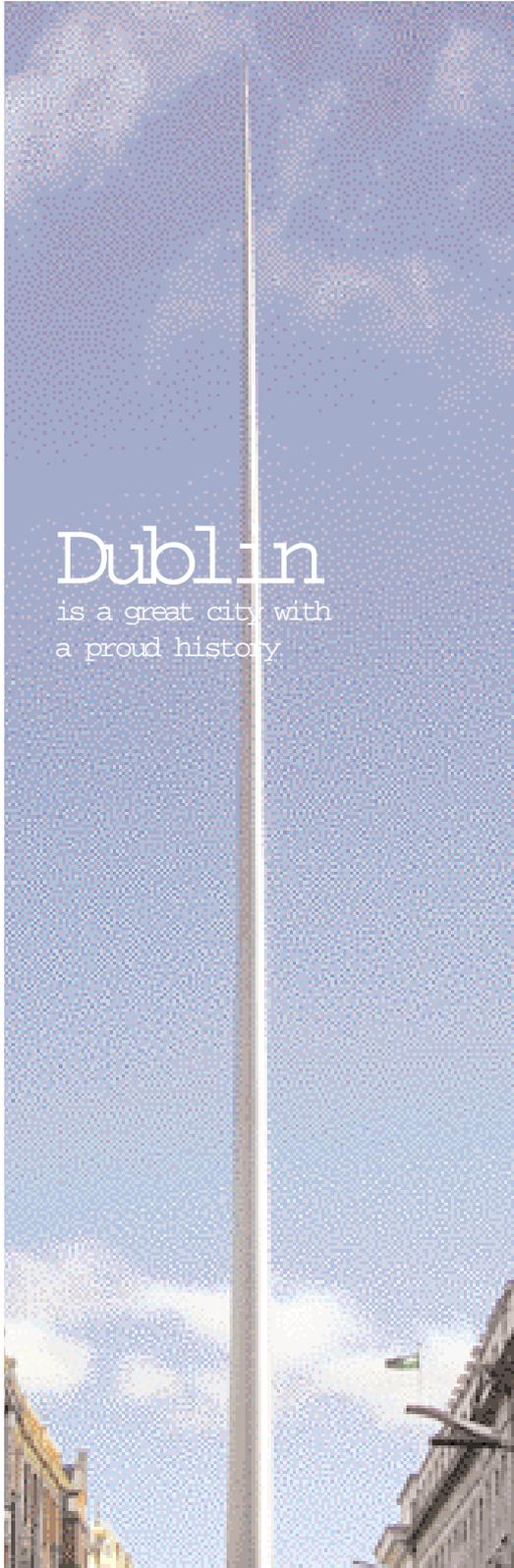


In Fine Gael we want the best for our city.



Dublin Office  
Fine Gael Headquarters  
51 Upper Mount Street  
Dublin 2  
Phone: 619 84 44  
Email: [dublin@finegael.ie](mailto:dublin@finegael.ie)  
[www.finegael.ie](http://www.finegael.ie)



Dublin  
is a great city with  
a proud history

People want to live and  
raise their children in  
one of the best capital  
cities of Europe.

In Fine Gael we want the best for  
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The local elections on June  
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city for all the citizens of  
Dublin. Fine Gael wants to  
give the city a new political  
leadership. That's why we  
have published our  
priorities for Dublin in  
this document.

***fine gael*** ★  
*on your side*

# taking a stand for dublin

## Fine Gael puts the capital city first – giving it back to the people

Dublin is a great city with a proud history. People want to live and raise their children in one of the best capital cities of Europe. In Fine Gael we want the best for our city.

In recent years the city has become a difficult place in which to live and work. The cost of housing and the cost of living keeps increasing as more and more people are forced out of the city and into adjoining counties. This must be turned around.

The Government's decentralisation plans will not only leave no major Department of State on the north side of Dublin, but have ensured that thousands of public servants have to leave this city. Decentralisation is bad for Dublin and for the country because the current plans are totally at variance with the national spatial strategy.

Getting around Dublin is becoming more difficult as congestion costs the city over €600 million a year. There is a real sense that nothing works and no one is in charge as the city grows at a rapid rate without any real master plan for the region.

Fine Gael has produced a National Manifesto for the upcoming elections,

which addresses the broader challenge facing the nation. However, given the particular nature of the problems facing the capital city, we feel it vital that Dublin has its own set of policies spelt out in detail.

The local elections on June 11th are not just about electing candidates, but must also be about setting out a new agenda for the entire Dublin region. We will work with others to develop that vision for a safer, cleaner, more competitive and smarter city for all the citizens of Dublin. Fine Gael wants to give the city a new political leadership. That's why we have published our priorities for Dublin in this document.

**Senator Brian Hayes**  
FG Dublin Spokesperson



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# Executive Summary

**1. Reforming Local Government in Dublin:** Fine Gael proposes the introduction of legislation for a directly elected Lord Mayor – elected by the people for a five-year term.

**2. Getting Transport Moving:** Fine Gael proposes the establishment of a new Dublin Transport Authority to take over the existing powers that are vested in 20 separate groups / agencies in Dublin that currently have some responsibility for transport.

**3. A Safe City:** Fine Gael proposes that the organisation and operation of the police in Dublin should fall under a Dublin Metropolitan Police service, working in tandem with An Garda Síochána.

**4. Value For Money Please:** We will create an Independent Infrastructure Review Unit which will regularly review and revise cost estimates within all relevant state bodies with responsibility for all infrastructure projects.

**5. Dublin: A Multi-Cultural City:** Fine Gael proposes that Dublin City Council designate different parts of the city as areas where another ethnic culture can be found, and local authorities provide citizenship courses to those that want to become Irish citizens.

**6. A Clean City:** Fine Gael will abolish the flat rate annual waste charge, introducing a fair waiver system throughout the city. By doubling the plastic bag tax, we will also make a commitment that within two years, all householders in Dublin will have recourse to recycling bins, organic composters, and other recycling facilities.

**7. Dublin: A Home For Everyone:** We will assist prospective house buyers achieve their goal of owning their own home by implementing a three point plan, namely introducing an SSIA-type savings account that will give First Time Buyers €1 for every €3 saved over a minimum of two years, abolishing stamp duty on second-hand homes for First Time Buyers, and the frontloading of mortgage interest relief to the first seven years of the life of the mortgage to help in the early, expensive stages of a mortgage.

**8. Building Up Public Infrastructure:** Fine Gael believes that Local Authorities should be given power to decide funding on projects that come within the remit of the National Lottery, as Dublin is currently losing out in comparison to other regions of the country in terms of its share of the funds.

**9. A Family Friendly City:** Fine Gael will introduce a Local Business Childcare Project whereby local businesses will co-operate to offer childcare facilities to employees locally at a reasonable rate, with financial investment from Local Authorities.

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# 1. Reforming Local Government in Dublin

Dubliners want to see real political accountability in the people they elect.

Political leaders and not County Managers should be making decisions in the city. Fine Gael wants a directly elected Mayor, in co-operation with elected City and County Councillors to be a real focus of power. Currently, power rests with un-elected officials, which is no basis for democracy and fair representation.

Fine Gael proposes the following:

1. We will introduce legislation to allow for the election of a directly elected Mayor for the city and county of Dublin for a five-year term.
2. The elected Mayor would appoint a team of Local Ministers with a number of executive powers from a newly comprised Dublin Authority, made up of existing Councillors from the four authorities.
3. The four existing local authorities (Dublin City, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown and South Dublin) will continue to make yearly appointments to the position of Council Chairperson. However, the new Mayor for the entire city will have very specific powers and tasks. Specifically he/she will co-ordinate policy in the areas of County

Planning, Business and Economic Development, Transport, Countywide Policing, Environmental and Joint Leisure & Amenity Programmes.

4. Fine Gael will root out waste and inefficiency by conducting a full audit of the multiplicity of local government agencies to see where streamlining can occur, with the clear aim of saving Dubliners money.

5. We want Dublin local authorities to use the existing power to allow local plebiscites on key local issues as a means of encouraging citizens to participate in decision-making.

6. In conjunction with proper planning and the adoption of a City and County Development Plan, we support the promotion of local area action plans, which set our strategic goals in smaller parts of Dublin for a five-year period. Local area action plans should be incorporated into the City and County Development Plans.

7. Maverick rezoning decisions in Dublin must now be sanctioned by the support of the Rezoning Review Board. Where Councillors go against the planning and development advice of their council, Fine Gael's Rezoning Review Board must sanction the decision before it can be accepted.

8. The Minister for the Environment and Local Government should continue to have the powers to dissolve councils that fail to pass a budget, but a fresh election should then take place instead of the appointment of an unelected and unaccountable Commissioner.



## 2. Getting Transport Moving

### Dublin is the capital of traffic gridlock.

We need to do better for those who use public transport and for those still dependent on the car as their only form of transport.

The case for a truly integrated transport system in Dublin is now well overdue. Fine Gael will provide such a system so that public transport is a real option for commuters. We have got to tip the balance in favour of public transport.

#### Fine Gael proposes the following:

**1. The establishment of a new Dublin Transport Authority** to take over the existing powers that are vested in 20 separate groups / agencies in Dublin that currently have some responsibility for transport. All public transport bodies would be answerable to the DTA for the service they provide.

**2. Better ticketing:** We will introduce easily accessible prepaid ticketing to reduce delays caused by the collection of fares by drivers. Ticket machines should be available at every bus stop. A ticket purchased at one point on the transport network should be adequate to transfer to any other part of the network or the Luas or Dart. Fine Gael will provide an integrated ticketing system, one ticket for bus/Luas/Dart, along with competition in the Dublin Bus route sector and more investment in park & ride facilities. Bus tickets will also be more available in retail outlets around Dublin. Purchase of an

annual ticket should be tax deductible for individuals; the present system for employers will be continued.

**3. Trains:** Fine Gael will promote investment in Dublin area suburban rail as a priority, particularly with a view to utilising existing tracks to serve new communities. Fine Gael favours the Iarnród Éireann plan, which is currently on the Minister's desk.

The plan includes the establishment of an integrated rail service involving Darts to Maynooth via Dublin 15 and the North Inner City, Lucan, and out as far as North Kildare and to the Airport.

**4. Safety:** We will make public transport more attractive – providing authorised officers on buses and DARTs, some of which could be in plain clothes, to enforce laws. CCTV will also be part of the new system to maintain public order on public transport. Drug abuse, alcohol consumption and smoking on buses will not be tolerated.

**5. New bus routes** will be identified in key areas where the population has expanded rapidly. Priority will be given to developing new routes, while some existing routes will be opened to tender. No passenger should have to wait more than 15 minutes for a bus.

**6. Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs):** We will increase the number and efficiency of quality bus corridors only where the streets/roads are capable of supporting them. Funded by the revenue generated from parking fees, Local Authorities will be charged with ensuring that these facilities are properly maintained, advertised, and signposted, as well as ensuring proper access to the site is provided for in the planning stages. We must avoid the mistakes of the past - for example, park and ride facilities at Newland's Cross are likely to cause further congestion due to inadequate access from the north-bound lanes of the

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Naas dual carriageway. Before new QBC's come into operation, public transport operators have to guarantee a minimum number of buses at peak times.

**7. Communicating with Commuters:**

Real time displays will be erected throughout the bus network so that passengers can tell when the next bus is due

**8. Fine Gael will seek to double the capacity of the DART service** by investing in rolling stock and signalling to increase the throughput of traffic. Instead of always buying new carriages, Iarnród Éireann should lease them, which would prove more cost-effective.

**9. DART Park and Ride Facilities:** Fine Gael will provide for more park and ride facilities along the DART lines, and will licence private and public operations to operate bus feeder services to and from DART Stations, reducing the use of private cars.

**10. Air Travel:** Fine Gael sees a case for the establishment of a second airport for Dublin or, at a minimum, a second terminal at Dublin Airport. If we do not have an efficient airport system, our tourism and commerce will be threatened.

**11. Fine Gael in government will introduce a dedicated traffic corps** for Dublin city to enforce traffic regulations and implement Operation Freeflow on a year round basis.

**12. The SCATS traffic light system** used in Dublin, which currently only controls 180 intersections in the Dublin City Council area, will be extended to South Dublin, Fingal, and Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown where, remarkably, they have different systems in place.

**13. Car-pooling:** We will encourage car-pooling by permitting cars with three or more occupants to use bus lanes. We believe that this initiative could

dramatically reduce the number of cars on the roads during commute hours. Like other proposals, the idea should be tested and only continued if it reduces congestion and does not impede buses using the quality bus lanes.

**14. Smart Bike Proposal:** We will introduce a Smart Bike System in pilot areas in the city, and if it is successful, the idea could be mainstreamed through all parts of the city and county. The system, which works well in many EU countries, uses information technology to allow commuters use a smart card that they have purchased in a newsagent or supermarket to unlock bicycles parked throughout the city and has the potential of offering public transport users an easy means of getting around the city.



**15. Toll Free:** Access to the M50 via tollbooths is causing nightmarish traffic jams. Coin operatives should be abolished if measures cannot be found to eliminate delays caused by drivers paying the toll. Technology - such as that currently used in London to collect the congestion charge electronically - should be gradually introduced. We will re-negotiate the contract with National Toll Roads to ensure that no motorist has to wait for a specified period at the toll bridge. If this maximum period is breached, the barriers should be automatically raised. This condition is now part of the contracts in place in respect of other toll roads recently opened.

**16. Fine Gael demands much greater co-ordination** between local business, local authorities and the traffic police in introducing a city wide streamlined off-peak delivery plan for the city. We welcome the pilot scheme in operation in Dublin city centre.

## 3. A Safe City

Crime in Dublin has increased dramatically since this current Government took office in 1997.



Public order offences, gun crime, violent attacks, racially motivated and homophobic crime, along with attacks on persons and property are common day occurrences in our capital. Whilst alcohol is repeatedly linked to our spiralling crime problem, a number of things can be done to improve the situation.

**Fine Gael proposes the following:**

**1. Establish Local Police Partnerships** under the auspices of the various local authorities in the city where the community, local politicians, relevant authorities and the Gardaí can meet on a regular basis to discuss local policing matters. We believe that police partnerships are essential in countering the existing vigilante threat that is posed in some parts of the city.

**2. We are calling for a fundamental change in the operational structure of the Gardaí in Dublin.** Dublin policing issues are different to other parts of the country. As such, we are proposing that the organisation and operation of the police in Dublin should fall under a Dublin Metropolitan Police service,

working in tandem with An Garda Síochána.

**3. Fine Gael want more Gardaí for Dublin** and demand that the governments election promise for 2,000 additional Gardaí be acted upon without delay. This will mean opening a new training centre, as the existing centre in Templemore cannot cope with the additional new recruits. We want new officers trained in Dublin so that as part of their training they can work with Garda Stations that are currently overstretched.

**4. In many EU capitals, the presence of a large police force in major pedestrian areas acts as a deterrent to crime.** This has never been tried in the city, and should now be acted upon immediately. Furthermore, we are calling for joint patrols of various parts of the city between the Gardaí and local authority uniformed personnel at times of the day when littering and public order offences are prevalent. Joint patrolling by Dublin City Council and the Gardaí could act as a deterrent.

**5. A new revitalised "Neighbourhood Watch" programme** should be re-launched in conjunction with the four Dublin local authorities.

**6. Fine Gael will make available funds to roll out the use of CCTV** as a means of detecting local crime. CCTV should not just be for business districts.

**7. Fine Gael believes that An Garda Síochána should deploy a new policy of recruitment** so that all areas of the city have representative members of the force within its ranks.

**8. The Drugs Court currently operating in the city centre should now be extended** to other parts of the city and out of the pilot phase.

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## 4. Value For Money Please

Dublin now ranks as one of the most expensive cities in Europe.

The rip off culture has taken off as Dubliners are short-changed on virtually everything they buy. Tourism in the capital will be lost unless something is done to stop this culture of rip off. We must also make accountable those agencies that win contracts for major infrastructure projects in the city. Luas was originally costed at €279 million, but has eventually come in at €770 million. The Dublin Port Tunnel is another example of bad value for money. Projects must come in on budget and on time.

*Fine Gael proposes the following:*

1. We will create an **Independent Infrastructure Review Unit**, which will regularly review and revise cost estimates, within all relevant state bodies with responsibility for all infrastructure projects. This review unit would have a remit in all public bodies involved in the delivery of infrastructure projects. It would be an independent body appointed by the Minister for Finance and would include finance, engineering and other recognised national and international experts who would assess the costs of all public infrastructure projects and ensure greater value for money at all stages in the delivery of infrastructure projects. This information would also be available to the Oireachtas and the public. It is essential that local authority finance committees in Dublin play a full role in monitoring the capital programme in their area.

2. We propose that the Office of the Director of Consumer Affairs be replaced by a pro-active Consumer Rights Enforcer who will be given new powers to drive the consumer agenda, including naming and shaming rip-off merchants. This Enforcer will empower Officers of Local Authorities to carry out inspections and take prosecutions at local level where a breach of pricing policy occurs. Local Authorities should carry out regular price surveys and sporadic investigations, as well as "name and shame" publicity campaigns to highlight blatant high margins on certain products.

3. We will demand that price lists are visible to the public.

4. Fine Gael proposes that the local health boards in Dublin should appoint funeral advisory officers to be available on mobile phone throughout the day and after hours to advise on funeral arrangements and how to minimise costs. Something needs to be done to tackle the exorbitant costs of funerals in the city. To this end, we will promote the creation of a co-operative of funeral undertakers for the benefit of people along the lines of the Irish Credit Union Movement.



## 5. Celebrating Dublin as a Multi-Cultural City

Thousands of immigrant workers have taken up vital jobs within the services sector of our capital in recent years.

Dublin is now a multi-cultural city and we all have much to gain from the new inhabitants that have come to live here. We recognise their contribution to our society. Without their work, the tourism, health, and financial services industries would collapse. Every person living in Dublin has a basic right to live in a peaceful and tolerant society. Fine Gael wants to encourage the active participation of all ethnic groups within the local democracy of this city.

Fine Gael proposes the following:

1. We are proposing that a new national public holiday for the specific purpose of celebrating multi-culturalism in Ireland be established. The festival of world cultures, now in its fourth year in Dun Laoghaire, is a wonderful example of this celebration of our new city. A new public holiday to celebrate multi-culturalism is something that we should all be able to participate in.

2. Each Local Authority in Dublin should immediately establish local consultation committees with the various non-

national communities in the city. Local government in Dublin should tap into the tremendous contribution that these communities have to make in their local area.

3. We propose the establishment of a special liaison service for minority ethnic groups as a means of explaining the provision of local services and providing multi-lingual versions of local authority application forms.

4. Local authorities in Dublin should provide citizenship courses to those who aspire to become full Irish citizens.

5. Dublin City Council should designate different parts of the city as areas where another ethnic culture can be found. For instance virtually every capital city in Europe has a Chinatown etc. We need to recognise the large groups of non-Irish citizens currently in Dublin and also see the tourism potential.

## Clean City 6. Dublin has got to clean up its act.

Fine Gael believes that the current waste management strategy policy employed by Dublin local authorities is not achieving its full potential. Incineration should not be an option for a city that has only recently taken to recycling. Much more needs to be done in terms of reducing, re-using and recycling.

Fine Gael proposes the following:

1. We recognise that domestic waste charges are a fact of life. However, these charges should be operated on a fair basis. Fine Gael will abolish the flat rate annual waste charge. A fair system

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of waivers should operate throughout the city.

2. We are proposing the establishment of a new local authority platform between the four local authorities of Dublin and local authorities in Britain who are supportive of our position to close the nuclear reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

3. We will double the plastic bag tax in order to generate funds, ringfenced for improvements of recycling facilities.

4. We will promote the establishment of more recycling green facilities in all communities around the city. We will also improve the level of information given to schools in the Greater Dublin area about the benefits of recycling. We will greatly extend plastic, battery, paper and glass bring centres. We want bring centres to be open throughout the week. In tandem with this, we will increase the number of collections of green wheelie bins from households, depending on demand.

5. With the money generated by charges, we make a commitment that within two years, all householders in Dublin will have recourse to recycling bins, organic composters, and other recycling facilities. We also want local authorities to provide Junk Collection on a much more frequent basis than is currently the case.

situation worse in the last seven years and has failed to provide proper funding to Local Authorities in Dublin to build affordable housing. There is simply no planning in place to deal with Dublin's rapidly expanding population as housing is now beyond the means of average income families.



Fine Gael proposes the following:

1. Fine Gael is proposing the establishment of one central application procedure for those who have applied for social housing. In future, instead of making applications for housing to a local authority, applicants would apply directly to this new agency. Rather than having existing Dublin housing authorities compete against each other for a limited housing supply, we believe it makes sense to amalgamate our efforts on a countywide basis for the benefit of all Dubliners. Every effort will be made to ensure that housing is provided in local areas, so that communities can be strengthened.

2. We will help Dublin's young First Time Buyers with a three-point plan to help them save for a house, buy a house and pay for their mortgage. This will involve:

- SSIA-type savings account that will give First Time Buyers €1 for every €3 saved over a minimum of two years.
- The abolition of stamp duty on second-hand homes for First Time Buyers.

## 7. Dublin: A Home for Everyone

The housing situation in Dublin is chronic.

The current Government has made the

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possible to establish special area amenity orders on existing green belt or parks land throughout the county. Housing must not be allowed to encroach upon vital green space.

**2. Our parks must be of the highest standard.** To this end, we will appoint a Dublin Playground Inspector who will make an independent assessment to the four local authorities on the current condition of playgrounds throughout the county. The quality and standard of playgrounds for our children in Dublin is disgraceful, in comparison with other major capital cities. Our parks do not have the type of security that is needed today. Park rangers/wardens need to be in place and in constant contact with the local police service. There is also a need to have more playing pitches, particularly in newer areas.

**3. We will establish a plan to preserve the unique village identities** that are in abundance in outlying parts of the county. The villages of County Dublin must be protected from over-development.

**4. We believe that the River Liffey could be a wonderful public amenity** if it was dammed at its mouth, thereby creating a canal like waterway in the heart of the city. This could help the entire inner city area and also help to establish an exciting waterways amenity for the entire city.

**5. Our members on Dublin City Council will develop a master plan** for the complete renewal of Dublin's Grand and Royal Canals. Now derelict, the walkways along the canals need to be rejuvenated.

**6. Fine Gael believes that the Abbey Theatre should be relocated to the Carlton site on O'Connell Street,** if suitable. This decision, above any other decision, would revitalise O'Connell Street while also helping to create a new cultural area close to The Gate Theatre and relocated Abbey.

**7. The National Concert Hall should be redeveloped** on the existing site in order to provide Dubliners - and all Irish people - with a facility of which they can be proud.

**8. We will promote Dublin as a venue for international sporting events,** and will provide the infrastructure necessary to facilitate such events such as the Tall Ships, the Overseas Tour de France etc.

**9. Young people throughout Dublin City are crying out for skateboarding and rollerblading facilities.** Public liability insurance companies must not stand in the way of the creation of these facilities for our young people. Fine Gael will immediately start work on a range of skateboarding parks throughout our capital.

**10. Local Authorities should be given power to decide funding** on projects that come within the remit of the National Lottery. Dublin is losing out in comparison to other regions of the country in terms of its share of the National Lottery Funds. These funds must not be used as an election slush fund and we believe that allocations should be given over directly to Dublin Local Authorities to determine priorities in their area.

**11. Fine Gael believes that a system should be introduced whereby school buildings around Dublin can be used to provide commercial crèche and child-minding facilities outside school hours.** We are also calling on the Department of Education to provide classrooms which may become available because of dwindling school numbers to local organisations and groups.

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- The frontloading of mortgage interest relief to the first seven years of the life of the mortgage to help in the early, expensive stages of a mortgage.

- Fine Gael seeks the release of suitable state-owned lands in Dublin for affordable housing.

4. As a means of encouraging downsizing, we believe that a tax incentive should be established to encourage older residents to move to purpose built accommodation and be entitled to keep a portion of the asset on the transaction of the sale of their property. This incentive for "empty nesters" would serve to free up family homes in prime locations in Dublin – thus diminishing the need for young property hunters to move further outside their location of choice.

5. Fine Gael will support and promote the development of the city in terms of rapidly expanding housing density in parts of the city, which have been underdeveloped to date. We see tremendous opportunities for infill housing development in the areas east of the Customs House. We will support policies that are designed to concentrate residential development on existing transport corridors or proposed public transport routes. There is a growing need for Dublin authorities to impose Compulsory Purchase Orders on derelict and underdeveloped sites throughout the city.

6. Fine Gael commits to the full implementation of the strategic guidelines for the greater Dublin area, which aim to stop the sprawl of the city into neighbouring communities.

7. As the recent Ombudsman's Report highlighted, planning enforcement is not recognised as a particular priority currently in the City. This has got to change.

## Dublin – Building up our Public Infrastructure 8.

Despite the recent upturn in our economy, many of our city streets and older county villages are in poor condition. We need to see a major injection of public funds in Dublin which



will enhance our amenities and facilities. Dublin is a beautiful Georgian city and it is vital that we preserve our heritage for generations to come. We have got to strike the right balance between the old and the new. Local authorities in Dublin play a pivotal role in developing public space for the city and county. The significance of Dublin Bay is a direct result of the improvement of the water quality.

Fine Gael proposes the following:

1. We will develop a new parks policy for the city and county, proposing where

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## 9. A FAMILY FRIENDLY CITY

Fine Gael believes that families must be facilitated in offering the best possible childcare provision for our children, while offering a choice to those who wish to be part of Dublin's vibrant workforce. We encourage parents to choose how children are to be cared for in the best possible way. In Dublin we will offer support to parents who wish to re-enter the workplace.



**1. Local Business Childcare Project** – Fine Gael will initiate a mechanism whereby local businesses will co-operate to offer childcare facilities to employees locally at a reasonable rate. Pooling of resources will reduce costs and will be further financed by direct investment of Local Authorities.

**2. We will re-examine child to adult ratios in crèches** - capacity can only be increased by lowering charges on crèches or by raising the permitted productivity of their workers.

**3. Local Authorities will develop an integrated up-skilling programme** aimed at parents who have been out of work for prolonged periods. Areas for upskilling/retraining will be identified in conjunction with Small Medium Enterprises in the City, so as to correlate supply with current demand. This will be funded by rebates based on a percentage of existing corporate rates that are paid by local business. This means that business will see direct and tangible benefit from rate payment.

**4. Community centres and amenities are often the lifeblood of a community.** They are particularly valuable for families, offering services to children, teenagers, mother and toddler groups, as well as a social outlet for our older population. These facilities have been slipping away. Fine Gael will strive for an active and resourced community centre in every village in Dublin. We will legislate to impose duties on any large commercial developer wishing to locate or expand in residential areas, to provide some serviceable and beneficial community facilities for residents. The local Planning Authority in direct consultation with local residents and public representatives will decide upon the nature and scale of such a required facility.

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