



ANEWDEAL 4THEWEST

Margadh Nua don Iarthar



A New Deal for the West

Executive Summary

1. Introduce a Rural Equality Bill and ensure all legislation and regulation will be rural-proofed, ending discrimination against rural areas.
2. Develop a new enterprise spatial strategy in order to orientate infrastructural development and IDA and Enterprise Ireland development in a balanced regional manner.
3. Make the West the e-commerce focal point of Ireland. Maximise the potential of indigenous online sales by delivering an ambitious e-commerce strategy getting 1,000 companies in the West each year trading online as well as developing an online town model
4. Provide financial stimulus to build a new generation of micro enterprises and co-ops in rural communities to be operational in a similar manner to the current High Potential Start Up support scheme operated by Enterprise Ireland.
5. Develop a Regional Cluster Policy for the Western seaboard, which would target a specific sector e.g. renewable energy and make recommendations on third level education and physical infrastructure requirements to promote such clusters
6. Establish a policy for the creative sector with a specific focus on the West of Ireland to provide a coherent structure for developing the sector. Facilitate export growth and domestic sales by promoting the 'Creative West' brand.
7. Maintain Irish match funding to leverage more vital rural development funds from Europe. The Exchequer to make up shortfall in cuts to leader funding from EU level.
8. Ensure all Irish householders and business have access to a minimum broadband speed of 100Mbps and the provision of industrial cable broadband to municipal towns in the West. Empower Comreg to regulate and reduce the high cost of broadband for users.
9. Enable digital cottage industries to flourish in the West and the development of a strategy, which would be supported by the IDA, to enable people to remain living in the West while working (telecommuting) elsewhere including overseas.
10. Explicitly recognise co-operatives in new legislation to ensure the growth and development of the sector and create a new arm of Enterprise Ireland which would assist with the development a new generation of co-operative enterprises.
11. Retain and extend services available at village post offices and retain where feasible of the village school including looking at creative solutions to challenge facing small schools including shared administration and transformation to Gaelscoileanna.
12. Examine the introduction of a two tier rates structure based on profitability and size as well as examining the potential of incentives for those who open new businesses within rural town centres.
13. An end to upward only rent reviews.
14. A pilot scheme for rural resettlement to encourage and support families with a relocation package of up to €5,000 including return flights for certain emigrant families to return to rural Ireland.
15. Pursue at EU level, a derogation from habitual residency clause for returning emigrants and introduce a returning emigrants/diaspora resettlement scheme for those who return to settle in rural depopulated areas of the West with a package of up to €1,500 for an individual.



16. A commitment that rural policing cannot be just dependent on economic scale or population numbers.
17. Recruit 3,000 gardaí over our government term to restore An Garda Síochána force levels to 14,250, or pre-crisis levels. Reverse the closure of Garda stations.
18. Roll-back of the Government's power-grab for LEADER and community development programmes thus protecting the community control and the bottom-up ethos in the roll-out of these programmes.
19. Oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which is a free trade and investment treaty being negotiated between the EU and the USA . TTIP represents a bad deal for Irish agriculture as well as for consumers, citizens and workers.
20. Introduce legislation for regulation for the beef processing industry to deal with allegation of price fixing, market manipulation and distortion practices considering the very small number of competitors on the Island.
21. Introduce all-island labelling.
22. Establish a Shannon River Authority to ensure that there is proper co-ordination and a robust response from the various agencies responsible when flooding occurs and also that necessary steps are taken to minimise the risk of flooding in the future.
23. Establish a Department for Fisheries, Marine and Marine Communities with a specific island division.
24. Rebalance the domestic fish quota distribution to ensure smaller vessels get a fairer share which will help revitalise the indigenous small and medium vessel fleet and stimulate the harbour and processing industry along the west coast.
25. Incentivise coastal communities so there are enhanced opportunities to diversify and benefit from marine resources outside of the area of conventional fishing.
26. Develop a transport plan for the West that seeks to make public transport and alternative models of transport a viable option for those living in the region.
27. Ensure that in rural areas with declining population, profitability should not be the key consideration regarding investment in transport infrastructure.
28. Provide a funding package for improving condition of rural roads.
29. Support the development of Ireland West Airport Knock as a strategically important international gateway to the Region through the continued growth of the Airport
30. Replace the current inequitable healthcare system with a universal public health system, tackling geographic inequalities in health service provision, free at point of delivery.
31. Address the historic underinvestment in public services in the west.
32. Protect out of hours doctors services in the West.
33. Invest in ambulance services, including air ambulance services.
34. Build and deliver up to 36,500 social and affordable homes between 2016 – 2021.
35. Abolition of the Local Property Tax.
36. Support regeneration programmes in Sligo and Galway, and examine the need for regeneration projects in respect of housing estates in smaller neglected rural towns.
37. Reintroduce social housing built on land offered over by a landowner and which the council would take ownership of on the death of the occupant (landowner). (Rural Dwellings Scheme)
38. Introduce staged tax measures on offshore oil and gas fields, as outlined by the report by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture.



39. Ensure the local community benefits from the development of natural resources in the West.
40. Ensure the retention of domestic turbarry rights for families in the West of Ireland who cut turf to heat the family home, as has been part of Irish tradition and heritage for centuries.
41. Introduce a full legislative ban on fracking.
42. Develop a green economic strategy for the Western seaboard region, which would explore enterprise opportunities in green services and renewable energy.
43. Make Galway the greenest city in Ireland in terms of transport, resource consumption, waste management, energy use and generation.
44. Work with Islanders to bring forward a Charter of Rights for the Islands, which would include the right to access the islands through proper piers and airstrips, broadband access and the right to essential social services. There should also be a specific job creation strategy with targets and timescales from Údarás na Gaeltachta based on the needs of each island.
45. Maintain the airlink to the Aran Islands.
46. Create a 29th sub-region, under the Rural Development Programme, to deal with offshore islands so that those organisations specifically dealing with the islands unique conditions and circumstances will be enabled to tender as Local Action Groups under the programme.
47. Deliver additional capital funding to Údarás na Gaeltachta to create employment and ensure economic growth in the Gaeltacht. Also reinstate the direct elections of Udaras board members.
48. Complete review of implementation of the 20 Year Irish Language Strategy and action plan to develop new.
49. End the derogation of the Irish language in the European Union.
50. Strengthen the Official Languages Act and provide further support for the implementation of its provisions.

Margadh Nua don Iarthar

Achoimre Fheidhmeach

1. Bille um Chomhionannas Tuaithe a thabhairt isteach agus cinnte a dhéanamh de go mbeidh gach reachtaíocht agus rialachán oiriúnach do cheantair tuaithe, gné a chuirfidh deireadh leis an leithcheal ar cheantair tuaithe.
2. Straitéis nua fiontraíochta spásúil a fhorbairt le forbairt infreastruchtúir agus forbairt ÚFT agus Fiontraíocht Éireann a threorú ar dhóigh chothrom réigiúnach.
3. Pointe fócais r-thráchtáil na Éireann a dhéanamh den Iarthar. A oiread leasa agus is féidir a bhaint as féidearthachtaí díolacháin dúchais ar líne trí straitéis r-thráchtála uailmhianach a chur ar fáil ina gcuirtear 1,000 comhlacht san Iarthar ag trádáil ar líne gach bliain chomh maith le samhail de bhaile mór ar líne a fhorbairt.
4. Spreagthach airgeadais a sholáthar le glúin nua de mhicri-fhiontair agus comharchumainn i gceantair thuaithe a chruthú a fheidhmeoidh amhail an scéim reatha thacaíochta Tosú Ardacmhainne de chuid Fiontraíocht Éireann.
5. Polasaí Braisle Réigiúnach don Chósta Thiar a fhorbairt a dhíreodh ar earnáil ar leith m.sh. fuinneamh in-athnuaite, agus a dhéanfadh moltaí ar oideachas tríú leibhéal agus ar riachtanais infreastruchtúr fisiciúil le braislí den sórt a chur chun cinn.
6. Polasaí náisiúnta don earnáil chruthaitheach a bhunú agus fócas ar leith ar Iarthar na hÉireann le struchtúr comhsheasmhach a chur ar fáil leis an earnáil a fhorbairt. Fás easpórtála agus díolacháin intíre a éascú trí bhranda 'an Iarthar Cruthaitheach' a chur chun cinn.
7. Coinneáil Chistiú Meaitseála na hÉireann le tuilleadh maoiniú forbartha tuaithe ríthábhachtach a ghíaráil ón Eoraip. An Stát-Chiste an t-easnamh a bhaineann le ciorruithe i maoiniú LEADER ó leibhéal AE a chúiteamh.
8. A chinntiú go mbíonn fáil ag gach teaghlach agus gnólacht in Éirinn ar luas leathanbhanda 100Mbp ar a laghad agus soláthar cábla tionsclaíocht leathanbhanda do bhailte bardais san Iarthar. COMREG a chumhachtú le hardchostas leathanbhanda a rialú agus a laghdú d'úsáideoirí.
9. A chur ar chumas tionscail tinteáin san Iarthar a bheith faoi rath agus forbairt straitéise, a gheobhadh tacaíocht ón ÚFT, a chuirfeadh ar chumas daoine cur fúthu go buan san Iarthar agus iad ag obair (teileachomaitéireacht) in áit eile, lena n-áirítear thar lear.
10. Comharchumainn a aithint go follasach i reachtaíocht nua le fás agus forbairt na hearnála a chinntiú agus brainse nua d'Fhiontraíocht Éireann a chruthú a chuideodh le forbairt glúin nua d'fhiontair chomharchumainn.
11. Coinneáil agus méadú seirbhísí atá ar fáil ag oifigí poist sráidbhailte agus coinneáil, nuair is indéanta, scoil an tsráidbhaile, lena n-áirítear ag breithniú réitigh chruthaitheacha ar na dúshláin atá roimh scoileanna beaga, comhriarachán agus athrú go stádas Gaelscoileanna san áireamh.
12. Breithniú tabhairt isteach struchtúr rátaí dhá leibhéal bunaithe ar bhrabúsacht agus ar mhéid, le cois amharc ar an fhéidearthacht a bhaineann le dreasachtaí dóibh siúd a osclaíonn gnólachtaí nua laistigh de lár bailte tuaithe.
13. Deireadh a chur le hathbhreithnithe cíosa 'ardú amháin'.
14. Clár athlonnaithe tuaithe le teaghlaigh a spreagadh agus tacaíocht a thabhairt dóibh le pacáiste athlonnaithe suas le €5,000, eitiltí fillte san áireamh do theaghlaigh áirithe le fillleadh ar chontaetha an Iarthair.

15. Tabhairt isteach maolú ó alt gnáthchónaithe d'eisimircigh ag filleadh agus scéim athlonnaithe d'eisimircigh ag filleadh/diaspóra dóibh siúd a fhilleann le dul a chónaí i gceantair thuaithe dídhonraithe an Iarthair le pacáiste €1,500 do gach duine.
16. Tiomantas nach ar scála eacnamaíochta agus líon daonra amháin a bhraitheann póilíneacht tuaithe.
17. 3,000 garda a earcú le linn ár dtréimhse sa rialtas chun fórsa An Garda Síochána a thabhairt ar ais chuig leibhéal de 14,250, nó an léibhéal a bhíonn ann roimh an ngéarchéim. An cinneadh chun stáisiún Ghardaí a dhruim a mhalartú - is beag an choigilteas atá déanta ag an druidim seo.
18. Gabháil cumhachta an Rialtas maidir le cláir LEADER agus cláir forbartha a stopadh agus, ar an dóigh seo, smacht an phobail agus éiteas ón bhonn aníos a chosaint i bhfeidhmiú na gclár seo.
19. Cur in Éadan na Comhpháirtíochta Trádála agus Infheistíochta Thrasatlantach (TTIP), ar conradh saorthrádála agus infheistíochta é, atá á chaibidil idir AE agus SAM. Drochmhargadh do Thalmhaíocht na hÉireann é an TTIP agus do thomhaltóirí, saoránaigh agus oibrithe.
20. Tabhairt isteach reachtaíochta leis an tionscal próiseáil mairteola a rialú le plé le líomhain faoi phraghas-socrú, ionramháil an mhargaidh agus cleachtais díchumtha, nuair a chuirtear san áireamh an líon an-bheag iomaitheoirí atá ar an Oileán.
21. Tabhairt isteach lipéadú Uile-Oileáin.
22. Bunú Údarás Abhainn na Sionainne lena chinntiú go bhfuil an comhordú cuí agus freagra stóinsithe ó ghníomhaireachtaí éagsúla atá freagrach as tuillte agus, lena chois sin, go ndéanfar na bearta cuí le baol tuillte a íoslaghdú amach anseo.
23. Roinn Iascach, Mhuirí agus Pobail Mara a bhunú le rannóg shainiúil do na hOileáin sa Roinn seo agus Aire Sóisearach ar a mbeadh freagrachtaí na n-oileán.
24. An leithdháileadh cuóta iascaigh a athchothromú lena chinntiú go mbeidh sciar níos cothroime ag soithí beaga. Cuideoidh sé seo leis an chabhlach soithí beaga agus meánmhéide a athbheochan agus spreagfaidh sé an tionsclaíocht chalafoirt agus phróiseála feadh an chósta thiar.
25. Pobail mhara a dhreasú sa dóigh go mbeidh deiseanna feabhsaithe ann le héagsúlú agus le leas a bhaint as acmhainní muirí lasmuigh de réimse na gnáthiascaireachta.
26. Plean iompair don Iarthar a fhorbairt ina bhféachtar le rogha inmharthana a dhéanamh den iompar poiblí agus samhlacha eile iompair dóibh siúd a chónaíonn sa réigiún.
27. A chinntiú, maidir le ceantair thuaithe ina bhfuil an daonra ag laghdú nach í an bhrabúsacht an bhun-toisc maidir le hinfheistiú in infreastruchtúr iompair.
28. Pacáiste maoiniúcháin le bail níos fearr a chur ar bhóithre tuaithe a chur ar fáil
29. Tacú le forbairt Aerfort Iarthar Éireann, Cnoc Mhuire mar thairseach thábhachtach idirnáisiúnta don Réigiún trí fhás leanúnach an Aerfoirt.
30. Deireadh a chur leis an chóras reatha éagothrom cúram sláinte agus córas uilíoch sláinte phoiblí a chur ina áit agus dul i ngleic le míchothromaíochtaí i soláthar seirbhís sláinte, saor in aisce ag an pointe soláthair.
31. Dul i ngleic leis an ghanfheistíocht atá ann le blianta i seirbhísí poiblí san Iarthar.
32. Seirbhísí seachuaireanta dochtúra san Iarthar a chosaint.
33. Infheistiú i seirbhísí otharcharranna, lena n-áirítear seirbhísí aerárthach othar.
34. Suas le 36,500 baile sóisialta agus inacmhainne a thógáil agus a chur ar fáil ar fud na tíre idir 2106-2021.
35. Díscor cáin mhaoine áitiúil.

36. Tacú le cláir athnuachana i Sligeach agus i nGaillimh, chomh maith le breithniú ar an ghá atá le tionscadail athnuachana maidir le heastáit tithíochta i mbailte beaga tuaithe a ndearnadh neamart iontu.
37. Tabhairt isteach athuair Tithíocht shóisialta tógtha ar thalamh arna thairiscint ag úinéir talaimh agus a ngabhadh an chomhairle seilbh air i ndiaidh bhás an áititheora (úinéir talaimh) (Scéim Tithe Tuaithe)
38. Beartha cánach a thabhairt isteach ar bhonn céimneach ar olacheantair agus ar gháscheantair amach ón gcósta, de réir mar atá molta sa tuarascáil ag Comhchoiste an Oireachtais ar Chumarsáidí, Acmhainní Nádurtha agus ar Thalmhaíocht.
39. A chinntiú go mbaineann an pobal tairbhe as forbairt acmhainní daonna san Iarthar.
40. A chinntiú go gcoinnítear móinchearta tí do theaghlaigh in Iarthar na hÉireann a bhaineann móin chun baile an teaghlaigh a théamh, óir is cuid de thraidisiún agus d'oidhreacht na nGael é leis na céadta bliain.
41. Tabhairt isteach cosc iomlán reachtúil ar fhraiceáil.
42. Straitéis eacnamaíochta ghlas a fhorbairt do réigiún an chósta Thiar, ina bhfiosrófaí deiseanna fiontraíochta i seirbhísí glasa agus san fhuinneamh in-athnuaite. Tá bille tugtha isteach ag Sinn Féin ar mhicrighiniúint leictreachais.
43. An chathair Is glaise in Éirinn a dhéanamh de Ghailimh i dtéarmaí iompair, ídiú fuinnimh, bainistíocht dramhaíola, ídiú agus giniúint fuinnimh.
44. Comhoibriú le hOileánaigh le Cairt Chearta na nOileán a thabhairt chun tosaigh a chuimseodh an ceart leis na hoileáin a rochtain ar chéanna agus aerstráicí cuí, rochtain leathanbhanda agus an ceart ar sheirbhísí sóisialta riachtanacha. Ba chóir go mbeadh straitéis shainiúil cruthú post ann ó Údarás na Gaeltachta le spriocanna agus amscálaí, bunaithe ar riachtanais gach oileáin.
45. An t-aernasc le hOileáin Árann a choinneáil.
46. An 29ú fo-réigiún a chruthú tríd an Chlár Forbartha Tuaithe, le plé le hoileáin mhara ionas go mbeidh na heagrais sin a phléann go sainiúil le dálaí sonracha na n-oileán ábalta tairiscintí a chur isteach mar Ghrúpaí Áitiúla Gníomhaíochta faoin chlár.
47. Maoiniú breise caipitil d' Údarás na Gaeltachta a chur ar fáil le fostaíocht a chruthú agus fás eacnamaíochta a chinntiú sa Ghaeltacht. Toghcháin dhíreacha chomhaltaí boird an Údaráis a thabhairt ar ais.
48. Athbhreithniú fheidhmiú Straitéis 20 Bliain agus plean gníomhaíochta don Ghaeilge a chur i gcrích agus ceann nua a fhorbairt.
49. Deireadh chur le maolú na Gaeilge in Aontas na hEorpa.
50. Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla a neartú agus tuilleadh tacaíochta a chur ar fáil lena fhorálacha a fheidhmiú.



Neglect of the West – Fine Gael and Labour’s record

- 1.** Austerity has devastated the West. This government’s austerity policies have been detrimental to the West of Ireland. Cuts have hit communities, families, public services and the local economy. Austerity has taken away the opportunity for people to live and work in the West.
- 2.** A generation of young people have been forced to emigrate. 200,000 young people have emigrated from Ireland since 2010 and one in six Irish born people now live abroad, the highest figure in the developed world. Emigration has had a disproportionate impact on the West of Ireland.
- 3.** There has been no focus on creating jobs in the West of Ireland. The government and enterprises development agencies have failed to bring forward a strategy for job creation in the West. It is no surprise that there is no recovery in the region.
- 4.** Healthcare is in crisis in the West. People in the West of Ireland feel let down and betrayed by broken promises in relation to cancer care in Sligo and A&E services in Roscommon. The centralisation of services and the downgrading of local services has led to chronic overcrowding in University Hospital Galway. Patients in the West also have to contend travelling increasingly long distances to access health services.
- 5.** There has been a failure to deliver high speed broadband. Those in rural Ireland and in particular in the West have been left behind when it comes to broadband and connectivity. Communities, businesses and would-be entrepreneurs have been denied access to high quality broadband, hampering the ability to create jobs in the region.
- 6.** Small and peripheral farmers have got a bad deal. CAP did not deliver a fair deal for small farmers in the West. The replacement of the REPS scheme with AEOS and now GLAS has been wholly inadequate. The GLAS scheme is difficult to enter and does not direct funds to farmers in environmentally sensitive areas as was envisaged by CAP. Many hill farmers have no access to GLAS at all.
- 7.** Local communities have been disempowered. The abolition of Udaras na Gaeltachta elections, the slashing of funding to Gaeltacht areas and the islands combined with the Government’s power-grab from LEADER and community development programmes have left many communities feeling disempowered and let down.
- 8.** Infrastructure has deteriorated due to severe cuts to regional and local roads budgets and a failure to invest in coastal protection and flood protection.
- 9.** Garda stations have been closed across rural Ireland. These closures which have saved little money have left elderly people in particular living in fear in rural areas across the West.
- 10.** Turf cutters have been criminalised. Families across the West have traditionally cut turf for their own use. It is part of the way of life in the West of Ireland. This government has criminalised this practice.



Neamart ar an Iarthar – Taifead Fhine Gael agus Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre

- 1.** Tá an Iarthar scriosta ag an déine. Bhí drochthionchar ag polasaithe déine an rialtais seo ar Iarthar na hÉireann. Chuaigh na ciorruithe i bhfeidhm ar phobail, ar theaghlaigh, seirbhísí poiblí agus ar an gheilleagar áitiúil. Bhain an déine an deis de dhaoine bheith ag obair agus ina gcónaí san Iarthar.
- 2.** B'éigean do ghlúin de dhaoine óga dul ar imirce. Chuaigh 200,000 duine óg ar imirce ó Éirinn ó bhí 2010 ann agus tá duine as gach seisear a rugadh in Éirinn ina gcónaí thar lear, an figiúr is airde sa domhan forbartha. Bíonn tionchar díréireach ag an eisimirce ar Iarthar na hÉireann.
- 3.** Ní raibh fócas ar bith ar chruthú post in Iarthar na hÉireann. Níor éirigh leis an rialtas ná leis na gníomhaireachtaí forbairt fiontraíochta straitéis cruthú post don Iarthar a thabhairt chun cinn. Ní hiontas ar bith é nach bhfuil téarnamh ar bith le sonrú sa réigiún.
- 4.** Tá géarchéim cúram sláinte san Iarthar. Mothaíonn bunadh Iarthar na hÉireann go ndearnadh feall orthu agus go ndeachthas siar ar ghealltanais maidir le cúram ailse i Sligeach agus seirbhísí T&É i Ros Comáin. Plódú seasta seirbhísí in Ospidéal na hOllscoile, Gaillimh is toradh do lárú seirbhísí agus íosghrádú seirbhísí áitiúla. Bíonn ar othair san Iarthar fosta achar níos faide taistil a fhulaingt le seirbhísí sláinte a rochtain.
- 5.** Theip ar sholáthar leathanbhanda ardluais. Tá bunadh na tuaithe agus an Iarthair go háirithe tite ar gcúl maidir le leathanbhanda agus ceangailteacht. Séanadh rochtain leathanbhanda ardcháilíochta ar phobail, gnólachtaí agus ábhair fiontraithe, rud a chuireann bac ar an chumas cruthaithe post sa réigiún.
- 6.** Drochmhargadh faighte ag feirmeoirí beaga agus imeallacha. Níor thug CBT cothrom na Féinne d'fheirmeoirí beaga san Iarthar. B'éasnamhach ar fad AEOS, agus anois GLAS, a cuireadh in áit scéim REPS. Is deacair dul isteach i scéim GLAS agus ní dhírítear maoiniú ar fheirmeoirí i limistéir íogaire comhshaoil faoi mar a bhíodhas ag súil leis sa CBT. Níl rochtain ar bith ar chor ar bith ag go leor feirmeoirí sléibhe ar GLAS.
- 7.** Tá pobail áitiúla díchumhachtaithe. Mar gheall ar dheireadh le toghcháin Údarás na Gaeltachta, ar chiorruithe móra ar mhaoiniú do cheantair Ghaeltachta agus do na hoileáin le cois an rialtas cláir LEADER agus forbartha pobail a ghabháil dóibh féin, mothaíonn go leor pobal gur baineadh an chumhacht díobh agus gur imríodh feall orthu.
- 8.** Tá an t-infreastruchtúr imithe chun donais mar gheall ar chiorruithe diana ar bhuiséid bóithre réigiúnacha agus áitiúla agus níor infheistíodh i gcosaint cladaigh agus tuillte.
- 9.** Druideadh stáisiúin Gardaí ar fud cheantair thuaithe na hÉireann. Ba bheag airgead a sábháladh air seo agus fágadh daoine aosta, go háirithe iad siúd atá ina gcónaí i gceantair thuaithe san Iarthar, faoi eagla.
- 10.** Rinneadh coirpigh de lucht bainte móna. Traidisiún de chuid theaghlaigh an Iarthair móin a bhaint agus a úsáid dóibh féin. Is cuid de shaol an Iarthair é. Tá cion coiriúil déanta ag an rialtas seo den ghnás seo.



A New Deal for the West

Sinn Féin has a vision for the West of Ireland.

A vision to make it a sustainable place to live and work.

A place where the quality of life is matched by the quality of public services.

A place where young educated graduates have the opportunity to stay and build their future and a place that welcomes back emigrants including those forced to leave over recent years.

People in the West of Ireland are sick of being treated as second class citizens, fed up with underinvestment and angry at the lack of jobs and opportunity. It's time for change. While historically, underinvestment and neglect are among the main reasons for the imbalance, government policy continues to prioritise the east coast. There is no economic justification for this – all of Ireland would benefit from balanced regional development. A fair recovery must mean a balanced recovery – it must mean a recovery in the West. For the West of Ireland technological developments mean (if the investment needed is made) that the region can break with the past and no longer has to be disadvantaged by its peripheral location.

Given the rural and sparsely populated nature of the West of Ireland, and the isolation experienced by many, communities frequently feel helpless in their ability to halt the decline. Their voices are not being heard in the corridors of power. In many cases, these areas find themselves pitted against each other in an “either or” battle to retain services or attract investment. There is need for fundamental changes in policies and practices in relation to the West. There needs to be a change of direction – a break with the failed policies of privatisations and underinvestment.

For Sinn Féin the introduction of Rural Proofing Legislation would underpin the other proposals and initiatives set out in this document.

Rural Proofing legislation is a key tool to ensure that the interests of rural dwellers are catered for in the development and delivery of policy and public services in way that has not been done to date. This is key to the future of the West of Ireland.

In the Six counties Sinn Féin Minister Michelle O'Neill became first government minister in Ireland to introduce rural proofing on a statutory basis. Sinn Féin Agriculture spokesperson Martin Ferris TD has introduced similar legalisation in the Dáil. In government Sinn Féin would enact this legislation.

Sinn Féin is committed to being a strong voice for the West. We believe it is time to recognise and embrace the opportunities that exist in the West of Ireland.

Sinn Féin believes that a number of key actions and targeted investment can begin a turnaround.

We are clear in our commitment to public services and to local communities. We will stand with communities in opposing the withdrawal of services and fight for a New Deal for the West.

A strong team of Sinn Féin TD's, Senators and councillors along with MEP Matt Carthy will make it our priority to deliver a New Deal for the West.



Margadh Nua don Iarthar

Tá fíis ag Sinn Féin d'Iarthar na hÉireann.

Fís le limistéar inbhuanaithe a dhéanamh de le bheith inár gcónaí agus ag obair ann. Áit ina mbeidh cáilíocht na beatha agus cáilíocht seirbhísí poiblí ar aon chaighdeán.

Áit ina mbeidh deis ag céimithe óga fanacht agus na blianta atá rompu a mhúnlú agus áit a gcuirfear fáilte abhaile roimh eisimircigh, lena n-áirítear iad siúd arbh éigean dóibh imeacht le blianta beaga anuas.

Tá bunadh Iarthar na hÉireann tinn tuirseach den dóigh a gcaitear leo mar shaoránaigh den dara grád, dubh dóite leis an ghan-infheistíocht agus fearg orthu faoin easpa post agus deiseanna. Seo an t-am le cúrsaí a athrú.

Cé go bhfuil gann-infheistíocht agus neamart le blianta anuas ar na cúiseanna atá leis an neamhchothroime, tá polasaí rialtais ag leanúint de thús áite a thabhairt don chósta thoir.

Ní féidir é seo a chosaint ar chúiseanna eacnamaíochta - ba le leas na hÉireann ar fad forbairt chothrom réigiúnach. Is ionann téarnamh cóir agus téarnamh tomhaiste, cothrom - agus caithfidh téarnamh teacht chun an Iarthair. Dá bhforbrófaí Iarthar na hÉireann ó thaobh na teicneolaíochta de (dá ndéanfaí an infheistíocht chuí), d'fhéadfadh an réigiún an t-am atá caite a fhágáil ina dhiaidh agus ní bheadh sé faoi mhíbhuntáiste mar gheall ar a iargúlta atá sé.

Nuair a chuirtear nádúr tuaithe agus tearcdhaonra Iarthar na hÉireann san áireamh agus an scoiteacht a mhothaíonn a lán daoine, is minic a bhraitheann pobail nach bhfuil aon neart acu ar an mheath. Ní chluintear a nguth i hallaí na cumhachta.

I gcuid mhór cásanna, fágfar na ceantair seo in iomaíocht lena chéile i gcoimhlint "seo nó siúd" le seirbhísí a choinneáil nó infheistíocht a mhealladh. Tá gá le bunathruithe maidir le polasaithe agus cleachtais maidir leis an Iarthar. Tá gá le malairt treo - polasaithe eile seachas na polasaithe a bhain le príobháidíú agus gann-infheistíocht.

I dtaca le Sinn Féin de, dá dtabharfaí isteach Reachtaíocht a Bheadh Seasmhach Maidir le Ceantair Thuaithe, chuirfeadh sé bonn faoi na moltaí agus na tionscnaimh eile atá leagtha amach sa cháipéis seo.

Is bunuirlis í Reachtaíocht a Bheadh Seasmhach Maidir le Ceantair Thuaithe lena chinntiú go riarfar ar shuimeanna leasaithe bhunadh na tuaithe, ar dhóigh nach ndearnadh go dtí seo, nuair a bheidh polasaí agus seirbhísí poiblí á bhforbairt agus á soláthar. Is den ríthábhacht é seo i dtaca le todhchaí Iarthar na hÉireann de.

Sna Sé Chontae, Aire de chuid Shinn Féin, Michelle O'Neill, an chéad aire rialtais in Éirinn le bearta a Bheadh Seasmhach Maidir le Ceantair Thuaithe a thabhairt isteach ar bhonn reachtúil. Thug urlabhraí talmhaíochta Shinn Féin, Martin Ferris TD, reachtaíocht den chineál chéanna isteach sa Dáil. Dá mbeadh Sinn Féin sa rialtas, dhéanfaid siad an reachtaíocht seo a achtú.

Tá Sinn Féin luite ar a bheith ina n-urlabhraithe láidre ar son an Iarthair. Creidimid gur mithid na deiseanna atá in Iarthar na hÉireann a aithint agus a thapú.

Creideann Sinn Féin go gcuirfeadh roinnt croíbhearta agus infheistíocht spriocdhírthe tús le téarnamh.

Is léir ár dtiomantas do sheirbhísí poiblí agus do phobail áitiúla. Seasfaimid leis na pobail agus iad ag cur in éadan deireadh a bheith le seirbhísí agus troidfimid ar son Margadh Nua don Iarthar.

Déanfaidh foireann láidir TDanna, Seanadóirí agus comhairleoirí de chuid Shinn Féin, i gcomhar le Matt Carthy FPE, tosaíocht de sholáthar Margadh Nua don Iarthar.



Creating Jobs

Creating sustainable employment and allowing people to have a credible career path is essential in any thriving community and the West of Ireland is no different in that regard. The creation of jobs in the West has been impeded by a number of factors but particularly by the poor quality of broadband and transport infrastructure.

There has been a lack of focus by the enterprise development agencies on creating jobs in the West.

There has been a failure to recognise that the West can lead in areas such as agri-food, tourism and e-commerce. For the West to reap the benefits of its natural resources and agri food sector, value added activity and processing needs to take place within the region. Across this region many small employers – engineering companies, food processing companies, manufacturing companies and retailers have disappeared over the last 15 years. While for a time the construction boom masked this collapse, the reality is that in most small towns nothing has replaced those jobs.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Improve connectivity including broadband and transport infrastructure to the West and within the West.
- Make the West the e-commerce focal point of Ireland. Maximise the potential of indigenous online sales by delivering an ambitious e-commerce strategy getting 1,000 companies in the West each year trading online as well as developing an online town model.
- Develop a new enterprise spatial strategy in order to orientate infrastructural development and IDA and Enterprise Ireland development in a balanced regional manner.
- Examine the potential to develop Local Public Banks for local business/SME's (an alternative model to the Strategic Investment Bank). This would involve 10 public banks, managed independently but with an identical business model and management principles, throughout the 26 Counties. 2-4 pilot banks to be established initially, with the roll-out of the network over a full term of government (5 years). The public bank model would follow a business model that will provide economic viability but will not be ran for profit maximization for shareholders.
- Provide financial stimulus to build a new generation of micro enterprises and co-ops in rural communities to be operational in a similar manner to the current High Potential Start Up support scheme operated by Enterprise Ireland.
- Open up public procurement to SMEs and microbusinesses and work with Intertrade Ireland and the Office of Government Procurement to develop a 'Meet the Supplier' event programme for the West in consultation with the Small Firms Association, Irish Small and Medium sizes Enterprise association, Chambers and micro business representatives, to be rolled out for all public servants engaged in all levels of awarding public procurement contracts.
- Push for social clauses in public procurement.
- Develop a Regional Cluster Policy for the Western seaboard, which would target a specific sector e.g. renewable energy and make recommendations on third level education and physical infrastructure requirements to promote such clusters.
- Encourage investment projects to strengthen the Research and Development capacity of the ITs with the objective of setting minimum targets to ensure more regionally balanced Research and Development public investment.
- Examine the feasibility of creating a combined university of the north-west, with economic regeneration as its core aim.
- Establish a national policy for the creative sector with a specific focus on the West of Ireland to provide a coherent structure for developing the sector. Facilitate export growth and domestic sales by promoting the 'Creative West' brand.



Connectivity

For many people in the West, including those trying to run or start new businesses the quality of broadband and mobile phone coverage are serious impediments. Access to high quality broad band should be opening up new and exciting opportunities for a region which in the pre digital era suffered as a result of its peripheral location. Sinn Féin has introduced legislation to tackle broadband and mobile blackspots.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- Ensuring all Irish householders and business have access to a minimum broadband speed of 100Mbps.
- The replacement of copper with fibre optic cable.
- The provision of industrial cable broadband to municipal towns in the West.
- Empowering Comreg to regulate and reduce the high cost of broadband for users.
- Examine the feasibility of creating of a national communications company to avoid a situation where the West and other peripheral and lower populations areas are always left behind.
- Create a digital hub in Galway City through the provision of sufficient broadband levels and IDA/ government incentives. This hub will become an economic driver in the West and could contribute to rebalancing economic regional development.
- Enabling digital cottage industries to flourish in the West and the development of a strategy, which would be supported by the IDA, to enable people to remain living in the West while working (telecommuting) elsewhere including overseas.
- Mobile phone companies licences to include conditions around the provision of coverage particularly in rural area and that future spectrum licences should be based on geographic coverage instead of percentage coverage.

A new generation of coops for the West

A new generation of cooperatives can play an important role in the revitalisation of the West of Ireland. In the past the co-operatives were a lifeline for many small communities in the West.

Because co-operatives are owned and democratically controlled by their members, the decisions taken by co-operatives balance the need for profitability with the needs of their members and the wider interests of the community. By providing opportunities for mutual aid and cost-effective service provision, cooperatives encourage local and individual self-reliance, offering an important alternative to globalised, investor-driven business that have ignored many peripheral areas.

The co-operative model of enterprise can be applied to any business activity.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Explicitly recognize in new legislation to ensure the growth and development of the co-operative sector.
- Create a new arm of Enterprise Ireland to assist with the development a new generation of co-operative enterprises.
- Examine the scope for the creation of tax exemptions for cooperatives that create employment in rural or disadvantaged areas and cooperatives engaged in social activities, at which community is the centre.
- Establish an institutional framework for the purpose of allowing for the registration of cooperatives in as rapid, simple, affordable and efficient manner as possible.



- Create a new arm of Enterprise Ireland which would assist with the development a new generation of co-operative enterprises. Also, this new arm would become a 'one stop shop' information repository for entrepreneurs, communities and enterprises wishing to set up a co-operative. Facilitate cooperatives in the establishment of support services and the creation of networks of cooperatives, where services such as accountancy and auditing, consultancy, legal and taxation services and marketing become cooperatives in themselves in an complementary and mutually reinforcing environment.

Protecting Village and Rural Life

The local village is the heart of the community in many parts of the West. However the string of cuts and policy changes have sapped the life out of many small villages. The closure of a school or post office, or the loss of a shop or local pub can be detrimental to the village. Further, when there is no public transport serving a community it makes it less likely that families and young people will remain there.

For older people in isolated areas villages can provide an opportunity to live in their own community, even when they may no longer be able to remain in their own homes.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- Retention where feasible of the village school including looking at creative solutions to challenge facing small schools including shared administration and transformation to Gaelscoileanna.
- Retention of, and extension of, services available at village post offices.
- Reform of the rostering system for garda stations – the current system is biased against rural stations and based on an urban model.
- Conduct an audit of transport to determine whether an integrated public transport plan to ensure villages are served by public transport and taxis/hackneys is required and feasible.
- Retain doctors in local villages and small towns.

Regeneration of Rural Towns

Sinn Féin believes regenerating rural towns is key to the future of the West. At present many rural towns have been hit by closures of shops and pubs as well as out of town developments.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- Putting a focus on creating local employment in rural towns and putting an obligation on enterprise development agencies in this regard.
- A commitment to keep open post offices, libraries, garda stations and other services that bring people in and connect them with their local towns.
- Examining the introduction of a two tier rates structure based on profitability and size as well as examining the potential of incentives for those who open new businesses within town centres.
- An end to upward only rent reviews.
- A new Living Above the Shop Scheme aimed at rural towns.
- Providing funds for regeneration of public spaces.
- Use of vacant buildings for community groups and non profit organisations.
- Encouraging local authorities to utilise the services of an architect to look at the regeneration of local towns / signage / shop fronts.
- Developing viable farmers markets in rural towns.
- Encouraging the branding / marketing/ theming of towns in the west.



Tackling de-population

For decades the potential of the West has been undermined by the outward migration of young people – be it to Australia or to Dublin. Declining population has long been a concern in most western counties, and for the islands. It has, along with government policy, been the driving force behind the closure of schools, post offices and garda stations.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- A focus on creating opportunities for graduates in the West.
- A pilot scheme for rural resettlement to encourage and support families with a relocation package of up to €5,000 including return flights for certain emigrant families to return to Rural Ireland.
- A returning emigrants/diaspora resettlement scheme for those who return to settle in rural depopulated areas of the West with a package of up to €1,500 for an individual.
- Facilitating and supporting those returning to care for elderly relatives by including the application of the habitual residence clause to the person who the returning emigrant will be caring for, rather than the returning emigrant themselves.
- A specific means tested assistance scheme for vulnerable older emigrants who wish to return home (but do not have the means to do so).
- Voting rights for Irish emigrants to keep them connected and represented
- Increased financial support for those organisations supporting Irish emigrants abroad, in particular aging emigrants in Britain and elsewhere. Including Irish in Britain, The London Irish Center, The Aishling Project (Returning to Ireland), Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers (US), Australian Irish Welfare Bureau (Melbourne & Sydney) etc.

Post Offices

Sinn Féin will do everything within our capabilities to maintain and enhance the rural post office network. Recognising the challenges facing the post office network we need to modernise and transform the role of post office so that they become a hub for accessing public services and social protections within in the community. The Post Office Network is an integral part of the social makeup of Ireland. Therefore, it should be protected and given the resources it needs.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Ensure Social Protection payments continue to be processed through the post office network. We also believe that other sources of revenue should be identified for the post office network such as government payments and banking.
- Protect universal service and ensure a high minimum standard for rural Ireland.
- Keep An Post in public ownership and ensure adequate funding to the Universal Service Obligation to avoid any potential threat to pay and conditions of staff, which have already been tested by full competition.
- Ensure competition in the postal sector does not reduce quality of or access to service
- Negotiate a comprehensive review or derogations from the Postal Services Directive, to increase minimum standards of universal provision and increase obligations to communities i.e. accessibility and protection of branches from closure.



Rural Policing

In rural areas there has been a growing concern that the closure of local garda stations has reduced garda visibility and made rural communities vulnerable to crime. This has contributed to many older people feeling vulnerable in their homes particularly where they live in isolated areas. In addition, farmers have found themselves increasingly dealing with the theft of valuable farm machinery and livestock. Sinn Féin is clear that there can be no second class garda service for rural communities.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- A commitment that rural policing cannot be just dependent on economic scale or population numbers.
- Recruit 3,000 gardaí over our government term to restore An Garda Síochána force levels to 14,250, or pre-crisis levels.
- Reverse the closure of Garda stations – these closures have provided minimal ‘savings’ to the state of €556,000 per annum and are a shameful legacy of this government.
- A change to rostering to allow increased presence in rural garda stations.
- A coherent strategy to maximise garda visibility in rural communities.
- Additional resources to be directed towards supporting and expanding Community and Text Alert and Neighbourhood Watch and appropriate CCTV schemes particularly in areas where stations have been closed over recent years.

National Rural Development Programme – LEADER

LEADER has been an important funding stream for rural communities and many communities are concerned about the impact of the changes brought in by the government:

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- Maintenance of Irish match funding to leverage more vital rural development funds from Europe.
- Exchequer to make up shortfall in cuts to leader funding from EU level.
- Roll-back of the Government’s power-grab for LEADER and community development programmes thus protecting the community control and the bottom-up ethos in the roll-out of these programmes.
- Appropriate balancing of both the social inclusion and economic development aspects of LEADER.
- Increased co-ordination between all programmes and agencies tasked with rural diversification and economic development.
- Create a 29th sub-region, under the Rural Development Programme, to deal with offshore islands so that those organisations specifically dealing with the islands unique conditions and circumstances will be enabled to tender as Local Action Groups under the programme.



Farming and rural communities

Farming and fishing are crucial to the economic life of the West. The agrifoods sector has resiliently outperformed other sectors of the Irish economy over the last number of years and yet many farmers are often undercut without receiving a fair price for their produce. Further, small farmers in peripheral counties have struggled to make a living as financial supports have disproportionately benefitted larger farmers.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- Addressing the issue of land eligibility: This project of LIPUS reductions is taking money from the most vulnerable farmers – particularly in the West. The project is questionable when 1/3 of farmers who received reductions have appealed the Department's decision. It is further questionable when of these appeals, 45% have been fully or partially successful. Sinn Féin is calling for an amnesty for those (who made claims in good faith) for retrospective penalties levied on LPIS over claims and for refunds to be issued immediately.
- The immediate implementation of a Charter of Rights for Farmers specifically dealing with onsite inspections.
- Simplification of the Beef Data Genomics Programme to encourage wider uptake. Instigate another round of applications next year to ensure full use of the fund allocated for this scheme.
- A call for a short term intervention price for milk and other safety net measures to protect smaller dairy farmers facing into price volatility as a result of quota abolition. Further, Sinn Féin have called for the strengthening of contractual relationships between producers and retailers to provide certainty for farm gate prices farmers in this sector.
- Introduction of legislation for regulation for the beef processing industry to deal with allegation of price fixing, market manipulation and distortion practices considering the very small number of competitors on the Island.
- Introduction of All Island labelling.
- Reintroduction of the Groceries Order with immediate effect.
- Opposition to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which is a free trade and investment treaty being negotiated between the EU and the USA . TTIP represents a bad deal for Irish agriculture as well as for consumers, citizens and workers. The Copenhagen Economics Report Commissioned by the Irish Government has warned that Ireland's beef sector is expected to contract by between 1%-3%; equivalent to €25-45 million as a result of TTIP. Any trade deal that includes ISDS should be oppose.
- A €12 million compensation fund to be established for Hen Harrier designated conservation lands.
- A commitment to the principals of food sovereignty, which in the case of Ireland means no GMO, no hormones in beef and the survival of the family farm as we know it.
- Maintain the concept of income averaging for taxation purposes to compensate farmers for extreme income volatility.
- Restore €5 million of Farm Assist.
- Additional 500 places on the Rural Social Scheme, expanding the current number of scheme places by 20%.



Flood defences

- Establish a Shannon River Authority to ensure that there is proper co-ordination and a robust response from the various agencies responsible when flooding occurs and also that necessary steps are taken to minimise the risk of flooding in the future.
- Regulate planning to prevent areas being built on or developed which are at risk of flooding, and investment in flood defences funded by Government. Planning will ensure full compliance with EU directives on flood mapping to tackle high-risk areas
- Invest in our water and sewerage, drainage and coastal infrastructure
- Measures to militate against climate change and its effect, including rising sea levels, storm weather, coastal flooding, etc.
- Address the market failure of the insurance industry and political failure of the Government through its lack of State intervention to provide affordable, capped insurance cover to domestic households and SME properties against high flood risk. This will involve looking at the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Insurance industry (similar to Britain), operating within EU State Aid rules, which commits insurers to make flood insurance for high-risk elements available to domestic households and SME properties.

Fishing and coastal communities

The natural resources of Ireland belong to the people of Ireland. Our waters and our fish stocks are some of our most valuable strategic resources, however years of neglect and mismanagement by successive governments have thwarted the potential for a vibrant, sustainable and valuable fishing industry.

European regulations, rigidly and enthusiastically enforced by the Irish government, have hurt fishermen, held back our fishing industry and hampered economic growth in coastal communities.

Sinn Féin is determined to support a rejuvenated fishing industry that is environmentally sustainable and economically viable. Such an industry could act as an engine for growth and employment in communities up and down our coast, delivering a fair recovery for this neglected sector.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Establish a Department for Fisheries, Marine and Marine Communities with a specific island division.
- Implement a Charter of Rights for the Fishing Industry setting out the responsibilities of both government and fishermen and women.
- Repeal the penalty point system that is currently in place, which criminalises fishermen and devalues their business.
- Reform fisheries management:
 - Make fisheries management structures more democratic.
 - Involve fishermen in the collection of independently verifiable scientific data.
 - Review the closures of fisheries.
- Introduce a sectoral work permit scheme, especially for fisheries to ensure that the recruitment of non-EU workers is regulated and that they are afforded the same protections.



- Facilitate island cooperatives and development companies in buying fishing licences and/or polyvalent 'tonnage' which could be leased out to island fishermen who wish to enter the industry or to expand their fishing operations.
- To overhaul and reorganise the aquaculture licensing regime to enable the sustainable development of the sector in conjunction with local communities. We would examine the development of onshore fishfarms which would be more environmentally friendly.
- Allocate funding for the development of the pier at Ros a'Mhíl to enable larger vessels to dock and to facilitate the further development of the fishing industry in the region.
- Review the licensing regime for seaweed harvesting and encourage a 'Fair Trade' model for organising the traditional harvesters into working collectives to manage their resources for the benefit of coastal communities.

Fighting in Europe for better conditions for Irish fishing:

- Fight for adequate quota and ensure a fairer distribution of it amongst Irish fishermen.
- Oppose further cuts to the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which exists to give financial assistance to coastal communities and the fishing industry.
- Pursue at a European level restrictions on factory vessels and super-trawlers in Irish waters.
- Negotiate a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and related legislation to simplify regulations and put an added emphasis on development in coastal communities.
- Negotiate an increase in draw-down of EU Funds to support the Irish fishing industry through:
 - Provision for a Single Boat Payment under a reformed Common Fisheries Policy.
 - Investment in Naval Surveillance to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by foreign vessels, and
 - Investment in health and safety schemes for fishermen.

Innovative methods:

- Pursue innovation, diversification and investment in the fisheries sector to:
 - support research and development in fisheries and seafood production; in coastal tourism; and in renewable maritime energy.
 - promote Ireland as a key hub for fish processing.
 - examine investment in hatcheries and spawning beds to facilitate restocking native fish species; and
 - explore capacity for blue growth along the Irish coast.
- Develop an environmentally sustainable cooperative-based aquaculture industry that takes into account international best practice and the Kunterra model in particular; and
- Address the inland fisheries conservation practices that have led to dwindling stocks and mass-fish kills.



Transport

Weak infrastructure is a central barrier to economic development and access to services in the West of Ireland. Lack of public transport and the costs of private transport (insurance, tax, petrol, annual NCT for older cars) are a significant push factor for young people who leave rural areas. To avoid increased levels of social exclusion, public and community transport must be matched particularly to the needs of older passengers, particularly those who do not drive and have no access to transport from family or friends.

Sinn Féin recognises the vital strategic value of Ireland West Airport, Knock (IWAK) to Mayo and the whole of the West. The underinvestment by successive governments in Knock Airport has meant that potential expansion has been delayed. Annual passenger numbers in excess of 700,000 clearly illustrates the fact that the Airport is a major transportation hub for the region.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Develop a transport plan for the West that seeks to make public transport and alternative models of transport a viable option for those living in the region.
- Ensure that in rural areas with declining population profitability should not be the key consideration regarding investment in transport infrastructure.
- Conduct an audit of public and community transport services with a view to developing efficient and cost-effective rural transport.
- Increase funding for the rural transport programme.
- A review of Bus Eireann non-PSO routes to determine social and economic benefit and see where extra subsidy is required to ensure connectivity where profit is not possible.
- Ensure sufficient hackney licences are made available to serve the needs of rural communities.
- Provide a funding package for improving condition of rural roads.
- Supports the development of Ireland West Airport Knock as a strategically important international gateway to the Region through the continued growth of the Airport
- Supports the current application by the Ireland West Airport Knock for 90% exchequer funding for the expansion plans associated with the operation of the Airport as well as further business proposals to facilitate the ongoing development of the Airport and the region.
- Agree a timeframe for the completion of the Western Rail Corridor which is critical to the development of the west.
- Examine the designation of the Atlantic Corridor as a Sustainable Transport Corridor, comprising balanced and sustainable joint road/rail infrastructure development in a single package.
- The development of a strategic transport policy for Galway city.
- Restore funding to local authorities for the LIS community involvement scheme for non council roads.
- Upgrade the N4 between Cloonamahon and Castlebaldwin to enhance Sligo/Dublin link.



Health Services

People living in the West of Ireland do not enjoy the same access to health services available to those elsewhere in the state. This is an inequality that must be addressed and is also an impediment to the economic progress of the region. Evidence of Sinn Féin's commitment to addressing such inequalities is the Rural Proofing Bill put forward by the party in the Dáil.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Replace of the current inequitable healthcare system with a universal public health system, tackling geographic inequalities in health service provision, free at point of delivery.
- Address the historic underinvestment in public services in the west.
- Protect out of hours doctors services in the West.
- Invest in ambulance services, including air ambulance services.
- Improve transport services as key part of improving access to health services and increase funding for and expand schemes such as Travel2Care.
- Increase cross border cooperation to make the nearest health services accessible to patients in all cases.
- Focus on addressing mental health in the West, not only by tackling the contributory factors such as isolation and unemployment but also by increasing the suicide prevention budget and the roll-out of Suicide Crisis Assessment Nurses in primary care and liaison nurses in A&E units. Further, we would extend counselling in primary care in line with the proposals of Mental Health Reform.
- Award an automatic medical card to every child with a serious illness or disability and tackle the poverty trap by introducing a new secure medical card for adults with disabilities based on medical need.
- Support older people by increasing home help hours, respite hours and providing additional nursing home beds.

Housing

They are a range of different housing challenges facing communities in the West of Ireland. These include families struggling with mortgage arrears, costly new regulations on self builds, a failure to invest a public house building programme, rural homelessness and a legacy particularly in counties such as Leitrim of vacant and incomplete houses as a result of celtic tiger era tax avoidance incentives.

As we strive to make the West of Ireland a better place to live and to work we need to address these issues and make it possible for people in the West to secure good affordable housing in the community where they wish to live.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal that includes:

- Rural-proofing all housing law and policy.
- Abolition of the Local Property Tax.
- Introducing legislation to empower the Central Bank to limit the interest rates that banks can charge.
- Supporting regeneration programmes in Sligo and Galway, as well as examining the need for regeneration projects in respect of housing estates in smaller neglected rural towns.



- Building and delivering up to 36,500 social and affordable homes nationally between 2016 – 2021.
- Significant investment in retrofitting with funding returning to 2011 levels.
- Extending the Home Renovation Incentive grant to encourage the restoration of existing properties in isolated rural areas. Also examine assistance for rural residents to upgrade cheap/abandoned housing stock (non primary residences).
- Identifying infrastructural corridors by councils where houses will not receive planning permission using these corridors for infrastructural work that won't cause disruption to people's homes as is the case in the development of the N6 Galway bypass.
- The reintroduction of social housing built on land offered over by a landowner and which the council would take ownership of on the death of the occupant (landowner). (Rural Dwellings Scheme)
- Encouraging a return to the building of houses in clusters, saving in infrastructure costs with corresponding incentives to attract people away from one off housing to reinvigorate our villages.
- Continuing to allow and smooth the planning process for the building of houses in rural Ireland as a primary residence, once it is agreed that the build is sustainable.
- Allowing all households who wish to upgrade their septic tanks and pecculation areas to be eligible to access the Septic Tank Grant Scheme.
- Considering moving to Local Authorities led inspection regime for self-builds in particular.
- Establishment of an independent panel of experts to undertake a comprehensive investigation into the extent, cause and possible remediation of the defective blocks issue (Mica muscovite, or weatabix block).
- Ensuring defective block suppliers adhere to new quality standards of blocks/cement as per recent legislation.
- Reforming and simplifying the Pyrite redress scheme and extend it to Mica brick homes – ensuring the scheme is fully funded and homeowners are supported through the process.

Using Natural Resources to benefit the West

The West of Ireland has never seen the benefit of its natural resources. Decades of corrupt and bad governments have allowed these natural resources to be handed over and exploited by others, including multinational companies.

In 1987 Fianna Fáil Minister Ray Burke changed the law, reducing the State's share in our offshore oil and gas from 50% to zero and abolishing royalties. In 1992, Minister Bertie Ahern reduced the tax rate for the profits made from the sale of these resources from 50% to 25%. Today we see a combination of increasing restrictions on ordinary people (the ban on turf cutting), privatisation (seaweed), and private rather than community benefit from natural resources (wind and wave).

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Introduce staged tax measures on offshore oil and gas fields, as outlined by the report by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Communications, Natural Resources and Agriculture.
- Examine the potential to establish a State oil, gas and mineral exploration company which would actively participate and invest in exploration.



- Plan for strategic public investment through the Irish Strategic Investment Fund in developing the renewable energy sector and examine the potential to establish a publicly-owned national green technology firm for Ireland that would manage and use the island's energy resources.
- Ensure community benefit from the development of natural resources in the West.
- Communities play a significant role in developing renewable energy in Ireland. Barriers that prevent community involvement in energy should be removed. This requires a dedicated route to the national grid for community projects. Capacity and capital supports for community projects must be made available.
- End the higher rural standing charge for electricity.
- Keep the ESB and all other public companies in public ownership.
- Enable small producers to sell power to the ESB.
- Coillte and Bord na Mona and other state companies should work closely for the development of renewable energy in Ireland.
- Ensure proper regulation of all aspects of wind turbine construction. This includes proper zoning of areas for wind turbine developments, the duties of planning authorities, setback distances and the responsibility of decommissioning wind turbines.
- Ensure the retention of domestic turf rights for families in the West of Ireland who cut turf to heat the family home, as has been part of Irish tradition and heritage for centuries.
- Engage with all interested parties in an effort to ensure the long term sustainability and preservation of our boglands.
- Focus on the development of wave energy in the West
- All energy projects must be subject to Strategic Environment Assessment. A Feed-in-Tariff must be made available for Solar PV electricity. A fair export tariff should be given for electricity from micro-generation, with the carbon offset contribution recognised.
- Ban low usage tariffs (which go against sustainability).

Environmental Sustainability

The West of Ireland has the ability to lead in terms of sustainability. We can make its villages, towns and cities the greenest in Ireland.

Sinn Féin is putting forward a New Deal to:

- Introduce a full legislative ban on fracking.
- Instigate community led development of renewable energy generation.
- Develop a green economic strategy for the Western seaboard region, which would explore enterprise opportunities in green services and renewable energy.
- Initiate a jobs strategy that creates more sustainable patterns of living (reducing commuting).
- Build the eco-tourism potential of the West, including significantly expanding the tourism potential of Coillte's wide range of forest-based events, from walking and orienteering to mushroom hunts and outdoor theatre events through exploring international tourism marketing opportunities by working in conjunction with domestic and international tourist boards.
- Develop the organic sector in the West through policy and strategy changes within the Department of Agriculture and additional resources with specific development workers for marketing, branding and other supports.



- Make Galway the greenest city in Ireland in terms of transport, resource consumption, waste management, energy use and generation. Target EU funding for this
- Seek to secure EU funding for measures to combat coastal erosion

The Islands

Sinn Féin is committed to supporting island communities along the West coast and making it a viable option for people to live and work on the islands.

As part of a new deal for the West Sinn Féin would:

- Work with Islanders to bring forward a Charter of Rights for the Islands, which would include the right to access the islands through proper piers and airstrips, broadband access and the right to essential social services. There should also be a specific job creation strategy with targets and timescales from Údarás na Gaeltachta based on the needs of each island.
- Facilitate island cooperatives and development companies in buying fishing licences and/or polyvalent 'tonnage' which could be leased out to island fishermen who wish to enter the industry or to expand their fishing operations.
- Maintain the airlink to the Aran Islands.
- Create a 29th sub-region, under the Rural Development Programme, to deal with offshore islands so that those organisations specifically dealing with the islands unique conditions and circumstances will be enabled to tender as Local Action Groups under the programme.
- Establish a Department for Fisheries, Marine and Marine Communities with a specific Island division this Department and a Junior Minister with responsibilities for Islands.

Cúrsaí Gaeilge & Gaeltachta

Tá gá díriú in athuair le tacaíocht mar is ceart a thabhairt don Ghaeilge agus na ceantair Gaeltachta.

Tá Sinn Féin ag moladh Socrú Nua a chinntíonn:

- Deliver additional capital funding to Údarás na Gaeltachta to create employment and ensure economic growth in the Gaeltacht. Also reinstate the direct elections of Udaras board members.
- Complete review of implementation of the 20 Year Irish Language Strategy and action plan to develop new.
- Focus more resources to provide language-in community activities.
- Ensure that there are at least two teachers in primary schools on the offshore islands
- Development of a deep sea pier in Rosaveal.
- Development of a new pier Inis Oírr.
- Commit to retaining the fixed wing air service to the Aran Islands from Connemara.
- Elimination of the derogation of the Irish language in the European Union.
- Develop the seaweed industry in the interests of the local community.



- Increase the Aquaculture industry in a sustainable way, which is acceptable to the local community.
- Strengthen the Official Languages Act and provide further support for the implementation of its provisions.
- Put together a plan to deliver state services in Irish for the Irish speaking community - without question, without condition.
- Strengthen Irish education and Gaeltacht education policies and implement in consultation with the Irish speaking community.
- Ensure affordability for working families who send children to Gaeltacht and sustainability for the Gaeltacht regions through providing tax relief to hard pressed families. This would involve the provision of a 20% tax credit in relation to expenditure incurred by parents for children for Gaeltacht courses set at a maximum at €950 per child. With regards to children whose parents are not working, Sinn Féin would grant a deduction at source for 20% of fees, if you have a medical card.



ANewDeal 4THEWEST



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