

Dublin

# Manifesto 2004

Local Elections



GREEN  
PARTY  
Comhaontas Glas



A red silhouette of a castle or city wall with three towers, positioned behind the word 'Dublin'.

Dublin

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# Imagine. Dublin, the greenest European Capital!

A National Park in the Dublin Mountains.

A coastal walkway and cycleway from Bray to Balbriggan.

College Green as a car-free public piazza.

Linear parks along the Liffey, Dodder and Tolka valleys.

Sustainable communities rather than endless sprawl.

Blue Flag status for every beach on Dublin Bay.

Broadband connection available to every household and business.

Community involvement in planning decisions.

Dublin - a 'Zero Waste' city.

A network of modern community medical centres.

All planning decisions childproofed.

Connect the two existing Luas lines and build three new lines.

20mph speed limits in residential areas.

A new Metropolitan Library of international standing.

Directly elected Mayors for each local authority.



# The Green Party vision for Dublin

Dublin should be the most enjoyable, friendly and 'greenest' capital in Europe. Given proper leadership, we believe this city has the potential to transform itself into a model of sustainable urban living by the year 2020. Our capital should be a cosmopolitan centre of European culture, internationally recognised for its high quality public services and for well-designed, compact, new urban quarters, welcoming to immigrants and confident in its own identity.

## Committed to Delivering on

- 1** A dynamic city economy that delivers on sustainable jobs [page 3](#)
- 2** Well- planned communities with affordable, high quality housing [page 3](#)
- 3** A clean and beautiful city [page 4](#)
- 4** A city with excellent public services for all [page 6](#)
- 5** A child-friendly city with a rich cultural life [page 7](#)
- 6** A city of thriving communities with civic pride and strong local democracy [page 7](#)

Unfortunately poor local government and corrupt planning have meant that Dublin is increasingly associated with urban sprawl and traffic congestion, social division and crime, dirty streets, the gradual disappearance of green space and the deterioration of our historical buildings. To achieve our vision we need a new politics in Local Government

This new politics would start by protecting and enhancing the city's remarkable natural resources by creating a National Park in the Dublin Mountains, linear parks along the Liffey, Dodder and Tolka valleys and a plan to make the best use of our spectacular seafront and bay. Dublin must also be a child friendly city, so that children have places to play and are able to explore their own natural environment. We should set the international standard for waste reduction and recycling and we want first class public transport and telecommunications systems to allow a green economy to prosper.

The Green Party is part of a broader European movement and we know from our colleagues how other European cities work. We want to put an end to the unsustainable sprawl of the city into the rest of Leinster and to ensure that housing is concentrated back towards existing centres, with well-planned integrated communities in areas like the Docklands, the North Fringe and around Heuston station. We also want to reinvigorate our traditional suburbs so that Dublin develops as a network of local neighbourhood centres, each with its own particular identity and vibrant street and community life.

Central government and developers have been calling the shots in Local Government for too long. We want to return real power to our local councils after June the 11th by agreeing a series of local Manifestos setting out how each council will start to achieve this new Green vision for Dublin. We need Green Councillors elected in every ward so we can revisit the concept of a Civic Alliance as set up in Dublin City Council in 1991, which involved a number of political parties agreeing a progressive programme of local government for the city. Our Green Party candidates for Dublin, commit themselves to bringing this about. We believe that the people of Dublin, and its future generations, deserve no less.



# On Dublin's local authorities, Green Party councillors commit to delivering on:

## (1) A dynamic city economy that delivers on sustainable jobs.

Employment in Dublin is mainly in service industries, creative industries, tourism, administration and new high-tech companies all of which should thrive in a green economy. To continue to attract these high value jobs we will need a state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure. These types of employment will also benefit from a Green policy of lowering labour taxes in return for higher taxes on pollution and the use of natural resources. The carbon taxes promoted by the Green Party, and supported by respected bodies such as the ESRI, are very employment -friendly and would result in a significant reduction in the levels of employer's PRSI contributions.

- The Government is building fibre optic networks in 19 other towns and cities in Ireland but we also need such co-ordinated telecommunications infrastructure for the Capital. Our aim should be to have a five megabyte broadband connection available to every household and business in the city by 2006.
- We would fast-track the plans for wind turbines on the Kish bank to help power the city. We also want to start researching how we might exploit the strong tidal flows in the Irish sea as well as developing other proven energy technologies such as combined heat and power systems .
- Fully exploit the job-creation potential from energy efficiency initiatives and cost savings through the introduction of smart domestic switching technology which reduces electricity demand during peak periods.

- Create a dynamic waste economy in Dublin City, involving materials collection, sorting, repair, re-use, recycling and composting activities.
- Ensure that the local authorities in Dublin adopt green procurement policies.
- Encourage localised food production and new local markets.
- Develop Dublin as an 'eco-tourism' destination , with new walking and cycling trails, and the highest environmental standards for tourism providers.
- Support Dublin as a centre for film- making and the other creative arts.

## (2) Well- planned communities with affordable, high quality, housing.

The Green Party believes that affordable housing is a fundamental human right that should be enshrined in the Constitution. For many people in Dublin, housing has become overpriced and unaffordable and this trend has been exacerbated by practices such as land speculation and hoarding. The continued funding of political parties by development interests means there is little incentive to change this situation. We are committed to implementing the recent recommendations of the all party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution on the issue of private property. We will empower local authorities to recapture some of the value that is added to rezoned land and to use this funding for social and affordable housing. We want to see the existing housing stock in the city used far more efficiently rather than letting the suburbs stagnate due to the lack of flexibility in our housing market. We also want to make environmental design an integral part of all new housing.



To tackle the **sprawl of Dublin** the Green Party will:

- Ensure that well-planned, high density, mixed- use developments proceed in areas like the south and north docks, the North Fringe and around Heuston Station.
- We will allow greater community involvement in major planning decisions.
- We believe that there is already sufficient zoned land in Fingal, Dun Laoghaire and South Dublin for housing . By introducing an annual zoning levy on serviced zoned land which remains undeveloped. we would bring real planning power back to the councils and put an end to 'land hoarding'.
- Stop the spread of one-off houses into the Dublin Mountains.
- Make greater use of the Derelict Sites Act to make vacant land and under-used buildings available for communities.

To provide **more affordable housing** for Dublin the Green Party will:

- Empower local authorities to compulsorily purchase land, at existing use value plus 25%.
- Increase the stock of social housing until the local authority waiting lists in Dublin are eliminated.
- Campaign for homeless action plans to be placed on a statutory basis to tackle the issues of homelessness and travellers' accommodation in Dublin.
- Push for the full implementation of landlord registration, regular monitoring of rented accommodation and prosecutions of persistent health and safety violations.
- Work towards the replacement of the rent allowance payment with tenure- neutral transferable housing benefit.

To ensure **more efficient use of existing housing** the Green Party will:

- Push for a significant reduction in the levels of stamp duty for those who wish to 'trade down'.
- Encourage the splitting of older housing stock

into two to provide for inter-generational housing provision.

- Carry out a survey of empty properties in each local authority area with a view to ensuring their efficient use.
- Provide sufficient resources for the effective maintenance and repair of local authority housing and prioritise action for estates in disrepair.

To promote **better environmental design in all housing**, the Green Party will:

- Promote technologies such as solar power or heat pumps in new house-building through changes to the Building Regulations and through financial incentives.
- Introduce an energy rating standard for new homes.
- Provide insulation and energy conversion grants for the unwaged, those on low incomes and older people to tackle fuel poverty.

### (3) A clean and beautiful city.

Dublin's location, its open mountains and sweeping bay, should makes us the envy of other capital cities in Europe. Key to our vision is the protection of these advantages and their development for the benefit of all our citizens. We also want to restore our most important civic spaces by redesigning them around people rather than the motorcar. Dealing with our waste is the biggest environmental challenge we face. A zero waste strategy to reduce, reuse and recycle our waste is the intelligent way to go.

To ensure the **best use of Dublin Bay** the Green Party will:

- Push for a long-term study to be carried out on the development of Dublin Bay.
- Will oppose any further infill of the Bay and support the relocation of some of the port activities to allow for new housing developments.



- Develop a coastal walkway and cycleway from Bray to Balbriggan.
- Ensure that every beach on the Bay achieves Blue Flag status and that we also protect our unique bird-life habitats.
- Reopen all the traditional sea baths along the bay as public amenities.
- Restrict trawler fishing in the bay to create a special leisure angling zone.
- Provide daily information on water quality and the level and sources of any discharges into the bay.

To ensure the best use of our **river valleys and waterways** we will

- Create a park and wildlife corridor along the Liffey valley.
- Stop any further zoning along the Dodder valley and create a joined-up network of public parks from Tallaght to Ringsend.
- Develop the amenity potential of the Royal and Grand Canals and their towpaths.

To ensure the best use of **our hills and mountains** the Green Party will

- Establish a National Park in the Dublin Mountains to make best use of the existing state forests and other public open spaces.
- Set up a new Dublin Uplands Council made up of representatives from local authorities, landowners, and sports, recreational and wildlife groups to co-ordinate the management and development of the hills.
- Establish public rights of way, new public transport services and cycle routes to create access to this National Park.

To create an **attractive urban environment** for Dublin, the Green Party will:

- Take private cars and trucks out of some of our most important civic spaces such as the city quays, Parnell Square and College Green. And reinvent

them as attractive riverfronts, city squares and urban spaces where people can enjoy their time working, living and relaxing.

We will create pedestrian priority areas with tree-lined boulevards from Heuston Station along the Quays to the Docklands and from Parnell Square down O'Connell Street via College Green and Grafton Street to St. Stephens' Green.

We shall seek an Urban Plan for this area that puts pedestrians and cyclists first, increases tree planting and public sculpture, promotes well-designed street lighting, facilitates public transport, - is fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

This will provide a vibrant civic and retail environment and we think that College Green would then be seen as one of the best public piazzas in all of Europe.

- Promote city farms such as the Airfield trust and other city farms as well as introducing a citywide system of public allotments.
- Offer short-term leases on small new café premises within our parks.
- Use development plans to protect and enhance existing open spaces, amenity areas, community gardens and key institutional lands.
- Protect Dublin's wildlife corridors and habitats, particularly when large infrastructural projects are being carried out. And support more tree planting in urban areas.
- Introduce much higher financial penalties for damage to Protected Structures and for breaches of the building regulations.

To **look after our waste** the Green Party will :

- Make sure every home, apartment and office complex in Dublin has segregated waste collection for dry and wet waste.
- Fast-track local, accessible, bring-banks, recycling centres, and closed vessel central composting systems.
- Oppose the development of an incinerator at Ringsend.
- Employ more environmental officers to increase



recycling rates for commercial waste and move Dublin towards the goal of becoming a 'Zero Waste' city.

- Draw up Litter Action Plans for each neighbourhood and involve local businesses, schools and community groups in their implementation.
- Introduce a name and shame policy for those who litter, and increase the number of bins for dog dirt.

## (4) A city with excellent public services for all.

The Green Party's vision of Dublin is of a city that provides all of its inhabitants with high-quality public services in the best European tradition. At present, Government policy supports a level of state expenditure on road-building that is four times the equivalent expenditure on public transport. We want to reverse that trend and to ensure significant investment in a 21st century public transport system that is on a par with other European cities such as Paris, Madrid, Helsinki or Vienna

We favour a decentralised model of healthcare with a strong emphasis on primary care services. We want the current crisis in our health services tackled through investment in a network of modern, high-quality, well-planned, 24 hour, drop-in community medical centres which will keep people out of the casualty units of the main hospitals.

We want to see local authorities keeping a strong involvement in the delivery of health services in their areas. We support leaner and restructured health boards with formal representation for patient/consumer groups, answerable to the newly proposed regional health authorities.

The Green Party is committed to making comprehensive and inclusive education available to all. We believe our education system must do more for children with special needs to ensure that they can also enjoy opportunities to access integrated school environments. We are supportive of diversity in educational provision and a variety of teaching models designed to meet a range of community and parental preferences. We want to see new schools being provided where communities are

growing and new school transport bus services to help cut down on traffic congestion.

To provide an **excellent integrated public transport system** the Green Party will:

- Introduce an integrated Transport and Land Use Authority for the Greater Dublin Area.
- Support the building of a Metro from Bray to Swords.
- Build a rail inter-connector between Spencer Dock and Heuston Station to link our national rail system so trains can run non-stop from Belfast to Cork or from Sligo to Wexford.
- Connect the two existing Luas lines and then extend the network to Lucan, Rathfarnham and Coolock.
- Introduce new Quality Bus Corridors on orbital routes to link city neighbourhoods.
- Introduce a fully integrated ticketing system for all public transport.
- Insist that all taxis be fully wheelchair accessible within five years.
- Introduce a car pooling system allowing people access to private cars when they need them.

To provide **local, community-based, health services** the Green Party will:

- Promote the development of 24 hour community health centres staffed by multi-disciplinary teams to take the pressure off the large hospitals in Dublin.
- Give primary care teams better access to hospital services.
- Oppose the closing of the A&E Departments of St Colmcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown and St Michael's Hospital, Dunlaoghaire.
- Provide emergency funds to the Eastern Regional Health Authority to contract beds in private nursing homes and increase the availability of 'in-home' care for elderly people to free-up bed spaces in acute hospitals.



To provide **excellent and inclusive educational services** the Green Party will:

- Promote an 'Integrated Public Partnership' approach to the building of new schools in areas where the community is growing, involving local authorities, school boards and the Department of Education.
- Integrate school transport into an overall strategy for urban transport provision.

## (5) A child-friendly city with a rich cultural life.

We believe that it is vital for society to get the early years right and to create an environment which helps parents to raise their children. Our car based transport system makes it difficult for children to experience the natural environment and is also contributing to the rise in obesity in our society. We want to ensure that children can once again play in their own local areas without fear of being run down. To make the necessary changes we believe all planning decisions should be child-proofed so that the needs and care of children become an integral part of all planning decisions. We want to ensure the provision of a range of public parks, children's playgrounds and sports and leisure facilities in order to encourage active healthier lifestyles for families and their children.

In order to create a **healthier urban environment for children** the Green Party will:

- Ensure that local authorities draw up a registry of green open spaces in their areas and use revenue from the collection of Development Levies to develop some of these areas as children's playgrounds, public parks or wildlife trails.
- Encourage greater public access to private outdoor sports areas, such as school playing fields.
- Use some of the Development Levy revenue collected by local authorities to fund sports and recreational facilities in local neighbourhoods such as skateboard parks, basketball courts, running tracks and football pitches.

- Draw up a local register of childminders and work through the planning system to ensure the increased provision of community childcare facilities and community crèches with flexible drop-in arrangements.

To ensure a **safer urban environment for children** the Green Party will:

- Allow for 20mph speed limits in residential areas to help ensure the safety of children playing on the streets.
- Implement a 'Safe Routes to School' system for each primary and secondary school in Dublin.

To promote **child and family-friendly cultural activities** the Green Party will :

- Re-institute the Dublin City Carnival.
- Fund more Community Arts programmes and other cultural activities for young children.
- Promote the greater availability of the Musical Instrument Loan Scheme through local authorities.
- Continue to develop the children's sections of public libraries.
- Build a new Metropolitan Library of international standing which would promote Dublin as the 'city that reads'.

## (6) A city of thriving communities with civic pride and strong local democracy.

The Green Party believes that a strong sense of civic pride is essential to the creation of a healthy and sustainable city in which all of its citizens have a stake. The role of local government is key to fostering the kind of city culture where residents, businesses and other groups work closely with the local authority to develop and maintain a quality living environment for all. We appreciate the growing public frustration at the limits of official public consultation processes, particularly in relation to planning



issues. The Green Party believes it is vital that meaningful opportunities are made available for public input into the planning process and that maximum transparency is ensured. The Green Party favours local authorities having greater control in deciding how their revenues are raised and spent rather than the current system of excessive central government control.

The safety of our streets and our neighbourhoods also contributes to a healthy civic culture. We want to see crime prevention achieved through investment in good design and management of public spaces and effective community policing in partnership with local communities. We believe that serious drug problems are better tackled using a social and medical rather than a criminal approach.

To encourage **public involvement in local government decision-making** the Green Party will:

- Introduce directly-elected Mayors on each local authority working in a cabinet made up of the City or County manager, the director of services and the six chairpersons of the strategic policy committees (who would be in full time paid positions with their own back-up office and research facilities.)
- Push for council meetings to be brought out to community venues, and to be held at times that facilitate maximum public participation.
- Each Council local area committee to meet in a local town hall or venue.
- Make the minutes of council meetings, planning documents and other relevant information easily accessible by the public on each council's website.
- Support the piloting of local referenda, online polling and other innovative participatory mechanisms.
- Encourage the piloting of a participatory budgeting processes.
- Call for an independent evaluation of the Agenda 21 initiatives being run by each of the Dublin local authorities
- Ensure the provisions of the Barcelona Declaration which ensures that disability access rights are fully implemented.

- Ensure all of the local authorities' policies and practices are equality and child proofed.

To make Dublin a **safer city** the Green Party will:

- Ensure that public spaces are designed and managed properly and upgrade all street lighting.
- Introduce more community policing and more Guards on bikes.
- Promote frequent consultation between Gardai and local community liaison committees.
- Reform the Garda Complaints procedure.
- Provide more resources to the Juvenile Liaison Scheme, the Community Garda programme and the probation service.
- Support the establishment of an independent body to compile and monitor crime statistics.

To **tackle the drug problem** in Dublin the Green Party will:

- Support comprehensive treatment services at local level for drug users, in partnership with communities.
- Provide drug education programmes in schools..
- Reverse the current phasing out of Community Employment Schemes and support disadvantaged communities with education, training and employment opportunities.
- Increase recreation and sports facilities for young people, particularly in disadvantaged areas.
- Provide greater resources for local Drugs Task Forces.

## Conclusion

Our politicians have allowed our system of local government to become increasingly irrelevant.

The people of Dublin are now aware of the planning corruption which some officials and councillors were willing to benefit from.

Furthermore, there has been an abdication of political responsibility as special arrangements between Labour and Fianna Fail in the City Council, and Fine Gael and Fianna Fail in other councils have divided the spoils of elected office without sharing any vision as to how Dublin should be developed.

The elections on the 11th of June allows the electorate a vital chance to change this system by voting for a party with a real vision as to how our city can work.

Dublin

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