M2 hill-section upgrade in 2009
- » Announcement of a new £250 million A6 upgrade between Derry and Dungiven
- » Appointment of contractors to undertake the A5 upgrade between Derry and Aughnacloy, as part of the all-Ireland dual carriageway between Derry and Dublin
- » Appointment of contractors to undertake the A8 project between Larne and Belfast, as part of the eastern seaboard dual carriageway links to Dublin
- » Completion of the A1 Newry by-pass, and A4 Dungannon/Ballygawley road

Sinn Féin will continue to lead on the regional development agenda, with a heavy emphasis on reversing past structural inequalities and delivering practical change. We will continue to promote the benefits of all-island development as the sensible and sustainable option for the future. Sinn Féin will continue to promote the substantial public investment in regional development as a key contributor to economic stimulus and job creation.

Sinn Féin is committed to providing an efficient transport system to support the increasing economic and social demands for transport mobility and geographical accessibility. It is clear that current patterns of transport usage and the high level of dependency upon the private car are not sustainable. The significant increase in emissions and congestion over recent years must be firmly addressed. This will require moving towards cleaner vehicles and more sustainable transport choices.

Part of the solution is about providing real and attractive alternatives. Sinn Fein is committed to delivering an ongoing and significant programme of investment to ensure a quality public transport network.

This will be supported by modernising infrastructure to encourage motorists to abandon their cars and take the bus or train, or walk or cycle. This strategy is focused on attracting sufficient numbers of commuters to reduce travel times and benefit business, the economy, the environment and greater social inclusion. Under Sinn Féin, public transport will be another objective of the equality agenda.

We will:

- » Deliver a new ActiveTravel Strategy which includes key actions to provide alternatives to the private car and include investment in cycling, walking and public transport
- » Introduce 20 new trains into the rail network
- » Continue to overhaul our water and sewerage services through capital investment, and ensure that the best governance and management of these services is secured before the end of our term in office
- » Introduce a Rapid Transit system in Belfast city, with initial pilot routes including west Belfast connecting to the east of the city
- » Start the construction of the A5 and A8 major roads schemes – the largest ever undertaken in Ireland thereby creating better all-Ireland linkages, providing jobs within the construction industry and contributing towards the reversal of the regional disparities between east and west of the Bann
- » Open the new A1 Newry by-pass
- » Begin construction on the A6 Derry to Dungiven by-pass
- » Open the new A4 Dungannon to Augher road upgrade and dualling between Ballygawley and Dungannon
- » In the aftermath of completing the feasibility study on the Newry Southern Relief Road, now conduct an environmental study
- » Introduce an All-Ireland Spatial Plan and North West Spatial Plan to create better socio-economic cohesion on the border corridor and across the Island
- » Launch a new Regional Development Strategy establishing a new vision for the region over the next decade, founded on the equality and all-Ireland agendas
- » Seek to secure City of Derry Airport's long-term future working with Derry City Council and the Executive
- » Introduce residents' parking schemes in Belfast and Derry

OIDEACHAS | EDUCATION

Sinn Féin's approach to education is grounded in our belief that education is one key to breaking the structural cycle of deprivation and inequality in our society. That is why we have set about the most radical overhaul of the education system since the inception of the six-county state.

When he was Education Minister, Martin McGuinness announced the end of the 11-plus transfer test. In 2007, Caitríona Ruane started the process to develop a new post-primary transfer system – one which would place the needs of children above the demands of institutions, and remove needless stress caused by unnecessary testing.

Our watchwords for education are Equality and Excellence. Our aim is to raise standards for everyone – not just those can afford to pay.

Some wish to cling to the old ways of inequality and discrimination. But their day has gone. With our partners in education we are creating a new system in which children can transfer seamlessly to their nearest post-primary school, and in which all schools – acting in collaborative networks – will be good schools.

We have removed state support for the unjust practice of selection/rejection which divided 11 year-old children into pigeonholes of 'future potential' and 'no future potential'. The ending of selection is only one aspect of our root and branch transformation agenda. We have also:

- » Made education a real community issue and not just the preserve of the 'great and the good'
- » Launched a Schools Modernisation Programme spending £700 million in schools building projects over the last three years
- » Mainstreamed collaboration between all schools in all sectors through Area Learning Communities, because all schools should be equally good
- » Introduced grants to low-income families for the purchase of primary school uniforms
- » Changed the funding for schools in order to give more to those with greatest need
- » Invested £46 million in ICT in schools
- » Implemented the Revised Curriculum giving teachers the freedom to do the job they've been trained to do
- » Allocated an additional £32 million for Foundation Stage (Years 1 and 2)
- » Established a dedicated Educational Taskforce to improve literacy and numeracy skills
- » Supported Irish-medium and integrated education through the approval and funding of new schools and nursery units
- » Established a Taskforce on Traveller education
- » Ensured trade union representation on departmental bodies
- » Provided seatbelts and lighting on all school buses

Our policies are already paying dividends, with our education system already performing better today than it did in 2007. More children are staying on at school post-16 and there has been a significant improvement in our results at both GCSE and A-level.

Sinn Féin will continue the radical restructuring of education. This will be focussed on delivering our twin aims of equality and excellence. The future development of the Lisanelly educational village at the former British military base in Omagh is an example of how Sinn Féin is transforming this society towards a new era of hope and opportunity.

Sinn Féin opposes student fees. We are seriously concerned about the approximately 52,000 young people between 16 and 25 years old who are not in employment, education or training. An indeterminable number of young people are neither registered as unemployed nor recorded as economically inactive. Sinn Féin believes the Executive as a whole must address this issue on a cross-Departmental basis.

The chair of the Assembly's Employment and Learning Committee, Sue Ramsey chaired a major inquiry into apprenticeships, including their function, quality, and accessibility. A range of recommendations from that inquiry to enhance the role of apprenticeships are now being implemented by the Department for Employment and Learning. We also believe that further education colleges need to be at the epicentre of planning for new investment decisions. Early involvement of colleges at the investment planning stage is the best way to ensure that a skilled-up workforce is available for new investment opportunities.

Sinn Féin supports the development of an all-Ireland skills strategy that ensures skills qualifications are compatible across the island, and recognised as such in both jurisdictions.

In the time ahead we will:

- » extend the entitlement to free school meals for children
- » continue to cut back on bureaucracy and ensure that more resources are put into frontline services
- » build more new schools on the basis of area needs
- » continue working for the harmonisation of the two education systems on the island
- » continue to oppose fees for full-time students
- » campaign for a new fees regime which assists older people to become involved in lifelong learning
- » press for the Executive to jointly address the needs of young people not in employment, education, or training
- » push for improvements in the function, quality and accessibility of apprenticeships
- » seek to place colleges at the centre of early investment planning

TALMHAÍOCHT AGUS FORBAIRT TUAITHE

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Sinn Féin's Agriculture Minister Michelle Gildernew has placed an unprecedented focus on the rights of rural dwellers. With increased pressure on farming and fishing communities, Sinn Féin has once again pursued the benefits of all-island planning and development. Michelle Gildernew has established a dedicated team of officials within the Agriculture department focused on north-south development.

In particular, it was Michelle Gildernew's swift and decisive intervention – standing up against short-sighted objections – by introducing a 'Fortress Ireland' approach to the massive dangers caused by the Foot and Mouth outbreak and Bluetongue disease, which ensured rural dwellers in the six counties did not face the widespread devastation that others in Europe suffered.

Sinn Féin has placed the need for a new rural white paper in the north at the centre of the agenda, with equality and all-island development as key elements. This will seek to set the agenda for future rural development, including new measures and laws that safeguard existing rights, and promote better protections of the positive contribution that rural dwellers make to wider society. As part of this objective, Sinn Féin has intensified the 'rural-proofing' of all public policies. We have also introduced a new and more effective equality screening procedure.

We are committed to the development of a new Planning Policy Statement 21 that protects the sustainability and interests of the wider rural community.

Investment in rural development by Michelle Gildernew has ensured that:

- » £120 million has been invested in the farm nutrient management scheme, securing our environment and giving a much needed boost to the construction sector;
- » £50 million has been invested in rural broadband;
- » £6 million has been invested in farm modernisation for disadvantaged areas;
- » £38 million will be invested in fishing communities and industry over the next three years; and,
- » £350 million will be allocated to rural areas over the next three years through the Rural Development Programme.

£10 million has been invested in addressing rural poverty and social exclusion. Among the outcomes delivered by Sinn Féin has been £1.3 million allocated directly to a rural childcare strategy; £0.6 million to tackle fuel poverty through a rural warm homes scheme; £0.8 million enabling an extension of the assisted travel scheme for rural areas; and a new door-to-door 'Dial a Lift' scheme for elderly/disabled rural dwellers.

In Europe, working with Sinn Féin MEP Bairbre de Brún, Michelle Gildernew has developed a new relationship with key officials in the EU Commission and Parliament. This has been vital to defending the interests of our fishing and farming communities from further attack.

We will fight for a fair outcome for agriculture and fisheries in the reform of the Common Agriculture Policy and Common Fisheries Policy, to ensure the single farm payment is maintained and capped at €100,000, and that a more regional approach is adopted to our fishing industry giving more local control over future development.

Sinn Féin is currently bringing a new Forestry Bill through the Assembly. We aim to double forest cover across the six counties over the next 50 years and to increase the sustainability of forestry in terms of social, environmental, recreational, tourist, health, sporting and green economic dividends, whilst simultaneously reforming the regulation of forestry management. This ambitious legislation will be important in helping to maintain our rich heritage of biodiversity and improving our ability to respond to the effects of climate change and emergency situations, such as flooding.

Likewise, at local level, the expansion of allotments and development of community farms/gardens can promote a range of educational, health, environmental and community building functions – especially on an intergenerational basis.

GERRY KELLY – ENSURING EQUALITY FOR ALL

As an Executive Minister, Gerry Kelly has played an important role in a number of areas including addressing the needs of victims and survivors of the conflict. He also holds special responsibility for issues affecting children and young people.

Sinn Féin is committed to addressing the needs of victims and survivors of the conflict. We support truth recovery and reconciliation as a necessary process for our society to move forward.

As a Minister Gerry Kelly has promoted the development of the Victims and Survivors Commission, Forum and Service and is responsible for overseeing the distribution of £36 million.

Gerry Kelly is the joint chair of a cross-departmental Interfaces Working Group which promotes and coordinates initiatives to tackle disadvantage and conflict.

He has also played a key role in overseeing the Good Relations budget of £28.7 million.

Gerry Kelly co-chaired a number of the Executive review functions that emerged from the Hillsborough Castle Agreement, and chaired discussions to transfer parading powers away from London to Belfast.

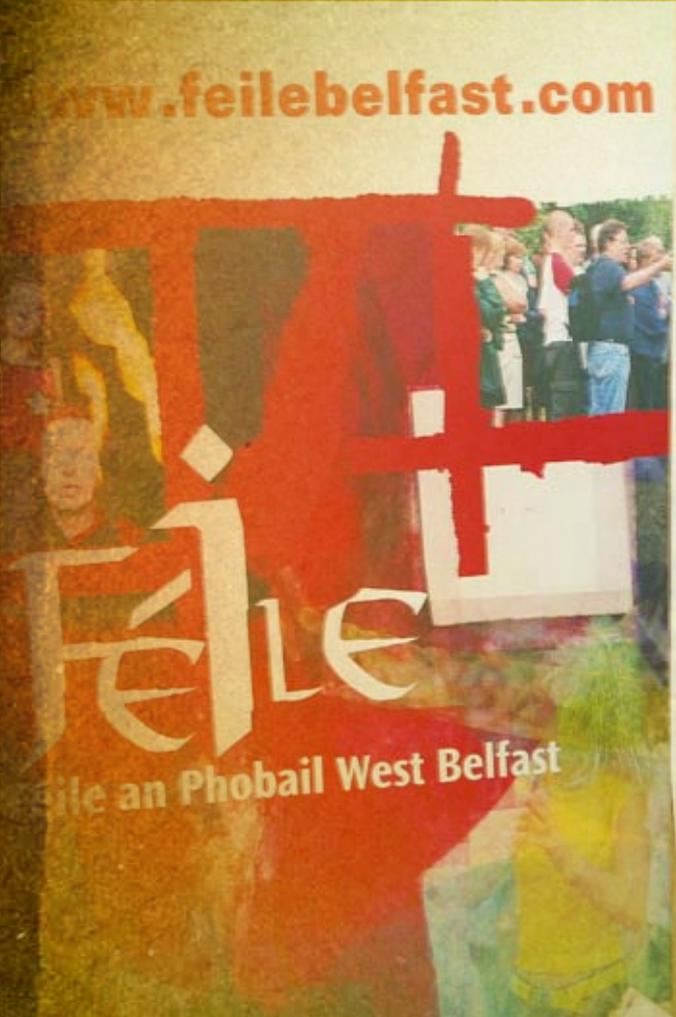
Sinn Féin believe all young people must be provided with the resources and support to develop to their full potential and we are committed to ensuring the Executive delivers on this.

In his role as Minister with special responsibility for children and young people, Gerry Kelly has prioritised a review of the nature of childcare provision in the children and youth service sector, including developing a new Executive Strategy on Childcare.

Sinn Féin have delivered mechanisms to address the lack of properly resourced childcare facilities.

Gerry Kelly delivered a rescue package for Playboard, securing almost £45 million for youth and children's schemes across the north.

He has secured contributions from other Departments to ensure the continuation of schemes until the childcare strategy comes into action.



SÍOCHÁN | PEACE

CEARTAS COIRIÚL | CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In April 2010, Sinn Féin delivered what others had labelled unachievable – the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Assembly. We have taken policing and justice powers away from Westminster and into the hands of local elected representatives.

The involvement of republicans on the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) over the past three years has – for the first time since the Good Friday Agreement and Patten Commission – begun to create an unprecedented level of accountability and transparency on issues of policing and community safety.

At the Policing Board level, Sinn Féin has championed the equality and human rights agenda, in relation to the introduction of tasers, the investigation of specific incidents of malpractice, the ongoing attempts by the police service to obstruct shoot-to-kill inquests, and the abusive application of ‘stop and search’ powers. We have supported increased powers and resources for the Police Ombudsman.

We have also ensured that a much greater emphasis on the rights of Irish citizens is understood by the police service internally, and by police officers externally. This has included the arrangement of full Policing Board meetings held as Gaeilge. In places like Short Strand in Belfast, we have supported the demands of local communities for the closure of old-style fortress police stations and the transferral of these vacant sites for positive local community benefit.

Of course we recognise there is substantially more work to do if the vision of fully representative, accountable, human-rights compliant civic policing with the community is to be irreversibly built upon.

DPPs represent the first tier of policing accountability, bringing together local police officers and local communities. Our party members – including those on the Policing Board and DPPs - have been attacked and threatened by small factions of militarists. We are facing those factions down and exposing their empty political rhetoric. Likewise Sinn Féin strongly opposes any efforts by securocrat factions of the NIO to relegate the status of DPPs to amalgams within new council committees for statutory agencies overseeing community safety policy.

Sinn Féin supports a routinely unarmed and demilitarised policing service. We will continue to campaign for this outcome, including the total ending of any use of plastic bullets which are lethal weapons and bad relics of past RUC policing. We will continue to oppose those who might still seek to undermine the significant potential and general goodwill that currently exists in relation to the future development of the police service, especially on an all-island basis.

The activities of politically-driven British Home Office agencies in the six counties, such as MI5 and the Serious and Organised Crime Agency have no place in Ireland. They must go. They have no legitimacy in Ireland. All criminal investigations must take place under the auspices and authority of the policing service and its full accountability structures.

Greater all-Ireland co-operation is a must. Sinn Féin believes that the proposed lateral entry programme of Garda Síochana officers must be expanded and enhanced. We have welcomed increased co-operation between the police services in the north and south on issues such as drugs investigations, road traffic enforcement, child protection and sexual crimes – including human trafficking. The lesson of this good work is that all-Ireland policing works. Sinn Féin will work to create greater all-Ireland policing structures.

The wider multi-agency community safety agenda has the potential to help reduce crime and anti-community behaviour, help improve community life - including the health of citizens, and help ensure greater financial efficiency and effectiveness. It has the potential to address issues such as the supervision of those on community-based orders, the curbing of street-drinking and under-age drinking, and the problem of how to address repeat offenders. Effective community safety and crime prevention also requires investment in the economic and social infrastructure of marginalized communities, and comprehensive provision of intervention and support services for individuals and families at risk.

Sinn Féin is committed to the community safety agenda in the context of a fully accountable and transparent criminal justice system, and in a way that must underpin – not undermine – the significant transformation we have developed to date. We will

campaign for the investment of greater resources into youth provisions and safer play areas. Comprehensive rehabilitation programming, including sentence management, can also contribute to a reduction in repeat offending, alongside provision of effective pre-release and post-release support. Sinn Féin strongly supports efforts to build upon efficient, transparent and accountable restorative justice programmes as an important factor in delivering more effective and meaningful justice outcomes for victims.

Sinn Féin has sought through negotiations on policing and justice, including amending justice legislation and the transfer of powers, to create a situation where the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is accountable for the decisions it makes. An important element in this accountability framework is the role and the powers of a local Attorney General.

The report of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate in August 2007 on the PPS identified 40 weaknesses requiring action. Last year a further report was issued reiterating deficiencies in the PPS. There needs to be a root and branch reform of the PPS.

The transfer of policing and justice powers represents a unique opportunity to begin this process and to construct a Public Prosecution Service that is representative of, and accountable to, the community, and free from partisan political control. Sinn Féin is committed to achieving this.

In the context of the transfer of policing and justice, Sinn Féin believes that a new all-Ireland review of sentencing and penal reform (including the role of prosecution and alternatives, and the role of custody and alternatives) should become a priority.

In the time ahead, Sinn Féin will:

- » continue to be proactive in setting the agenda on policing, in line with Sinn Féin policy;
- » continue to advocate a community and multi-agency partnership approach to policing;
- » continue to enhance the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system;
- » deepen the consultative engagement with communities on policing;
- » advocate effectively by raising local grievances and seeking resolution and redress, and by ensuring that local policing plans genuinely meet community needs;
- » continue to challenge both abusive and negligent or unprofessional policing;
- » work constructively to overcome resistance to change within the PSNI and Gardaí, as well as among elements of the policing oversight structures;
- » continue to monitor allocation of resources, professional standards, performance on human rights, equality and community engagement obligations, and trends and patterns in the use and abuse of force and in response times;
- » campaign to achieve the demilitarisation of PSNI buildings and vehicles, and the reduction and positive conversion of the counterinsurgency-era police estate.

AN FHÍRINNE | TRUTH RECOVERY

Sinn Féin is committed to building the peace and healing the wounds from the recent conflict. Truth recovery is one of the outstanding elements of the Irish peace process. It needs to be addressed so that the lesson of our history can be learned and never again repeated. The British government as the major protagonist in the conflict clearly cannot be left to deal with these matters.

Sinn Féin believes that:

- » An independent international truth commission is required.
- » An effective truth recovery process is dependent on full cooperation by all relevant parties.
- » The body charged with this onerous task:
 - » should have a remit to inquire into the extent and patterns of past violations as well as their causes and consequences;
 - » should examine and report on institutional and collective responsibility; and,
 - » must be independent of the state, combatant groups, political parties, civil society and economic interests.
- » Accordingly, in the above context, the two governments should authorise a reputable body, such as the United Nations, to devise and implement all measures and processes necessary to achieve:
 - » The independence of the commission;
 - » Effective independent truth recovery methods; and,
 - » The public reporting of its findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- » This should be underpinned in legislation.

Sinn Féin rejects all attempts to create and sustain a hierarchy of victims and survivors. We have been consistent in opposing any such hierarchy. All processes should be victim-centred and should deal with all victims of the conflict on the basis of equality. All of those affected by the recent conflict have the right to be treated equally.

As the primary state contributor to the conflict, the British government has the major financial, moral and political responsibility to enable such a process. We also believe the Irish government has a constitutional, legal and moral responsibility to promote and encourage this course of action. Given the all-island nature of the conflict, the truth recovery mechanism must also be on an all-Ireland footing.

This must apply to the issue of compensation for victims and survivors. The British government should, as an initial step, accept the Eames/Bradley recommendation in respect of a small recognition payment to all victims.

Martin McGuinness acting as the joint leader in the Executive insisted that the new Victims Commission – established in 2008 – needed to demonstrate that no victims or survivors would be left behind. To that end, a new victims strategy to meet the needs of victims has been produced. A budget of £36 million has been set aside over the course of three years and Sinn Féin will ensure that future support and services are shaped by victims and survivors.

Four Victims Commissioners were appointed to ensure the widest possible support for the work of the Victims Commission. Likewise the new Victims Forum represents all sections of society as equals.

All victims are also currently regarded as absolutely equal under the terms of the Victims and Survivors Order 2006. Despite demands by some unionists to alter this statute of equality for victims, Sinn Féin has made it clear that we will not tolerate any such move. It will not happen.

Sinn Féin will continue to campaign for a comprehensive truth recovery process that:

- » is victim-centred on an all-Ireland basis;
- » requires full co-operation from all relevant parties;
- » is grounded in equality for all and is politically neutral;
- » is international and independent;
- » examines the full causes, nature and extent of the conflict;
- » places healing and peace-building – for victims and survivors, but also wider society – as an objective;
- » has national reconciliation as the core objective, informed by values of respect and generosity from all.

In addition, we will continue to work to ensure that all forms of politically-motivated discrimination faced by ex-POWs are ended and made unlawful.

The family of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane has been supported across Ireland, Britain, the United States and further afield in their demand for a full, independent, public inquiry into his murder in February 1989. Sinn Féin supports this demand. The British government's decision to suggest an inquiry under the new Inquiries Act 2005 represents a fundamental breach of the agreement reached at Weston Park in 2001. The Pat Finucane case remains a litmus test of the British system's commitment to a credible and effective truth recovery mechanism.

Sinn Féin will also continue to support those families who have still not been granted full inquests, in flagrant breach of the British government's obligations under Article 2 of the ECHR. Some of these cases stretch back to the shoot-to-kill policy of the early 1980s.

Building a united, harmonious society demands that all the difficult issues are dealt with in an equal and inclusive way, and as a necessary part of putting the past behind us. Looking after victims, their families and survivors is an essential part of this.

IDIRNÁISIÚNTA | INTERNATIONAL

Sinn Féin is an internationalist party. We retain and build links and alliances with progressive forces across the globe. We actively promote Irish military neutrality as a key positive influencing factor in international relations. Through established and new linkages, we are seeking to promote a progressive agenda internationally, including full adherence to the United Nations Millennium Development goals.

We support the right of all peoples to national self-determination and to the exercise of that right free from external impediments. All people have a right to determine their political, social, economic and cultural destinies.

We respect the independence and integrity of other nation states and progressive struggles to govern their own affairs.

While no two conflict resolution processes are identical, Sinn Féin has ensured that our experience of the Irish peace process is widely available to others.

To that end, party president Gerry Adams has been engaged in trying to secure meaningful conflict resolution processes in the Middle-East and the Basque Country. Other leaders such as Martin McGuinness, heading up the Executive, and junior Minister Gerry Kelly have been involved in Iraq, Sri Lanka and the Phillipines. Martina Anderson and Pat Doherty have both been in Venezuela as guests of President Hugo Chavez to explore the possibilities of bringing cheaper oil to Ireland to benefit the poorest sections of society. Other Sinn Féin MLAs such as Alex Maskey, Paul Maskey, Raymond McCartney and Jennifer McCann have also travelled to the Middle-East, Basque Country, Turkey and Kurdistan in our ongoing work to assist in dealing with the causes of conflict internationally. Sinn Féin representatives continue to act as expert advisors and experienced observers in a wide variety of international situations. We will continue to build these international relations as one of the governing parties on the island of Ireland.

Sinn Féin opposes the ongoing Cuban blockade and has campaigned for the release of the Cuban Five. Likewise Sinn Féin believes that the current blockade of Gaza and the colonisation of the West Bank – contrary to international law - must be ended.

US involvement in our own peace process has been a vital ingredient in its success. Sinn Féin will continue to press the US administration to adopt a similarly positive role in other arenas, particularly the Middle-East.

Essential elements to building a successful conflict resolution process in the Middle-East would be the immediate halt by Israel of any further building of the Separation Wall as a first step to its ultimate demolition; the ending of settlements and occupation in the West Bank; and the promotion of basic humanitarian conditions and respect for human rights throughout Gaza and the West Bank. The recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council's 'Goldstone Report' into the war on Gaza should be implemented.

It is important that the European Union continues to support the Irish peace process. Sinn Féin is committed to promoting a progressive agenda within the EU and further afield, particularly in terms of issues like protecting workers' rights and defending national sovereignty. This means critical but positive engagement, promoting a democratic, social and peaceful EU, whilst strengthening the role of national, regional and local authorities.

Through the work of our European team, including Bairbre de Brun MEP, we will use the European Union and its institutions to continually promote the issue of Irish unity and other issues related to the peace process. We will develop progressive policy positions with partners internationally, making alliances with other progressive MEPs and parties. In addition, we will link our work in the Assembly, Leinster House and local councils to our work at EU level, and bring information on developments at EU level back to different sectors and local communities in Ireland through a programme of outreach.

We will continue to raise the issue of the undocumented Irish in the United States, working in tandem with Irish-America, the Irish government and US legislators.



COMHIONANNAS | EQUALITY

COMHIONANNAS AGUS CEARTA DAONNA

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Sinn Féin is the only party to consistently champion the equality agenda. We have pursued the equality agenda in all aspects of public policy and political negotiations.

It is worth recalling that this is the twenty-fifth anniversary year of the start of the MacBride Principles campaign in the United States. We were the only political party in Ireland to forthrightly support that campaign. It is now widely acknowledged that the MacBride Principles were central to the development of new effective anti-discrimination laws to tackle employment bias alongside positive pro-equality laws brought in under the Good Friday Agreement – particularly the Section 75 and Section 76 duties of the NI Act 1998, which promote equality of opportunity, and guard against discrimination on the grounds of religion or political opinion, respectively.

Section 75 requires all government resources in the north to be spent in a way which (a) promotes equality of opportunity between various groups and sectors, and (b) which conducts continuous assessments of the impact on equality caused by public policy proposals and implementation.

Sinn Féin has constantly campaigned for the full implementation of Section 75 despite resistance by sections of the senior civil service. We have battled against the continuing institutional resistance to the equality aspects of the Good Friday Agreement.

The existing patterns of socio-economic inequality in the six counties demonstrate that Catholics and nationalists are routinely worse off in every measurable indicator. The proper implementation of Section 75 has the potential to alter those patterns over time. It also has the potential to promote equality between other sectors also, including those affected by disability, older and young people, ethnic minorities, men and women, and those of different sexual orientation.

The joint leader of the Executive, Martin McGuinness has placed the promotion of equality at the centre of Sinn Féin's Assembly work. This has included requiring a full equality impact assessment of the last Programme for Government, Budget and Investment Strategy in January 2008. While by no means perfect, Sinn Féin will use this precedent to ensure progressively improved adherence to the Section 75 duties over coming years, both inside and outside the Assembly.

Similarly, Sinn Féin is pushing the equality agenda through the innovative use of public procurement contracts to require that private enterprises take actions with wider social benefits. This includes hiring designated quotas of long-term unemployed and the training of quotas of apprenticeships. Public monies spent on large capital contracts must assist in addressing inequalities across the north.

Regeneration has a central role to play in the equality agenda. Large amounts of public financing in areas of social deprivation must be utilised for the wider benefit of society and not merely the profit of developers. That is why Sinn Féin believes that all regeneration processes must have the promotion of equality as their primary aim, including the targeting of proposals on the basis of promoting equality and a comprehensive equality impact assessment. This is particularly relevant in relation to Masterplans like Girdwood/Crumlin Road Gaol, where senior civil servants have failed to properly promote the equality agenda.

Public servants involved in sidestepping or ignoring their statutory equality duties must embrace the new reality that was promised in the Good Friday Agreement or be held accountable for a failure to do so. Public resources must be spent on the basis of promoting equality and tackling substantive inequalities. It is the duty of public servants to demonstrably comply with that requirement in terms of visible outcomes.

Regeneration processes must develop rigorous performance indicators on the basis of full equality impact assessment and genuine participation involving the most needy sectors of society. Such measurable indicators based on this weighted evidence should demonstrate how subsequent proposals – targeted on the basis of promoting equality – address significant inequalities, eg. long-term unemployment and economic inactivity through targeted skills building programmes.

Sinn Féin supports the decentralising of government departments – particularly to the west of the Bann. We have resisted the efforts of the Department of Finance and Personnel to bury the Bain report on decentralisation. The decentralisation of key government functions will be a critical factor in tackling regional disparities that have been cultivated by decades of regional discrimination.

Sinn Féin has been at the forefront of highlighting the failure of the Department of Investment, Trade and Investment and Invest NI to ensure that the promotion of equality is a key condition for supporting inward investment. We have exposed the patterns of the past decade, which show that – despite pockets of significant deprivation - the constituency of South Belfast routinely had more jobs and investment promoted than the entire border corridor from Derry to Newry. We have secured inquiries by the Comptroller and Auditor General into some aspects of Invest NI's activities. This will now result in a full investigation by the Public Accounts Committee.

We will continue to press for international investment to be made on the basis of equality. The peace process and foreign direct investment must be seen to help change the patterns of inequality that exist in our society. In particular, this can be assisted by foreign investment attaching strict contract compliance conditions requiring that the measurable promotion of equality becomes a core element and outcome of any funding decisions, alongside helping to address regional investment disparities.

Sinn Féin is pursuing equality for gaelic games, Irish culture and nationalist emblems throughout the six counties, in every forum. We have utilised existing equality law to challenge the unequal and discriminatory sectarian ethos that continues to exist in large parts of the north.

Sinn Féin will campaign for improved equality legislation which supplements and enhances existing equality laws. We are committed to a Single Equality Bill which meets that objective, in the context of the unique pro-equality and anti-discrimination legislation in the six counties. We will not tolerate any efforts to undermine or reverse the existing statutory framework, particularly in relation to fair employment monitoring and group rights. We believe Section 75 should be expanded to include other categories, including socio-economic status.

The routine violation of civil, political, economic and social rights – gerrymandering, right to housing, right to a job, internment and the long term suspension of many rights under emergency provisions helped exacerbate and prolong the conflict in the north.

Sinn Féin continues to demand that legally enforceable economic and social rights are enshrined in law across Ireland and in a fully enforceable Bill of Rights. Sinn Féin advocates the right to social, economic, gender and cultural equality. This encompasses equality for all. The history of this jurisdiction has been one in which citizens rights were trampled on and ignored. Discrimination and injustice were integral parts of the fabric of this society. An effective, legislatively-based and robust Bill of Rights can make a significant contribution to protecting the fundamental rights of every citizen in the north, and in particular the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society. We will continue to support a Bill of Rights on that basis. The recent NIO consultation proposals are absolutely flawed and Sinn Fein rejects them.

Sinn Féin's priorities include:

- » A strong, inclusive, broad, fully enforceable Bill of Rights for the north, including enforceable economic and social rights, as required under the Good Friday Agreement;
- » An all-Ireland Charter of Rights as required under the Good Friday Agreement;
- » Strong Gender Equality policies and legislation;
- » Enhanced Equality legislation across Ireland;
- » Maximum Human Rights protections;
- » Support for measures to achieve equality of representation both in political life and in all public appointments; and,
- » Strong legislation and policies to tackle sectarianism, racism, hate crime, homophobia and to tackle discrimination based on disability, age, gender.

MNÁ | WOMEN

Despite significant improvements, women are still subjected to ongoing institutionalised inequalities, discrimination and abuse. In particular, women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are considerably more likely to suffer.

Sinn Féin actively promotes equality for women, both within our party and in wider society. We have the largest number of women elected to the Assembly. This is a fact about which we are proud and on which we are committed to building. However it must be acknowledged that women are still largely under-represented at all levels of government, especially in leadership roles at Ministerial and Executive level, and the public sector.

We believe that all political parties have a responsibility to ensure that more women are elected to all political institutions. Political parties can and should adopt strategies to increase the number of successful women candidates by using positive action in their recruitment and selection processes to ensure that we are all working towards achieving 50/50 parity. Public appointments need to be representative of society.

We have strongly supported the campaign to end violence against women. Most of this violence takes place in the home. Sinn Féin supports campaigns to end violence against women, but much more work is required to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and abuse throughout society. Trafficking of women is also an increasing problem and that is a reason why Sinn Féin believes an all-Ireland approach to fully accountable and effective criminal investigations into such issues is so important.

Sinn Féin also believes that we need more locally-based Sexual Assault and Rape Centres (SARCs) which offer, under one roof, all of the services which a victim of rape or sexual assault needs.

The pay gap between men and women is actually getting worse. Fifty years after the introduction of the Equal Pay Act, that is totally unacceptable. We urge all sectors of society to end unequal treatment between men and women, and to take positive measures to promote equality in that regard. Equal pay rates would be an example of good practice. In the Assembly and Executive, Sinn Féin representatives – led by the Martin McGuinness, as joint leader of the Executive – strongly supported the thousands of mainly women civil servants at lower grades who were entitled to substantial back-pay as a result of the unequal pay regimes introduced by British direct rule ministers over three decades. This campaign has successfully resulted in a substantial agreed settlement between the Executive and the trade unions, something which Sinn Féin wants to see implemented as soon as possible.

Rural women face particular socio-economic disadvantages, often having to travel further to access well-paid and flexible employment. Minister Michelle Gildernew has placed a special emphasis on encouraging the contribution of rural women entrepreneurs to the economy, particularly under the Rural Development Programme 2007-13.

Many lone-parents are women. They are going to be negatively affected by new rules on jobseekers benefits. Sinn Féin believes there is an urgent need for new childcare provisions which are quality, affordable and flexible. Ultimately we support a phased-in programme of universal public childcare, highly regulated in the interests of child development and child protection. This would include early childhood education and care, universal free pre-school for three to five year-olds (including a naonraí option), as well as afterschool childcare programmes for older children. Publicly funded childcare could potentially provide sustainable exchequer returns with women in particular lifted out of poverty, attaining better employment and thereby paying more taxes.

In the immediate term, the current changes to benefits payments make enhanced childcare essential. Similarly, it is becoming increasingly obvious that these childcare provisions should be extended for parents whose jobs do not correlate with school closing times, particularly those in low-paid part-time jobs like the tourism and hospitality trades.

Public resourcing to meet the particular needs of women can be properly targeted if the equality impact assessment process and Section 75 duty to promote equality are fully implemented. Sinn Féin is committed to pressing this priority for those groups suffering ongoing inequalities – not least women – during the forthcoming, and future, Budget/CSR processes.

POBAIL NUA | NEW COMMUNITIES

Immigrants and new Irish communities are increasing the diversity of our society. This is something to be celebrated and embraced. The changing face of Ireland is not transient; it represents a significant and long-term change in our country.

Sinn Féin absolutely opposes racism and sectarianism in every form. Hate crime has no place in our society. Sinn Féin representatives have been at the forefront of opposition to racist attacks against Travellers and immigrant families, as demonstrated by our strong stance in places like south Belfast. Both of these sectors must have an equal right to housing provision appropriate and adequate to their needs, and an equal right to live free from discrimination and hate crime.

Social change and diversity can bring enormous benefits to our country. The social and economic dividends of inward migration to Ireland are obvious. Equally the potential damage to Irish society if we mismanage or neglect our new cultural and ethnic mix is substantial.

Proper planning and adequate resourcing to promote equality on the basis of objective need is a firm foundation for our future development. But just and fair public policies – fully compliant with international law, international best practices and human rights – are also required to address issues like migration and asylum. Migration should be managed in a way that reconciles the national interest and the needs of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers.

Sinn Féin absolutely opposes the British government's application of detention without charge in penal institutions, which is used against potential asylum seekers.

DAOINE AOSTA | OLDER PEOPLE

Sinn Féin recognises that older people play an invaluable role in society, yet they are liable to face discrimination and inequalities in a range of services. They are particularly likely to face financial hardship.

New policies are needed to ensure that our growing population of older people have full equality. For example, in terms of educational opportunity, we will campaign for a new fees regime which assists older people to become involved in lifelong learning.

As joint leader in the Executive, Martin McGuinness has already appointed an older persons' advocate as an interim measure to the appointment of an Older Persons Commissioner. Sinn Féin will ensure that a properly-resourced Commissioner for older people is appointed within this Assembly term.

Sinn Féin is also demanding a comprehensive 'Strategy for Equality for Older People' to actively promote participation in the life of the nation. This should be based upon a fundamental review by the public sector across the island of the standards of living experienced by older people, including pension provision, cost of living, fuel poverty, disposable income and access to public services.

The needs, wishes and dignity of older people must be central to the care options which are available to them. The rights of older people who choose residential care need to be fully protected from the negative effects of either inefficiency or abuse. Those choosing home care need to be properly resourced and supported.

Appropriate care packages must be put in place for all citizens, particularly older people, being discharged from institutions including hospitals. Significant distress and inefficiency is caused by discharges which are delayed by the untimely planning of care packages, or disrupted by their ineffectual implementation. There must be seamless links between hospitals, trusts and society.

Sinn Féin supports free personal care for all senior citizens. We believe older people must be centrally involved in the planning and evaluation of health care delivery. Full and effective implementation of the Section 75 equality duties, involving meaningful consultation, would afford such an opportunity in relation to all public policies.

The safety of older people, particularly in their own homes, is a matter of community concern. Sinn Féin will seek to use the devolved policing and justice system, in conjunction with wider community safety initiatives, to address this need.

MÍCHUMAS | DISABILITY

Sinn Féin is committed to the positive promotion of equality for people with disabilities. We advocate a coordinated all-Ireland rights-based approach to addressing the needs of people with all kinds of learning, mental and physical disabilities, as well as social and communication disabilities such as autism.

We are working to ensure the constant implementation of the Section 75 statutory equality duties, alongside obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Promoting Social Inclusion Disability Working Group report presented to the Executive in December 2009 requires the public sector to adopt a range of positive measures in promoting equality for those with disabilities. We will work to ensure full implementation of these recommendations. We will also work to support the aims of the Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance.

Sinn Féin believes that the current 25 per cent rates relief available to people with disabilities must be regarded as a minimum baseline, not a maximum ceiling. We favour a complete waiver for those with a recognised disability.

We recognise that young people with disabilities are more likely to drop out of formal education and to face greater challenges in fulfilling their potential in later life. The long-term impact of learning disabilities on a person's life chances is also often overlooked. A strong, enforceable Bill of Rights, in conjunction with the implementation of equality law, would be central to addressing such disadvantages.

PÁISTÍ AGUS DAOINE ÓGA

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Sinn Féin believes that the development and protection of children and young people is a social obligation, not just a family responsibility. We take our obligations in this regard very seriously. Sinn Féin supports the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and we believe that the Convention must underpin all laws and policies relating directly and/or indirectly to children.

Sinn Féin believes that:

- » Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of physical, emotional or mental violence, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, injury or abuse (including sectarian and racial abuse), neglect, bullying, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual exploitation or abuse
- » All children born on the island are citizens, and as such have the right to remain in Ireland, in the care and company of their parent(s), regardless of the national origin of the parent(s)
- » Children have the right to be heard, to be consulted in all matters affecting them and to access information about their person
- » The child's best interest must be the paramount consideration in every matter concerning the child
- » The state must provide adequate support and assistance to parents and other primary carers to enable all children, insofar as is possible, to grow up and thrive in a stable and safe environment where the child is valued and encouraged to attain their full potential
- » All children must have access to childcare and crèche facilities of a high standard
- » Education is a right and all children must have access to free education

We believe that the rights of the child must be explicitly constitutionally protected and enshrined in a strong, legally enforceable Bill of Rights across the island.

The lack of co-ordinated public policy delivery for children and young people is a major factor in this society's failure to deliver full equality and full opportunity.

Gerry Kelly has special responsibility for issues affecting children and young people in the Executive. He has prioritised a review of the fractured nature of childcare policy provision in this sector, including commissioning a new Executive Strategy on Childcare. Lack of proper and resourced childcare facilities can seriously inhibit the life opportunities of children and young people affected. Child poverty is a significant challenge.

Sinn Féin will campaign during the forthcoming CSR Budget process to provide sufficient resources to redress this deficiency.

We are calling for focused policy-proofing of all public initiatives, including inter alia in terms of children and young people. While this should happen routinely under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998, the reality is that many departments are failing in their duties. An additional layer of proofing should act as another filter to ensure the needs of children and young people are fully targeted. This is particularly relevant in terms of planning decisions for new residential developments.

Sinn Féin is fully committed to child protection, and all party representatives and members are required to refer all allegations of sexual abuse to the appropriate statutory authorities.

In the Executive, we have supported the establishment of the Bichard coordination group to oversee the implementation of the Bichard recommendations, particularly the establishment of the safeguarding vulnerable groups scheme. Sinn Féin is fully committed to a public inquiry which would investigate the extent of historical institutional and clerical abuse here. We fully support the right of survivors to seek redress.

Sinn Féin recognizes that a disproportionate number of vulnerable or marginalised children enter the criminal justice system. We are committed to the identification and implementation of appropriate early intervention measures which aimed at addressing this.

Sinn Féin is committed to the removal of all under-18s from Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre to Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre.

AN GHAEILGE

Sinn Féin is fully committed to the use and promotion of the Irish language. We have fought, marched, negotiated and demanded that the rights of tens of thousands of Irish speakers be fully respected – particularly by the British and Irish governments.

On a day-to-day basis in Councils, in the Assembly, in Leinster House and in the European Parliament, we are actively engaged in fighting for the language. Those who choose to use Irish must be free to do so, unencumbered by preventative legislation dating back to the Penal Laws or other outdated prejudices.

Sinn Féin – acting in concert with Gaeilgeoirí and Irish language activists - will achieve an Irish Language Act. The rights of Irish speakers need to be entrenched in legislation.

In our own party, we have a dedicated Irish language coordinator to guide the work of our activists on a range of bodies from Foras na Gaeilge and Údarás na Gaeltachta to the elected bodies of the Assembly, the Dáil and local councils, north and south. The party produces a range of materials in Irish and organises ranganna in Stormont and other party offices for members. At the Assembly, we actively promote the use of Irish and work continually to enhance and develop the language throughout Stormont and government departments. In education, we have enabled the establishment of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta.

In particular, through the office of the Sinn Féin Education Minister Caitríona Ruane we have provided financial, curricular and demonstrable public support for the language. We have facilitated the growth of the Irish medium sector which now has 23 freestanding schools, 12 Irish medium units and plans to develop more over the next 18 months. Caitríona Ruane has:

- » approved a £15 million capital development build for Coláiste Feirste
- » secured £2 million for the development of Irish medium curricular materials
- » established a north-south working group to develop Irish medium resources
- » increased the Irish-medium postgraduate certificate places resulting in eight new teachers for the Irish medium sector every year
- » secured agreement for major capital works for four Irish medium primary schools
- » approved three new Irish medium schools
- » approved new náiscoilleana
- » initiated a primary languages programme introducing Irish, as well as Spanish, into a number of primary schools.

In the other Sinn Féin departments Conor Murphy and Michelle Gildernew are also implementing the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and providing public sector services through the medium of the Irish language. This has resulted in bilingual signage, Irish language departmental strategies, and ranganna for civil servants – funded by the departments – which are currently over-subscribed.

Sinn Féin was the party which put a focus on the promotion of Irish at the recent Hillsborough talks. In negotiations with the British Prime Minister, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness secured £12 million of funding for the Irish language Broadcast Fund and £8 million for a new Capital Infrastructure Fund.

In the time ahead, we will:

- » Campaign for Acht na Gaeilge in conjunction with Gaeilgeoirí and language activists
- » Pursue a rights-based approach to legislation which, for the Irish language, means Acht na Gaeilge and the repeal of the 1737 Justice Act which prevents the use of Gaeilge in the justice system
- » Campaign for maximum compliance by the British government with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
- » Support the continued development of the Irish medium sector in education
- » Seek to establish a systematic approach in all institutions and agencies of government to the handling of oral and written communications as Ghaeilge
- » Promote the use of Gaeilge in signage and place names, street names, personal names and in the names of organisations
- » Work with the Dublin government to further develop the all-Ireland approach to language revival, including strengthening and expanding Foras na Gaeilge and supporting the implementation of the twenty-year plan
- » Seek to put funding for the Irish Language Broadcasting Fund on a permanent footing and on a par with broadcast funding for Welsh and Scots Gaelic
- » Press for an Irish language radio fund with a focus on developing Irish language community radio on a wider basis.



**POST - GEILLEAGAR LÁIDIR –
CÁILÍOCHT BEATHA NÍOS FEARR
A STRONGER ECONOMY AND
A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE**

GEILLEAGAR | ECONOMY

Irish unity is not just a republican and democratic objective – it is also an economic imperative. Partition is costing Ireland hundreds of millions annually, through unnecessary public sector duplications and differentials in currency and VAT rates.

Sinn Féin's economic policy is grounded in:

- » all-Ireland development and harmonisation;
- » maximising the impact of public sector expenditure, including public procurement and eradicating wasteful practices;
- » introducing a system of proportionate and progressive taxation based on assets and income;
- » nurturing indigenous small and medium-sized, and social enterprises with creative growth incentives;
- » promoting sustainable economic growth and inward investment with an emphasis on achieving measurable equality and social impacts.

Our economic policy paper 'Financing the Future – the all-Ireland Approach' spells out a range of measures we would take to deliver on this agenda. At present the northern Assembly does not have fiscal sovereignty – the powers to vary taxation and set financial policy, eg. on the minimum wage. Sinn Féin has been leading demands for these powers to be devolved from Westminster. This would provide much greater control over economic and social development. It would further opportunities to develop an all-Ireland economy.

While Sinn Féin is very critical of the European Monetary Union's constraints on economic independence, we believe that the six counties should be integrated into the euro-zone in order to establish a single all-Ireland currency. Irish Government Ministers and Irish MEP's should pursue a campaigning role to reform the EMU rules and the European Central Bank.

Sinn Féin believes that promoting equality and targeting objective need must become part of the fabric of economic decision-making on a routine basis, in line with Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and the principles of New Targeting Social Need. This should be complemented by more participatory public budgeting and more accountable practices in public spending. Sinn Féin ensured that the Executive's last CSR Budgetary process was subjected equality screening. We are determined that this will be built upon in 2011 with a core equality impact assessment procedure central to the process.

Sinn Féin believes in the merits of establishing a state bank (possibly through the nationalisation and amalgamation of the two main banks, AIB and Bank of Ireland). We oppose the National Assets Management Agency (NAMA) because this will cost tax-payers in the 26 counties billions over coming decades.

We support the introduction of an income-linked new wealth or 'solidarity' tax on all net assets, domestic and global (including property) valued over €1 million – excluding working farmland. This is similar to the approach in other European countries and the value at which the tax is levied should be reviewed at each Budget.

Sinn Féin has spearheaded the campaign in the Assembly for credit unions to be given the right to compete with banks on a range of services. As successive chairs of the powerful Finance and Personnel Committee, Mitchel McLaughlin and Jennifer McCann have also overseen major examinations of issues like public procurement and the relocation of public sector jobs. They have gained cross-party support for a series of recommendations requiring greater equity, efficiency and equality. For example, under Sinn Féin's leadership the Committee recommended that the Executive should develop an affirmative policy for the sustainable dispersal of public sector jobs.

Sinn Féin supports the dispersal of public sector employment and offices throughout the six counties, as we believe this has the potential to be beneficial in terms of both economic and equality outcomes. Sinn Féin is opposed to Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Our primary opposition to PFI is that it involves the introduction of market forces into public sector provision, eg. in terms of privatisation. Our concerns, however, range much wider. A considerable weight of evidence confirms Sinn Féin's belief that PFI/PPPs represent poor value for the public sector. Public service provision under PFI will create problems in future years with a substantial amount of revenue being devoted to paying long-term historical agreements.

GETTING IRELAND BACK TO WORK

Job creation and retention will be key to ensuring economic growth. In our strategy document 'Getting Ireland Back to Work', we set out over 80 various proposals to retain and create jobs. In order to achieve that, all of those involved in jobs creation and training – statutory agencies, unions, employers and educationalists – must come together to plot the job creation pathway.

We are specifically calling for further education colleges and universities to be recognised as central stakeholders at the planning phase for job creation or inward investment. This will allow for a more appropriate match between employment opportunities and skills base, contributing to longer-term sustainability by maximising job uptake.

Public investment and capital build projects must be underpinned by social objectives to ensure that maximum jobs are created and targeted towards the long-term unemployed and apprenticeships. Sinn Féin ministers are already leading the way with this innovative approach. We will expand and enhance such job creation in the time ahead. Likewise, public procurement processes can be used to expand the opportunities for small and medium sized, and social, enterprises – something to which Sinn Féin is committed.

The potential of the social economy needs to be fully enhanced and realised with local community economic initiatives being supported by the public sector to generate local term financial stability and job creation. There should be specific targets in the new Programme for Government on this issue.

- » Job creation and retention will be key to ensuring economic growth. In our strategy document 'Getting Ireland Back to Work', we set out over 80 various proposals to retain and create jobs.
- » Public investment and capital build projects must be underpinned by social objectives to ensure that maximum jobs are created and targeted towards the long-term unemployed and apprenticeships. Sinn Féin ministers are already leading the way with this innovative approach
- » Public procurement processes can be used to expand the opportunities for small and medium sized, and social, enterprises – something to which Sinn Féin is committed.
- » The Executive should establish a Jobs Task Force that can coordinate a job retention and creation strategy across departments
- » The Executive needs to tackle the high costs of doing business here in order to support local industry and attract investment
- » Ensure high-level broadband coverage across the north, especially in rural areas
- » Invest NI must undergo radical change in order to provide more effective support to local small and medium sized enterprises
- » Harness the potential of the renewable energy sector to create green jobs and investment opportunities
- » State-owned banks must resume lending to small and medium sized enterprises
- » Ireland cannot afford partition. All-Ireland development and harmonisation should advance in a planned way.
- » Fiscal sovereignty including the transfer of powers from Westminster to vary taxation and set financial policy including on issues like the minimum wage.
- » Bring the Six Counties into the eurozone to create a single island currency

SLÁINTE | HEALTH

As a party committed to cherishing all the children of the nation equally, Sinn Féin believes the continued inequalities in health and in access to healthcare requires a radical republican approach underpinned by rights-based governance.

Our vision is of a seamless all-Ireland health service based on universal public provision – that is, one that provides full equality of access, and that is free at the point of delivery as of right. The all-Ireland approach makes sense in improving local access to healthcare – particularly along the border corridor, while improving efficiency.

We accept that public finances are not infinite. That is why Sinn Féin has championed the use of equality impact assessment as the basis for budgetary and resource decision-making. This process provides a way to allocate resources on the basis of tackling objective needs and inequalities. Sinn Féin strongly supports and commends the invaluable work done by thousands of workers in our healthcare system. We remain in favour of fair terms and conditions for all workers, and are determined to resist ongoing attempts to privatise healthcare.

We are also determined to follow through on former Health Minister Bairbre de Brún's ground-breaking 2002 policy 'Investing for Health'. That Sinn Féin ministerial policy – which still forms the basis of much of the good work being done in the health service today – needs to be built upon further. We need to understand why deeply ingrained inequalities in health continue to afflict this society, with the poorest people getting sick more often and dying younger. These social inequalities are not just bad for society. They also cause massive inefficiencies and avoidable pressures for the health system.

Sinn Féin will continue to put the equality agenda at the centre of the public health system. We will lobby the newly formed Public Health Agency to tackle social inequalities earlier and more effectively. We believe that the next phase of implementing 'Investing for Health' must be grounded in the achievement of measurable outcomes and improvements based on an objective assessment of current inequalities and projected needs.

Our society has still not got to grips with the problem of mental health. The Bamford Review highlighted the need for greater investment in mental health services. This is something Sinn Féin continues to support. However there are also other practical initiatives we have taken to raise awareness about mental health issues and to assist those who may be suffering. Sinn Féin has been at the forefront of demanding an all-Ireland suicide prevention strategy, and in the Assembly party president Gerry Adams – supported by other Sinn Féin representatives – has consistently highlighted this pressing social need. We have strongly supported the 'card before you leave' system to provide vulnerable patients at Accident and Emergency units with advice and contact numbers and follow up appointment details.

Suicide is also now the most common cause of maternal death. Sinn Féin is calling for a new system to provide dedicated perinatal mental health services on an all-Ireland basis, ensuring that pre-natal and post-natal patients can be cared for with their new-borns when this is required.

Cancer care remains a focus for long-term health planning. Sinn Féin has been at the forefront of the campaign to ensure equality in cancer care facilities across the island, particularly in terms of the north-west. We will continue to campaign for urgent delivery on the Health Department's existing commitment to address this need. We also believe more funding is required for child cancer care services and that the qualifying criteria for the winter fuel payment should be expanded to include cancer sufferers.

Sinn Féin recognises the invaluable contribution made to our society by approximately 185,000 carers, who not only perform a valuable service to other citizens but who also save hundreds of millions of pounds annually which the Executive might otherwise have to pay. We believe that measures are required to ensure that carers are not forced to cope with the additional burden of marginalisation, social exclusion or poverty. One option would be to ensure that carers get much better and more equitable access to the benefits system. Sinn Féin believes carer's allowance should be a standalone benefit.

Disease prevention and health promotion are becoming ever more significant priorities, especially in communities with higher levels of ill-health. Effective programmes can place a significant role in addressing poverty-related patterns of ill-health. Sinn Féin's record on health shows that previous manifesto commitments have succeeded, including the re-introduction of free prescriptions, the banning of smoking in the workplace and raising the minimum age for buying tobacco to 18.

We support prompt and widespread access to effective drug and alcohol treatment services, including community-based services. Other new problems are facing our society, not least the time-bomb of obesity. Using the Assembly health committee, Sinn Féin has pushed an inquiry into obesity. That report and its recommendations have recently been published. We will now work to ensure that they are implemented as fully as possible.

FORBAIRT SÓISIALTA | SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sinn Féin has placed social justice at the heart of our social development demands. Working with and for local communities is the *raison d'être* of Sinn Féin's public service approach to political activism.

Sinn Féin believes the right to shelter in affordable quality accommodation is a basic inalienable right. We do not believe the Department of Social Development (DSD) and Housing Executive are fully discharging their obligations to promote equality of opportunity and objectively address social needs. Their recent decision to cease 'ring-fencing' of the Social Housing Development Programme will have a negative impact on the number of houses available to service pressing social need in places like north Belfast and Derry. This must be urgently reversed. A develop-driven agenda is not acceptable. Social housing must be provided on the basis of objective need.

Sinn Féin believes that an enforceable right to housing should be enshrined in domestic law across the island, as well as in a legally enforceable Bill of Rights for the six counties. In order to service this, the Housing Executive must be champions of all aspects of housing, with the promotion of equality at the centre of all its policies.

Sinn Féin regards equality as the foundation stone on which sustainable mixed communities can eventually be established in the north. We need to tackle sectarianism within our communities, particularly its divisive consequences. Promoting equality must be addressed as a legal and political priority – not least given the legacy of discrimination and inequality in housing. This includes dealing with the diverse needs of sectors such as Travellers, people with disabilities, older people, people with dependents, and the disproportionately high levels of Catholic housing need in places like north Belfast.

Tenants must be protected from exploitation by unscrupulous landlords who are paid over £90 million annually without adequate regulation, and home buyers must be free from exploitation by developers and banks. Sinn Féin supports the introduction of a mandatory registration of landlords, which must involve an effective system for enforcing tenant rights including a rent control regime. This is something we have long campaigned for. We are also campaigning for the introduction of a mortgage relief scheme to assist those in danger of losing their homes as a consequence of the current economic crisis.

Sinn Féin has been to the fore in demanding changes to the Housing Selection Scheme, which discriminates against people in areas of high demand. We have been spearheading demands for more effective measures, and where appropriate legislation, to deal with the scourge of anti-social activity. In particular these reforms must include early intervention to prevent escalation and challenge those parents who refuse to deal responsibly with children who are engaging in vandalism and destruction of the community.

The community, voluntary and youth services sectors play a vital role in providing opportunities, advice and support, particularly among dispossessed and marginalised communities. We believe that these sectors need to be bolstered with long-term funding which provides sustainable support, particularly given the enhanced and invaluable role they play in the delivery of programmes and services. Funding programmes which are centrally focused on tackling social exclusion and inequality at their core should be sustained. The relationship between this sector with central government and other funding bodies should be on the basis of an equal status and overseen by compacts, strategic frameworks and memoranda of understanding which have been widely consulted on. Sinn Féin will work to ensure a new funding and governance framework for the community, voluntary and youth sectors which meets these objectives.

Personal debt and lack of adequate access to benefits is a significant burden on the most disadvantaged sectors of our society. We believe the winter fuel payment should be expanded to include cancer sufferers. We also believe that measures are required to ensure that carers are not forced to cope with the additional burden of marginalisation, social exclusion or poverty. In that regard, Sinn Féin believes carer's allowance should be a standalone benefit.

CULTÚR EALAÍON AGUS FÓILLÍOCHTA

CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Sinn Féin believes that investment in culture, arts and leisure must be recognized as just that – an investment, not a burden. All citizens have the right to access to the arts. Arts, culture and leisure are also net contributors to the all-island economy, and the creative and sporting industries are important employers for many people.

Sinn Féin wants greater investment in community arts. We would also encourage professional artists who are funded by either of the two Arts Councils – north and south – to do more educational and outreach work in schools and in the community. We want to widen access to the arts whilst encouraging excellence to flourish.

We believe an all-Ireland arts and culture strategy is required, with obvious merit in the creation of one overall Arts Council for the island. This is appropriate in terms of both longer-term planning and ensuring the sustainability of available resources.

The promotion of culture, arts and leisure in the six counties does not fully reflect the experience of all citizens. For too long, the state-sponsored expression of culture and arts has been politically partisan and socially elitist. Yet throughout the course of the recent conflict some of the greatest examples of cultural expression sprouted from the hearts of dispossessed local communities, particularly theatre, and the best works of art were to be found in protest images and political murals on the gable end walls of our streets.

Sinn Féin believes that culture and arts must develop organically, and must reflect the new equality-based dispensation promised by the Good Friday Agreement.

That means the GAA being properly recognised by the state as the largest sporting organisation on the island. It means Irish culture being formally recognised in every facet of the state, both practically and symbolically. And it means promoting previously marginalized practitioners and examples of literary, visual and performing arts which ensure a fuller representation of society in the north.

Sinn Féin champions each of these objectives. We have systematically sought to give ownership of previously hostile arenas like Stormont over to Gaels and Gaeilgoiri by organizing regular events, meetings and gatherings. We have actively introduced Irish cultural symbols and language into the civic and political institutions in which we are involved. In some cases we have managed to achieve either equality or neutrality in relation to cultural symbolism. Sinn Féin has also campaigned for more culturally representative displays in publicly funded museums and galleries. We will continue to do so.

The new political dispensation also means that the campaign to interfere with the rights of soccer players from the six counties who opt for the Ireland international squad must end for good. Sinn Féin strongly supports the right of everyone born in the six counties to assert their Irish citizenship, and we also support the creation of a single all-Ireland soccer team.

Community arts must not be starved of funding in favour of perceived 'status quo' culture. But neither are these sectors mutually exclusive. We believe that localized festivals instill pride within the local community and that those festival organizations need to be supported financially. We will work with community arts and tourism initiatives across the north to help them realize the potential of job creation within this sector.

Likewise, cultural tourism – using our rich community cultures, particularly associated with the political conflict – must be properly resourced. Community arts and cultural tourism have the potential to become generators of wealth within our society. This means that the Arts Councils and the Tourist Board must forge a greater partnership – in an all-Ireland context - in developing a fully-fledged cross-Departmental policy to prioritise resources towards these sectors.

Sinn Féin is committed to ensuring that culture, arts and leisure funding supports all sectors on the basis of promoting equality, particularly the marginalized – women, people with disabilities, Travellers, new communities and LGBT people.

Equality must also be the watchword in terms of the regional promotion of culture and arts. Sinn Féin does not accept that funding from tourism signature projects promoting major cultural attractions in the west - such as the Derry Walls - should be jeopardized or cut in favour of preserving funding for other developmental projects in the east, like the Titanic project in Belfast. We believe there is a compelling case for a properly resourced tourism signature project in each of the six counties. We will continue to work with Tourism Ireland to promote the island as an outstanding place to visit.

Sinn Féin believes that arts and culture have a significant role to play in community regeneration initiatives, economic growth and general social well-being. Diversionary arts programming for children and adults at risk can also contribute to community safety and a better future for these individuals by supporting constructive creative expression. Art therapy programmes can enhance mental health provision and addiction services. That is why money for the arts and culture is an investment rather than a burden. We will continue to campaign for increased resources on that basis.

TIMPEALLAUGHT | ENVIRONMENT

The increasing recognition that globalisation impacts upon our environment demands that we understand the benefit of mass activism as well as individual action.

In Ireland that means adopting an all-island approach and recognising that damage to the environment anywhere is bad for all of us. Environmental issues are not segregated by the artificial border between Donegal and Derry, or Dundalk and Newry. An all-island approach to protect and enhance the environment is the only way forward. That is why the Cavan/Tyrone electricity interconnector should be accommodated as an underground cable – not by overhead power lines, which could endanger the environment and public safety. Sinn Féin believes that public concerns about this proposal warrant a Public Consultation.

Sinn Féin believes that harmful emissions must be reduced by at least 30% from their 1990 level by the year 2020 and by 80% or greater by 2050. That requires rates of reduction of at least 3% per annum. We also believe that an increased focus needs to be placed on zero or low carbon, good quality, well-insulated, energy efficient, affordable housing. Similarly high standards should apply to all new build, public buildings and other structures. Not only will this approach help reduce our emissions, it will help decrease our levels of fuel poverty and create jobs in construction and conversion. Sinn Féin also believes that low, or even zero, carbon zones should be created, starting with areas where there is a concentration of fuel poverty.

Local government reform and the review of public administration being implemented by the Department of the Environment remains an area of uncertainty for many in the sector. Sinn Féin wants the reform programme to be implemented in full. We believe that the reduction of councils from 26 to 11 can be hugely beneficial for society in the six counties. However it is absolutely essential that the reforms are grounded in a specific and robust framework which guarantees equality, economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in the discharge of all functions – whether political, cultural or symbolic on the one hand, or bureaucratic, managerial or developmental on the other. Sinn Féin believes that directly elected public representatives must make up the majority on all public bodies and boards – including, but not exclusively, those established under RPA.

Sinn Féin has supported the reform of planning being developed by the Executive, and placed a special emphasis on ensuring visible adherence to the Section 75 equality duty during the process. Sinn Féin still retains reservations about the lack of third-party appeals in the new proposals, and we will continue to press for a mechanism or provision of an independent challenge to ensure public confidence in the new planning process. With the proposed transference of substantial planning powers to local authorities, Sinn Féin will be at the vanguard of ensuring the promotion of equality and sustainability in all council planning proposals, alongside the expansion of the all-Ireland planning agenda in border authorities.

Sinn Féin promotes the concept of waste reduction, re-usage and recycling as a method of controlling waste production. Sinn Féin opposes the current Environment Minister's efforts to introduce a single waste authority in the six counties, on a range of grounds. Not least of our concerns would be practical interference with the three existing local government waste management groups in the six counties, and the fact that they are already well-advanced in developing unique solutions to waste within their areas. We will also oppose any attempt to centralise waste management to support a privatisation agenda. We support mechanical-biological waste treatment, and anaerobic digestion with combined heat-and-power as our preferred waste-to-energy solution where these involve production of electricity and do not involve incineration or other thermal waste treatment.

We believe that waste treatment must be carried out in a way that benefits the environment and prevents climate change. We do not believe incineration is a viable option in this regard. We support the development of an all-Ireland Zero Waste Strategy and the creation of an independent all-Ireland Environmental Protection Agency. We reject the concept of nuclear energy because we do not believe that it is a safe carbon-free source.

Sinn Féin is promoting the benefits of a new plastic bag levy in the six counties and we will continue to push this in the Assembly.

Sinn Féin strongly supports the development and use of renewable energy. It has substantial potential to mitigate climate change, advance all-Ireland development, move Ireland towards energy independence, reduce energy costs to individual and business consumers, create local jobs and support local/social enterprises, as well as increase public revenue through publicly-owned enterprise. We believe that Ireland is well-placed to be at the centre of a new, green economy, due to our potential abundance of wind and wave energy. We also support the use of biomass and solar energies. In the time ahead, the Executive should focus on a reduction in energy consumption, the development of renewables and the decentralisation of energy infrastructure.

Sinn Féin has a holistic approach to sustainable development. We believe that not enough recognition is given to the interdependence of the economic, environmental and social pillars. We are working to ensure a greater integration of these pillars in public policy development and delivery through the new Sustainable Development Strategy.



UILE-ÉIREANN – TÓGÁLAITHE NÁISIÚN ALL-IRELAND – BUILDING FOR UNITY

UILE-ÉIREANN – TÓGÁLAITHE NÁISIÚN

ALL-IRELAND – BUILDING FOR UNITY

Sinn Féin is the only all-Ireland political party with elected representatives in every forum across the island. We are the only party with the strategy and policies to achieve Irish unity and independence.

In the all-Ireland Ministerial Council, Leinster House, the European Parliament, the Executive, the Assembly and at local council level, Sinn Fein is increasingly delivering on a progressive all-Ireland approach to future development.

Irish unity makes sense – politically, socially, culturally and economically. Significantly, the Good Friday Agreement recognises the principle of self-determination, including the provision for a feasible constitutional route to a United Ireland. For the first time ever, the British government is signed up to such a commitment, should a majority in Ireland wish it. Together with the clear economic, demographic, social and political trends, there is a strong argument that Irish unity is a realistic and feasible objective within a meaningful time scale.

In 2008 Sinn Féin launched a renewed international campaign to promote Irish unity. This included major conferences in San Francisco, New York, Toronto and London, with support from across the political and public spectrum.

- » To achieve Irish unity we have set ourselves three interlinked challenges.
- » The British government must amend its policy from upholding the union to becoming persuaders for Irish unity.
- » The Irish government must significantly increase its practical planning for Irish unity.
- » There needs to be meaningful engagement with unionists about the type of united Ireland they want to live in.

Unionists will form 20 per cent of the new Ireland with all of the additional rights and safeguards of the Good Friday Agreement, rather than remaining two per cent of a population ruled by Westminster.

Sinn Féin is also taking practical steps in every elected forum to promote increased all-Ireland integration. Sinn Féin Ministers have established new All-Ireland and Equality Directorates in three government departments. In the all-Ireland Ministerial Council we are systematically building the opportunities for expansion. Even the DUP is now fully embedded in the all-Ireland Ministerial Council. And the benefits of the all-Ireland bodies – like Intertrade Ireland – are becoming ever more obvious in the current economic climate.

Practical examples of the all-Ireland agenda in action include Conor Murphy's A5 Ballygawley to Derry dual carriageway project being joint-supported financially by the Irish government; Caitríona Ruane's continuing support for the Middletown Autism Centre being joint-resourced by the Irish government; Michelle Gildernew's 'Fortress Ireland' approach to stopping foot and mouth disease, and bluetongue; and the ongoing work by Gerry Adams with Irish Ministers Eamon O'Cuiv and Micheal Martin to provide greater funding for Irish language initiatives.

In the time ahead, Sinn Féin will intensify our approach to promoting Irish unity internationally and at home, and continue to broaden and expand all-Ireland co-ordination and integration.

At the Hillsborough talks, Sinn Féin secured a commitment from both governments and the DUP that outstanding elements of the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements would be progressed – including the establishment of the All-Ireland Parliamentary and Consultative Civic Fora and the completion of the Review of the All-Ireland Implementation bodies with particular consideration of case for additional bodies.

A core requirement for Sinn Féin will continue to be the embedding of the all-Ireland political architecture, and the progressive expansion of the all-island bodies, building on the Good Friday Agreement.

We aim to:

- » Amend British Government policy from upholding the union to becoming persuaders for Irish unity
- » Continue to identify steps and measures to promote and assist a successful transition to a united Ireland
- » Secure a referendum on Irish unity to be held simultaneously, North and South
- » Press Irish government to significantly increase its practical planning for Irish unity

- » Engage with unionists about the type of united Ireland they want to live in
- » Pursue Six County representation in the Oireachtas
- » Campaign internationally to promote Irish unity
- » Practical steps in every elected forum to promote increased all-Ireland integration
- » Systematically build the opportunities for expansion in the all-Ireland Ministerial Council
- » Broaden and expand all-Ireland co-ordination and integration in economic development, service provision and planning
- » Establishment of the All-Ireland Parliamentary and Consultative Civic Fora and completion of the Review of the All-Ireland Implementation bodies with particular consideration of case for additional bodies