

Sinn Féin

ÁTHA CLIATH

DUBLIN LOCAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2004



LOCAL POWER – a democratic right

A message from Gerry Adams

Uachtarán Shinn Féin

A chara,

The Local Elections of 2004 are taking place at an important time in Irish politics.

The peace process is in grave difficulty as the Good Friday Agreement, endorsed by the people in a referendum just a year before the last Local Elections, remains unimplemented. Sinn Féin has not been distracted by the pre-election efforts of our political opponents to falsely place all the responsibility for the current difficulties on our shoulders. Instead we have continued with the hard work of rebuilding the peace process, representing our electorate and presenting our political programme to the people throughout the 32 Counties.

With this Dublin manifesto we present another part of that programme. We base it upon the principle that local power is a democratic right. As a party committed to building an Ireland of Equals we want to see local democracy strengthened and brought closer to the people.

Sinn Féin is working for a capital that, like other modern European cities, is a clean, safe, affordable place to live in. Our candidates have a proven track record in delivering for communities in this city, and are determined to bring about an end to the inequalities they suffer. Many of these communities have been abandoned by other parties except, of course, around election time.

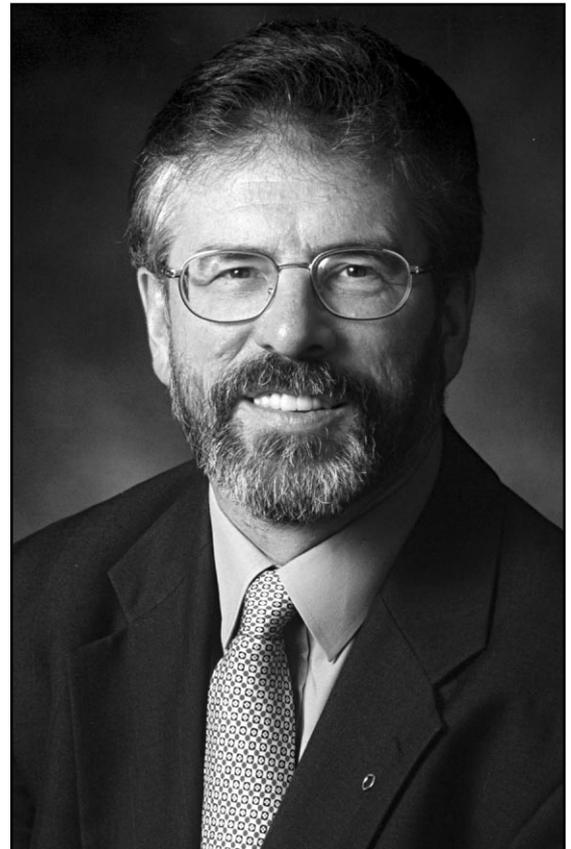
Sinn Féin councillors will be part of our All-Ireland team of elected representatives who are building a new Ireland. We are working to ensure that the corruption, neglect and mismanagement of the past is replaced by energetic campaigners fighting for quality public services including empowered local democracy, accessible healthcare, housing as a right, improved transport, affordable childcare and education as the guarantee of equal opportunities for all.

On June 11th, I urge you to support our vision of a better Dublin, to help us build, in the city's local authorities and in the European Parliament, a fair city for all.

Is mise

Gerry Adams

Uachtarán Shinn Féin.



Delivering for Dublin

Sinn Féin's current elected representatives already make up a first class team for Dublin. Seán Crowe TD and Aengus O Snodaigh TD represent the party in Leinster House. Cllrs Christy Burke, Larry O'Toole, Dessie Ellis and Nicky Kehoe make up the voice of Irish republicanism in Dublin City Council. Cllrs Mark Daly and Cathal King represent the party on South Dublin County Council.

On June 11th, the people of Dublin have an opportunity to enhance this team's effectiveness by electing more of the 30 candidates we are running across Dublin for the four local authorities and electing Mary Lou McDonald as Sinn Féin's first ever MEP.

Our candidates, elected represen-

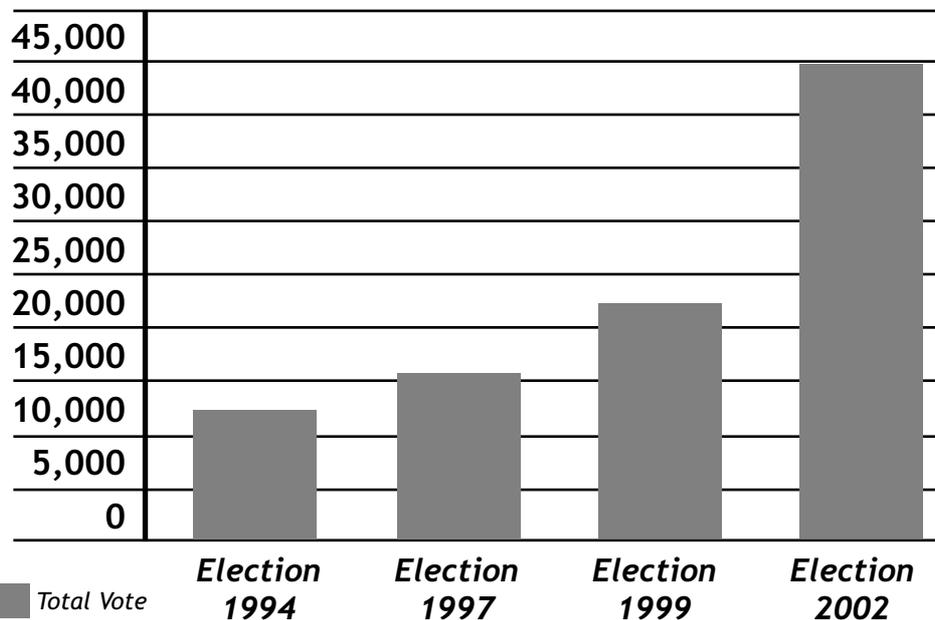
tatives and local activists make up our team for Dublin. Our TDs in Leinster House work in co-ordination with our local representatives, elected and unelected, to ensure that every Sinn Féin representative has the power to hold Government Ministers to account for their actions in his or her community.

As an MEP, Mary Lou McDonald will articulate the needs of the people of Dublin in the European Parliament, working in conjunction with our growing team at local and national level.

Our party's National Elected Representatives Forum is unique in Irish politics, bringing elected representatives from all over the island of Ireland together to co-ordinate our work on behalf of the Irish people.

Sinn Féin - Delivering for Dublin, Delivering for Ireland.

The Rise of Sinn Féin in Dublin



Housing - A Right for All

There are over 4,000 homeless people in Dublin, an increase of 274% since the introduction of the Housing Act of 1988. The average price of a new home in Dublin is now well over €300,000 and second hand houses are at €373,000. The current housing crisis is one of the major challenges facing Dublin today. Consecutive governments, and indeed administrations in City hall, have failed to show the political will necessary to provide solutions to this problem.

Since coming to power this Government has done nothing to alleviate the problem. One of Charlie McCreevy's first decisions was to eliminate the first-time buyers grant making it even more difficult, impossible for some families, to buy a home.

Minister Martin Cullen amended Section V of the Planning and Development Act, allowing developers to avoid building social housing. It has now reached the stage where some developers are advertising their properties as being free of social housing.

According to the latest report by Dr Peter Bacon more than 20,000 new homes will be needed in Dublin City Centre over the next nine years if population trends continue.

Sinn Féin, in trying to address the

crisis, introduced a bill in Leinster House to enshrine the right to housing in the Constitution, receiving the support of all Opposition parties but defeated by a Government committed to opposing a rights based society. Our councillors will continue to support the campaign, which has the backing of a wide range of housing and homelessness groups.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- No council house to remain boarded up for more than 2 months
- The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) at current use value, at a maximum, to enable local authorities to secure land for housing
- No sale of Council land to speculators or private developers. Surplus state and church land to be transferred to Councils to allow the building of local authority homes.
- The sale of a local authority home to an existing tenant cannot proceed without being replaced by at least one new home in local authority housing stock
- Proper maintenance and security on all local authority housing to ensure tenant safety and a well-kept housing stock to meet future needs.
- Capping of rent and increased protection for tenants in the private rented sector
- Homeless Action Plans and Traveller Accommodation Plans to be placed on a statutory basis and all local authorities to implement them
- Rehousing women who have suffered violence in the home to be a priority



Healthcare – From the Cradle to the Grave

This government promised in 2002 to permanently end hospital waiting lists by May 2004. It was a promise they knew they would not keep and today there are some 27,000 people on hospital waiting lists. They promised to issue a further 200,000 medical cards. They have broken that promise and in fact there are 20,000 fewer people with medical cards than there were two years ago – and hospital charges have been increased twice since then.

The less well-off in Ireland are dying because they lack access to healthcare in this state. Dr Jane Wilde of the Institute of Public Health estimated last May that almost 6,000 people die prematurely each year in Ireland simply because they are poor. This is almost 20 times the figure of road deaths every year.

The two-tier health service in this

state is not a soundbite or a slogan, it is a killer. People living in poverty are shut out of the health service.

The FF/PD Government is also abolishing the health boards which, for all their faults, allowed for some democratic accountability because they included elected members of local authorities. Bureaucratic change is being implemented at the expense of accountability.

Sinn Féin is campaigning for fundamental reform of our health services to remove gross inequality, reverse the legacy of underfunding and make the services more efficient and responsive to the needs of the people. Despite welcome increases in health spending over the last number of years investment in our health system still lags behind the EU average.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- **A&E facilities for under-12s at Beaumont Hospital and retention of A&E and acute status for Loughlinstown Hospital**
- **Adequate funding for Tallaght and Blanchardstown Hospitals**
- **Democratic accountability and a continuing role for elected representatives in ensuring that the health service needs of the people are being met**
- **Campaigning for an All-Ireland National Health Service with care free to all at the point of delivery and an end to the two-tier system**
- **Support for community based healthcare facilities and services**



Transport – Accessible, Reliable & Public

Chronically underfunded public transport, traffic gridlock, billions poured into road building without any cost-benefit analysis and critically flawed proposals to break up CIE. Can Dubliners survive three more years of Seamus Brennan as Minister for Transport?

In January a European expert on transport, Ton Sleddens, revealed that this state failed every single one of 27 indicators of good transport policy. The incompetence of this Government is making a shambles out of our transport system.

A study carried out in 2000 by the UCD Economics Department found that Dublin had the third lowest subsidy rate for urban bus services in Europe. Although investment in public transport has increased since 2000 and CIE is modernising its systems, the Government is set to break it up and model our public transport system on the disastrous, expensive and unsafe British model.

Sinn Féin believes we need to seriously examine whether the billions invested in road building is good value for money. We need

to know why we have to pay for the roads through taxes and then again through road tolls to see the profits end up in the pockets of private companies. Sinn Féin believes that public transport should be the priority and opposes the needless break up of CIE. We will work for an All-Ireland transport system, a truly national transport policy and for quality, reliable and cheap public transport.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- **Opposing the break-up of CIE and the privatisation of Dublin Bus**
- **A proper system of bus corridors and bicycle lanes in our cities and major investment in quality buses to provide extra hours and routes**
- **A School Bus Authority, co-ordinated at local government level in both urban and rural areas**
- **Implementation of an integrated ticketing policy, including LUAS, as part of our public transport strategy**
- **Full integration of LUAS into Dublin bus and rail services, and extension of LUAS to West Tallaght**
- **Appropriate park-and-ride facilities for DART and rail stations**
- **Opposition to road-tolling**
- **Opposing the break up of Aer Rianta and any attempt to sell off Aer Lingus**



Crime and Policing – Accountable and Visible

Eighty percent of Dubliners are afraid to walk the streets at night according to a recent MRBI survey in the Irish Mirror. Drug-dealing, 'joy-riding', robberies and assaults are concentrated in areas of Dublin deprived of resources and hardest hit by cuts.

The scourge of drugs continues to devastate working class communities across Dublin with heroin and increasing amounts of cocaine easily available. The drugs problem must be tackled by the Gardaí working in partnership with local communities as part of an overall strategy to eliminate the social deprivation that is a key cause of drugs abuse.

People have a right to live without fear in our capital. They also have a right to a police force that is accountable, and that works in partnership with the local community.

Sinn Féin has published a radical document for Garda reform, Policing for the People, which has set a benchmark for a first class policing service for the future.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- **Appointment of an independent Garda Ombudsman and a civilian Policing Board independent of Garda management, including local and community representatives**
- **Community Policing Partnerships set up at Garda district level, elected by the local authority and representing the local community**

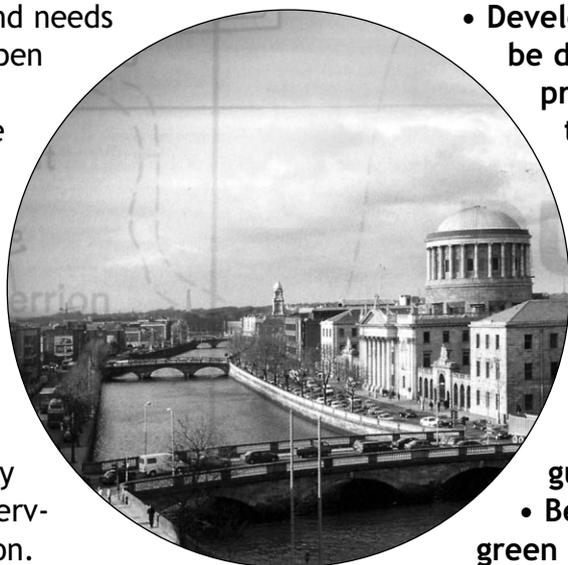
- **A review of Garda deployment and increased visibility of Gardaí on the streets**
- **A review of the effectiveness of the Community Gardaí involving representatives of local communities**
- **More resources for the Drugs Task Forces and Garda Drug Squads and the formulation of new strategies for dealing with increasing levels of cocaine and crack cocaine use**
- **Tackling disadvantage by providing community resources and employment as a bottom line requirement for effective action on drugs**
- **Comprehensive and holistic drug treatment programmes and other services that are responsive to the diversity of individual, family and community needs and not limited to methadone maintenance or 12 step programmes only**



Planning and Development - Building a City of Equals

Planning and development in Dublin are almost bywords for corruption. The legacy of crooked councillors putting brown envelopes before the needs of the people is one that haunts local government in Ireland, and in Dublin particularly. Every day the Tribunals bring us new revelations of the culture of greed and arrogance that seemed to dominate local politics in Dublin in the '80s and early '90s.

Planning in Ireland needs to be made an open and inclusive process, with the local community at the heart of the decision making process, with real powers to affect change. Developers should not merely have to pay lip service to consultation.



Central to Sinn Féin's goal of an Ireland of Equals is enabling people to play a substantial role in decisions regarding the development of their own local areas and in the management of local and community resources. Planning can be an essential tool in tackling anti-social behaviour, but bad planning or a lack of integration in planning, creates communities devoid of social resources

Sinn Féin's submission on the Dublin Draft Development Plan, Building a City of Equals, emphasises the need for community involvement. We are also committed to

opposing changes in the retail planning guidelines which would favour massive superstores over neighbourhood and community businesses.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- **Community involvement in the planning process as a basic starting point of all development plans and removal of the planning objection fee**
- **Development plans to be drafted on the principles of sustainable development and to focus on developing brown field sites**
- **Maintenance of the current retail planning guidelines**
- **Better use of green space. It should be more than merely an open field which becomes a place for anti-social elements to congregate and should meet the needs of the community**
- **An integrated approach to all development plans building houses in conjunction with social amenities and an adequate, accessible and affordable local public transport infrastructure**
- **All development plans to provide for the specific needs of young people and the elderly in terms of facilities and amenities**
- **Ensuring that development plans promote the cultural and civic life of the community**



Waste Management – Towards Zero Waste

The debate about waste management in Dublin during the last few years has been dominated by the issue of the Bin Charges. Sinn Féin opposed the Charges as an unjust form of double taxation that violated the principle of 'Polluter Pays'. The real polluters are the manufacturers of unnecessary packaging and big business. Household waste amounts to less than 10% of waste.

Our councillors and activists were in the forefront of opposing the Charges and members and supporters of Sinn Féin went to prison on principle rather than pay charges they saw as unjust.

Sinn Féin has consistently opposed incineration at central and local government level. We fully understand that incineration does not contribute to the solution but only adds to the problem. We will continue to actively support communities campaigning against the imposition of hazardous incinerators in their area.

Sinn Féin also opposed the Government's decision to take the power to develop waste management plans from the elected representatives of the people and we continue to campaign for a return

of that power to councillors.

We have published our waste management charter, Towards Zero Waste, outlining our all-Ireland strategy to combat waste and pollution; a strategy based on waste reduction, reuse and recycling. All our communities are affected by a waste crisis, all our communities will be affected by incineration and it is up to all of us to implement an environmentally sustainable response.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- **The abolition of local authority refuse charges which are an unfair double tax**
- **Opposing incineration and all attempts to impose incineration on communities against their will**
- **Reopening and redeveloping the Irish Glass Bottle recycling plant in Ringsend under Council management and subsidising the development of recycling facilities in general**
- **Opposing privatisation of waste management services**
- **Returning the power to make waste management plans to local authorities**
- **Adequate funding to ensure full separated waste collection from all homes within Dublin during the period of the current Waste Management Plans**
- **Bringing the fight to close Sellafield into every local authority chamber in Dublin**



Community Empowerment – Building on Experience

Sinn Féin is committed to empowering the people of Ireland to ensure the maximum possible control of their own destinies, local economies and communities. We do not want to lead the people; we want to help the people lead themselves.

Nowhere is the Government's contempt for community empowerment more vividly displayed than in its treatment of Community Employment Schemes. In 1997, when the Coalition Government was elected, there were just under 40,000 CE participants. In 2004, after seven years of Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats, the number is expected to be 25,000, a reduction of almost 40%. These cutbacks have devastated community projects and services across Ireland. Home helps, meals-on-wheels, child-care, environmental and heritage projects have all suffered.

Despite the fury of local communities and their representatives, the Government went ahead with its actions and ignored the wishes of the people. Sinn Féin is committed to the empowerment of communities and citizens. We believe that the people must have greater input and control over the political process for it to be truly democratic.

One of the contributory elements to growing political apathy is the disconnection of citizens from the body politic. In our urban areas, the lack of effective local power has left whole neighbourhoods



trapped in poverty and victim to the effects of joblessness, ill health, drug abuse and crime when they should be thriving growing communities.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- **Restructuring and democratisation of agencies such as the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, to make them a part of local government and not an unaccountable arm of central government**
- **Giving communities more control over the management of their own estates, particularly in relation to housing allocations**
- **Reversal of the cuts in Community Employment schemes, whose social importance to Dublin communities has not been understood by this Government**
- **Support for directly elected Mayors and an end to the quangoisation of local Government**
- **A national debate about reforming local governance to empower communities including the possibility of instituting the right to petition for recall of councillors and initiatives**



A Multicultural Dublin in a Multicultural Ireland

In a dramatically short space of time, Ireland has gone from an almost monocultural nation, to one where people of various colours, creeds and cultures are radically changing Irish society.

The response of the Government, and elements of the media, to these changes has left a lot to be desired. Immigrants and asylum seekers have been dehumanised or portrayed as spongers, criminals and welfare cheats. For many of Dublin's newest arrivals, the Ireland of the Welcomes has been anything but.

As Ireland becomes a more multicultural country, the challenge is to embrace our growing diversity as a source of strength, opportunity and economic dynamism. To do this we must begin by opposing racism, discrimination and intolerance of any kind wherever it occurs. We must challenge the stigmatisation of non-nationals and of Irish citizens with non-national parents. The discriminatory policies of this Government must also come to an end.

All Sinn Féin candidates in Dublin have been through anti-racist train-

ing facilitated by the National Consultative Council on Racism and Interculturalism and have individually signed an anti-racist pledge. We are committed to a multicultural Dublin as the capital city of a multicultural Ireland.

The priorities for Sinn Féin councillors are:

- The establishment of a Dublin Anti Racism Network facilitated, resourced and supported by local councils to develop policy, co-ordinate community activity and liaise on a cross-sectoral basis.
- Increased resources for minority ethnic NGOs as well as anti-racist organisations
- An end to the system of Direct Provision and forced dispersal of asylum seekers and its replacement by the right to work and the freedom to choose one's place of residence
- Retaining the equal right of citizenship for all children born in Ireland
- Opposing racism in whatever form it appears in our communities
- The adoption of an anti racist charter by all local authorities and their services.





Mary Lou McDonald – Dublin's Voice in Europe

The vast majority of our laws and regulations now originate in the European Union, many of them from secret, unaccountable committees. This Government, along with the so-called Opposition, has blindly accepted whatever treaty has been brought forward, making us vote a second time if we do not get what the media and political elites see as the 'right' answer.

Another Europe is possible, and Sinn Féin is the only party with the energy, the vision, and the commitment to lead that struggle in Ireland, working with our friends and allies across Europe. Our vision is for a Europe where 68 million people are not living in poverty, where our public services are not systematically privatised and where Irish neutrality is protected from those people in Europe, and in Ireland, who wish to do away with it.

Mary Lou McDonald will be a voice for Dublin, a voice for the Irish people, and a voice for change in Europe.

The priorities for Mary Lou McDonald are:

- Articulating the needs of the people of Dublin in the European Parliament
- Monitoring the activities of the Eurocrats in Brussels and Strasbourg
- Working for a Europe of Equal States and not a European Superstate
- Supporting progressive measures from Europe such as mandatory trade union recognition, environmental legislation and the equality agenda
- Alerting the Irish people to decisions made at a European level that are damaging to Irish interests
- Working for all-Ireland co-operation on funding, farming and the economy

Mary Lou



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