

REAL LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Real democracy means that citizens can participate at every level in the decisions that affect their lives, and that their voices are heard. It goes far wider than electing different tiers of local government. It means giving parents a say in the education of their children, giving tenants a role in the management of their estates, giving patients an input into the delivery of health services, giving consumers a voice in decisions on public transport.

Local democracy must find a structured way to give citizens a voice in decisions that affect them - a structured consultative role for community councils, devolution of staff to work with community groups in shaping ideas, new ways of working that break down the "them" and "us" between community groups, officials, and elected representatives.

Labour's vision for Dublin is of the widest possible participation of the community in the day-to-day decisions that affect their lives.

PEOPLE MUST COME FIRST

LABOUR

FOR A CITY THAT WORKS



OUR CITY HERITAGE

An active programme of conservation and refurbishment with tighter development control is needed to protect Dublin's medieval, Georgian, and Victorian heritage. Prominent new developments must be of a high standard, creating a heritage future generations will value.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- A major emphasis on conservation, and finding new viable uses for old and valued buildings;
- New building must respect its neighbours, and tighter development control to protect streetscapes;
- Planned renewal and rebuilding in a major blitz on derelict sites, as part of an area by area renewal programme for Dublin;

- Archaeological studies of existing vacant sites in the medieval city. New building to conserve the archaeological layer;
- An action plan for better shopfront design;
- A city that is safe and full of life after dark;
- Rates rebates for businesses that are lit and unshuttered at night to be explored.
- An urban landscaping plan for Dublin, including tree planting, paved pedestrian areas, pocket parks, street furniture, street sculpture;
- An active policy of fostering the arts at city centre and community level;
- An urban renewal programme for urban villages and the County Dublin towns harnessing the energy of local communities;
- Architectural workshops on different areas of the city, and its suburbs, could provide a fertile source of new ideas.



THE QUALITY OF LIFE:

PLANNING THE ENVIRONMENT

Planning abuse must be ended. Local involvement in planning should be fostered. Standards of urban design can be raised, and mixed use zonings would bring greater variety and life to many neighbourhoods.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- An end to re-zoning of the Green Belt and mountain amenity area;

BUILDING NEW COMMUNITIES

Dublin's rapid housing growth of the last 20 years has not been matched by the growth in essential community facilities. In spite of great vitality, new communities face many obstacles - lack of resources, unemployment, isolation from extended families, isolation from local services and centres of power.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- New local councils for Tallaght, Lucan, Clondalkin, and Blanchardstown, with power and resources to tackle local problems. Council offices at district shopping centres;
- The IDA to target unemployment blackspots in the Dublin area;
- Public resources to be targeted at areas of greatest need, for example, those identified in the CODAN report. A planned programme to complete unfinished areas and provide basic community facilities;
- The new local councils to act as landlords for all local authority housing in their areas;
- A programme to bring natural gas to all areas of Dublin;
- An active youth and sports policy.

DUBLIN'S NATURAL AMENITIES

Dublin's priceless natural resources of the sea, the mountains, and its rural landscape must be conserved.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- A management plan for the Dublin coastline, for Dublin Bay and the beaches. Problems like the coastal erosion at Killiney and Shankill, and the silting up of the Bull Island channel to be tackled;
- Tertiary treatment of sewage to clean up Dublin Bay;
- Twice daily beach cleaning in the summer season. Water quality details to be displayed at beaches;
- Special Amenity Area Orders to protect the mountains and Howth Head;
- Continued development of amenity parks along Dublin's rivers and canals;
- Public access to riverside walks in the new Liffey Valley Special Amenity Area;
- Conservation of trees and woodlands. Santry Woods to be developed as a special nature park;
- Planting of small urban forests of oak, ash, beech, and other deciduous trees in city and regional parks and on institutional lands;
- Rural building to harmonise with the landscape, and preserve hedgerows and stone walls;
- Legislation to tackle excessive public liability claims which prevent the full enjoyment of public amenities;
- New weekend minibus services to give better access to the mountains for hill walkers;

- A moratorium on further development zoning pending a comprehensive land use and transportation study; The ERDO report to be abandoned;
- Strategic development planning to be carried out by an elected greater Dublin Council covering the whole city and county area;
- Local communities to be formally consulted before the Development Plan can be varied;

- Development of the Dublin Way family walk route in the mountains;
- A small boats marina for Dun Laoghaire Harbour, and full public access to all parts of the harbour.



PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- Recycling depots at all supermarkets - bottle bank, cans, plastic bags, and paper;
- Returnable glass bottle depots inside supermarkets, like the French 'cosigne' system;
- Friendly technologies to be used in all public purchasing, for example, recycled or unbleached paper, council vans to use unleaded petrol or car gas;
- Mandatory minimum standards for air pollution with day to day monitoring and publication;
- Progressive extension of the gas grid to encourage this non-polluting fuel;
- Polluters to pay the cost of clean-ups.



ACCESS FOR ALL

Dublin generally gives primacy to cars over pedestrians. Major physical obstacles impede push-chairs, prams and wheelchairs.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- All new footpaths to be dished
- A planned programme of identifying and tackling physical barriers facing people with mobility or visual handicaps, starting with the city centre;
- An accessibility assessment by the National Rehabilitation Board to be included with all new planning applications for buildings used by the public;
- The NRB design standards for disability to be progressively applied to all buildings open to the public;
- Disabled people to be directly involved in public monitoring of progress on mobility issues;
- Accessibility in public transport to be accelerated, accessible taxis encouraged, and a network of parking spaces for disabled people.

- Development controls to focus on urban design, how new buildings harmonise with the street;
- All planning applications to be referred to a qualified Conservation Officer;
- Development Control standards to encourage varied estate layout, for example Cheshire-style, which gives priority to children and pedestrians over traffic;

A SAFER PLACE TO LIVE

Tackling crime and vandalism is a high priority. Women must be free to walk the streets. Old people must not be prisoners in their homes. The high cost to the community of vandalism and crime must be tackled on two fronts - through more effective policing - and through tackling at its roots the circumstances where crime breeds.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- More Gardai on the beat, major overhaul of Garda desk and court work;
- An offensive against drugs;
- Secure units for young offenders, with an active emphasis on rehabilitation;
- Effective action on cider parties, provide attractive alternatives for young people;
- Tackle the root causes of crime through targeted action to help young people at risk of becoming offenders.

TACKLING THE HOUSING CRISIS

Low income families in Dublin experience a major housing crisis. The halt to public housing since 1987 means there are now 6,000 on official housing lists as a result of the virtual total halt to public housing in Dublin since 1987. Flexible housing answers must meet changing housing need, new lettings must be provided where people want to live. Tenants must be given a real say in their own neighbourhoods.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- An active public housing programme, aiming to clear housing lists over four years. This should include the restoration and conversion of vacant buildings, new housing, and house purchase;
- A major expansion of the role of housing associations in the provision and refurbishment of housing;
- "Homesteading" programme to provide housing at nominal cost for individuals who renovate decayed housing to an agreed standard;
- The Housing Finance Agency to fund voluntary and co-operative housing developments, and sites to be made available by the local authorities;
- Community based maintenance programmes to give a new deal to public sector tenants. Rent credits for tenant maintenance;
- Acceleration of the major refurbishment programme in existing public sector housing. Controlled entry doors and a concierge system to be introduced for flat blocks;
- A planned programme of environmental improvements for public housing estates especially flat complexes. Private garden space to be provided as far as possible for flat tenants;
- Community based management of public housing, with majority tenant involvement;

- Facilities for feeding and changing babies to be a condition of planning permission in all new public buildings and shopping centres;
- Child care facilities to be treated as an integral part of residential development;
- Development levies to include a sum towards community facilities.

- Security of tenure for long term private tenants, with a right to renew a lease at the market rent;
- A legal right to a rent book, to a written letting agreement and basic standards for all tenants;
- The jurisdiction of the Rent Tribunal to be extended to monitor rent increases in excess of inflation, breaches of tenancy agreements, and the return of deposits for the open market rented sector;
- An active policy to tackle homelessness, in partnership with voluntary organisations and the health boards, using the full range of powers under s. 10 of the 1988 Housing Act;
- Grants to be available for maintenance, management, and care and welfare services, in projects catering for homeless people with special needs;
- Legislation, on the lines of the Nursing Home Act, to provide for minimum standards of accommodation and care in hostels for the homeless;
- A comprehensive accommodation programme for travellers, managed to a high standard by joint traveller/community groups;
- Termination of ground rents.



FINANCING LOCAL SERVICES FOR DUBLIN

Funding for Dublin's local services has not kept pace with the expansion of the city and county. Basic services are underfunded following major cutbacks. Most decisions on spending are made at national level, with limited knowledge of local factors and local needs.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- Government funding for local services should be based on a proportion of central government revenue raised in Dublin, for example, through income tax, VAT etc., adjusted by an index of needs, for example, size of population, km. of roads and water mains;
- Local authorities to be given full autonomy to allocate Lottery funds to community projects in their areas. Dublin's share of Lottery funding to be related to Dublin's share of Lottery income;
- Capital gains to private land and property owners arising from rezoning or public investment in infrastructure to be made taxable to help fund Dublin's infrastructural development;
- New pub licences, taxi licences etc. to be sold or auctioned by local authorities to raise funds.

MAKING DUBLIN WORK

Dublin needs to be revitalized. Quality public services, quality public transport, and a living inner city, are essential if Dublin is to work.

We want to see an end to the division of Dublin by class and income. We want to see a Dublin where public amenity transcends private gain.


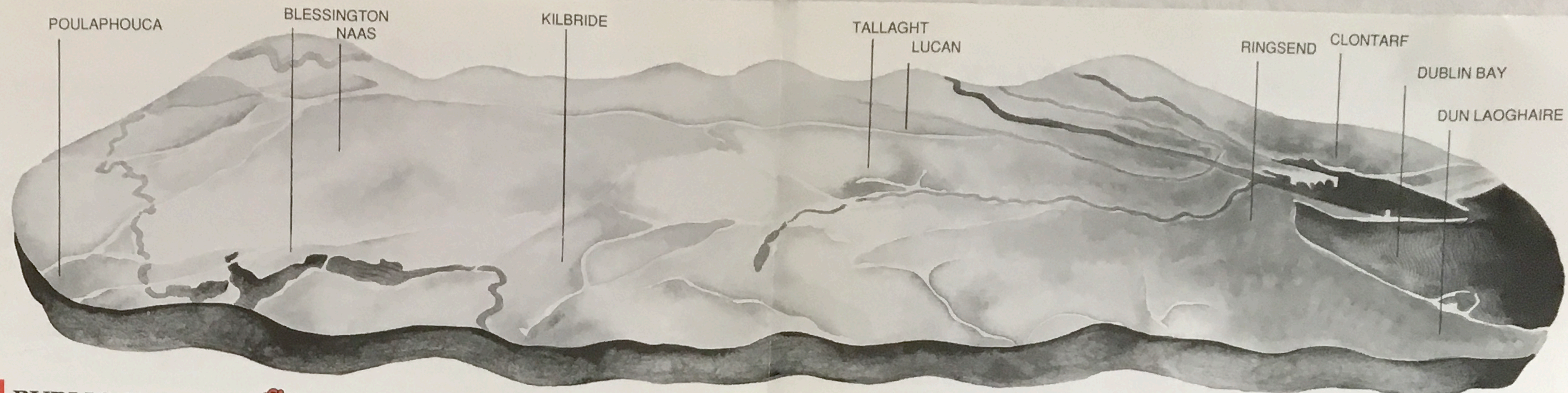
THE KEY ELEMENTS OF LABOUR'S STRATEGY FOR DUBLIN ARE:

- Public services which put the public first;
- A living inner city;
- Quality public transport to get Dublin on the move;
- Conservation of the city fabric and the green belt;
- Cleaning up of the planning system;
- Tackling of the housing crisis facing low income families;
- Making Dublin a safer place to live.

DUBLIN - A CITY THAT WORKS



LABOUR

PUBLIC SERVICES

PUTTING THE PUBLIC FIRST

Public services must put the public first.

That means improving the quality of local services, bringing service offices to where people live, and involving the public as consumers in making decisions.

The proposed four councils for Dublin are at the same time too large and too fragmented - too remote from local communities - but fragmenting overall planning for greater Dublin. Natural communities, like Tallaght and Clondalkin, need their own district councils, enjoyed already by areas like Bray and Sligo with only one-third of their population. But Dublin can't afford four separate Development plans, or an un-coordinated transport and traffic system.

WHAT DUBLIN NEEDS IS:

- A democratically elected Greater Dublin Council to take strategic decisions on planning and transport services for Dublin as a whole;
- District councils to serve natural communities of 50-100,000 people which would bring local services to the heart of local communities;
- Devolution of local administration to a network of local offices in neighbourhood shopping centres, where people can deal under the one roof with all council services - roads, planning, parks, housing, grants. These offices to become "one-stop shops" dealing also with social welfare, health, and community information;
- The use of modern communications to end the runaround for people who have to deal with the proliferation of different public service offices;
- The public given a structured role in decision making through users' councils for different public services;
- Streamlining of local bureaucracy and giving frontline staff a voice in planning services;
- Involvement of local communities in decisions affecting them;
- Harnessing of municipal and community enterprise to create jobs as shown by Sheffield Council, London Enterprise Authority;
- A strong emphasis on community development;
- Resources for community groups to include making public premises available at nominal cost, help with administration including shared facilities, group insurance policies to be arranged by local authorities to bring down costs.

GETTING DUBLIN ON THE MOVE

The present balance between public (30%) and private transport (52%) into Dublin's city centre must be reversed to get Dublin on the move again. To do that, Dublin needs a quality public transport system which serves the consumer well.

The funds earmarked for the Inner Tangent and the Eastern Bypass roads should be invested instead in a rapid transit network. Priorities should be new lines to Tallaght and Clondalkin, and the re-opening of the Harcourt St. Line as light rail.

A new port access route for lorries along the disused railway through Drumcondra would bring heavy traffic from the port to the ring motorway.

Different traffic management measures to reduce inner city traffic should be introduced on a pilot basis over successive weeks to assess their impact on solving Dublin's traffic problems, and the successful measures should then be implemented.

TO GET DUBLIN ON THE MOVE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES ARE NECESSARY:

- Reverse the balance between private and public commuter traffic;
- A democratic Dublin Transport Authority with a mandate to put public transport first, and with power over public transport, road planning, traffic, and parking for all Dublin;
- A new port access route for lorries along the disused railway through Drumcondra to be examined in depth;
- Reliable and efficient public transport, which puts the consumer first;
- Late night buses on main routes on the hour throughout the night;
- Consumers to be directly involved in planning and monitoring public transport services;
- More flexible route planning, more local link services;
- New rail links to Tallaght and Clondalkin;
- A light rail service on the Harcourt St. Line;
- The funds earmarked for the Inner Tangent route and the Eastern Bypass to be redirected towards rapid transit and the new port link for lorries;
- A Nipper Bus network for the inner city, encouraging commuters to park and ride;
- Prepaid bus/DART tickets to permit route transfers;
- More lateral bus routes to link outer suburbs to each other;
- Cycle paths along the canals, and the Dodder and Tolka linear parks;

- The ring motorway to be completed, and to be toll-free;
- Proposals to reduce car traffic to be evaluated on a pilot basis, and the successful ideas implemented, for example:
 - reduced bus and DART fares
 - leasing of additional buses to expand the public fleet;
 - more flexible taxi services, for example, shared taxis;
 - free car parking at key public transport pick-up points;
 - restriction of centre city deliveries, bin collections etc. to early morning or late evening;
 - encouragement of car pooling by restricting peak hour traffic crossing the canal bridges into town, for example, alternating car registrations;
 - road pricing in the city centre;

- Effective enforcement of traffic laws to keep main routes clear.



PUTTING BACK THE CITY'S HEART

The population between the canals has halved since 1960. With over 160 acres of derelict sites in inner Dublin, and pervasive urban decay, time is running out. The success of Glasgow's urban renewal, achieved mainly through housing associations, gives Dublin a model.

LABOUR PROPOSES:

- A halt to rezoning for outward expansion of Dublin to focus development in the inner city;
- A democratic Inner City Renewal authority, with power to undertake area based rejuvenation programmes, with a substantial revolving fund;
- Housing is the key to inner city renewal. Families from the area, single people, those without cars, and students, are a largely untapped market;
- Housing associations to play a major role, backed up by "assist teams" similar to those in Glasgow;

- Redevelopment of vacant upper floors for housing. Changes in bye-law and insurance requirements to make that a reality;
- Colleges to provide student housing in the inner city by converting derelict or under-used buildings;
- Partnerships between public, voluntary, and private sectors on renewal sites;
- Encouragement of export based industry in the port area;
- Incentives to be concentrated to give an area by area comprehensive rejuvenation programme, instead of present widely diffused incentives;
- Incentives to favour conservation rather than demolition. Heavy financial penalties for derelict buildings and sites;
- No further road widening in the inner city;
- Urgent action to restore the streetscape damaged by the Inner Tangent route, e.g. Parnell Street, Cuffe Street/ Harcourt Street corner, Patrick Street;
- More pedestrian-only streets. Development of new pedestrian routes through the centre, for example, Temple Bar to Grafton Street; new pedestrian bridges on the Liffey and canals; new routes to be kept open through Trinity College, and Dublin Castle;
- Development of special amenity squares at Heuston Station, St. Mary's Church/Wolfe Tone Street, and at Green Street/Halston Street;
- A pedestrian mall at the Abbey Theatre in Marlborough St. as a focal cultural point, linked to a new pedestrian route over the Liffey and through Trinity College;
- A covered market at Moore Street;
- An urban planting programme, especially to help tone down unsympathetic modern buildings;
- Opening of the Iveagh Gardens to the public.



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