



Lobbying Achievements: Programme for Government

17th June 2020

Dublin Chamber has welcomed the [Programme for Government](#) agreed between the leaders of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party as offering the basis for a significant step change in Government policy and a sustainable economic reset post-Covid-19. Our vision is that Dublin will be globally renowned both for its economic competitiveness and quality of life. For many years our policy and lobbying agenda has been based on the complementarity of these attributes. Promisingly, the proposed Programme for Government integrates this approach, by committing to adopt new indices for wellness and social progress as measurements for Government success.

Earlier this year, the Chamber's [general election manifesto](#) called for a 'Decade of Delivery' to secure a sustainable future for the Dublin region. Specifically, the Chamber focused its campaign on the delivery of: infrastructure for an urban future; sustainable urban planning and housing; Dublin as Europe's leading hub for enterprise; and a modern flexible workforce.

Since the election, the Chamber has continued to lobby on all of these fronts, while bringing the sustainability agenda to the fore as the overarching priority for inform policy, e.g. by calling for a more ambitious and business-friendly approach to the growing challenges of climate change and the need for a circular economy. Dublin Chamber's leading theme this year – the transition to a green economy – has proved particularly timely; the Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the relative fragility of our current economic model while also showing the possibility of new ways of working and living. The Chamber has also been at the forefront of promoting remote and flexible working, and is well-positioned to advise Government on the changes needed.

Many of the Programme's commitments adopt proposals that we have long been campaigning for, including greater capital investment in public transport; a radical improvement in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure; a new national strategy for SMEs; the promotion of green public procurement; and an accelerated carbon tax timeline. Importantly, the National Planning Framework based on a city regions model has been retained.

A number of commitments lack specificity or are insufficient, and will be items for further action. For example, the commitment to new social housing construction is welcome, but lacks detail as to how it will be delivered. Improvements to Ireland's Capital Gains Tax and R&D Tax Credit regimes are mooted, but stop short of proposing specific changes. Central to the implementation of the Programme for Government, and the speed of progress under each heading, will be the allocation of Ministries and critically, the person or persons that lead the departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform.

An overview of the Programme for Government is outlined below, comparing our key recommendations with the commitments in the Programme. The Chamber will continue to engage with prospective Government parties in the coming weeks and months to ensure that the voice of Dublin business is heard.

DUBLIN CHAMBER AGENDA	PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT
Dublin Chamber Vision: Dublin to be globally renowned for its quality of life and economic vibrancy.	Balanced scorecard approach to assessing Government policy success. New wellbeing indicators in housing health and education initially.
Planning & Infrastructure	
Water security for Dublin: complete the Eastern & Midlands Region Water Supply Project by 2025.	Fully consider review of Irish Water’s proposed approach to the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region.
Complete MetroLink, the DART Expansion Programme, and BusConnects by 2027. More integrated transport system.	2:1 ratio of expenditure between new public transport infrastructure and new roads. Prioritise delivery of Metrolink, Luas and light rail expansion, DART expansion and interconnector and BusConnects. Park & Ride implementation plan. Integrated timetable and ticketing. New Dublin Transport Advisory Council.
Deliver the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Plan by 2025. Bikes to account for a 20% modal share by 2030.	10% of the transport capital budget for cycling; additional 10% for pedestrian infrastructure. Widen the eligibility of the Bike to Work scheme. Enhanced allowances for e-bikes and cargo bikes.
Implement demand management strategies such as Low Emission Zones. Avoid congestion charges and other tolls for access.	A policy framework for low emission zones. Evaluate and bring forward measures for demand management to incentivise modal shift.
Diversify the energy sources that feed into the national Grid, including offshore wind. Invest further in alternative fuel sources, including hydrogen and bio-methane.	70% renewable electricity by 2030; take advantage of the massive potential of offshore energy. Invest in hydrogen projects. Complete the Celtic Interconnector to connect Ireland’s electricity grid to France.
Maintain adherence to the National Planning Framework.	Bring forward the review of the <i>National Development Plan</i> and extend revised plan to 2031, and aligned with the NPF.
Directly elected Mayor for Dublin, or an equivalent figure, with the necessary powers and responsibility to implement Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.	Directly elected mayor in Limerick to be elected in 2021 and supported with a financial package to deliver mandate. Mayor plebiscites in 2024 in any local authority that wishes. Citizens’ Assembly in 2021 to consider the type of directly elected mayor and local government structures best suited for Dublin. Support the establishment of Night-Time Culture Mayors in Dublin and Cork. Consider devolving more powers to local authorities.
Improved coordination between transport infrastructure and development planning in Dublin.	Review and extend the statutory remit of the NTA. This will allow the NTA to work with local authorities to develop transport strategies with a strong legal basis in our cities, towns, and regions.
Ensure an additional 14,000 homes are built in Dublin each year with higher densities. Drive brownfield site development. One-stop-shop for conversion of ‘over the shop’ properties for residential use.	Prioritise the increased supply of public, social, and affordable homes. Improve the supply and affordability of rental accommodation and the security of tenure for renters. Examine ways to ensure that unused or underused building stock in cities can be used for housing. New scheme to expand and build on the Living Cities Initiative to encourage infill development. Further develop ‘Live Above the Shop’ measures. Better enforce the Vacant Site Levy.
Provide a stable planning environment, with more of a ‘stick and carrot’ approach.	Establish Planning and Environmental Law Court with specialist judges on the same basis as the existing Commercial Court model. ‘Use it or lose it’ condition for planning applications of 10 units or more. Review how community gain can be captured through

	development levy process, rezoning systems, and planning permission conditions. Reform and consolidate CPO laws.
Improve public safety with a focus on additional police on the ground.	Prioritise visible policing in both rural and urban communities.
City Regions Ireland initiative.	Balanced regional development is critical to reducing pressure on the Greater Dublin area. Prioritise the siting of new state bodies in towns and cities outside Dublin. Establish a unit to coordinate social dialogue and create new models of sectoral engagement.
Budget and Competitiveness	
Commit to maintaining Ireland's 12.5% rate of Corporation Tax.	Maintain a supportive environment for Foreign Direct Investment.
Cut Capital Gains Tax to 20% for unlisted trading firms.	Review Capital Gains Tax in each Budget to support innovation driven enterprises that help transition to a low-carbon economy.
Improve Entrepreneur Relief, taxation of share dividends for entrepreneurs, SME R&D tax credit and share options for SMEs. Extend SARP to SMEs.	Review the taxation environment for SMEs and entrepreneurs, with a view to introducing improvements to different schemes, so that Ireland remains an attractive place to sustain and grow an existing business or to start and scale up a new business. Encourage greater take-up of the R&D Tax Credit by small domestic companies.
Equalise Earned Income Tax credit for self-employed, and remove 3% USC surcharge on the self-employed earning over €100,000.	The Earned Income Tax Credit (Self-employed) will be equalised with the employee tax credit. Reconsider 3% USC surcharge.
Provide transparency for businesses on how commercial rates are used. Improve Local Authority budgeting process to end use of commercial rates increases as a 'balancing item'.	Require each council to publish an annual statement of accounts to all homeowners and ratepayers, giving a breakdown of how revenue was collected and how it was spent. Examine ways to further streamline the commercial rates system post COVID-19.
Full local retention of LPT revenue; maintain LPT at a reasonable rate.	Most homeowners will face no increase in Local Property Tax. All money collected locally will be retained within the county.
Maintain competitiveness of taxes on labour.	Consideration will be given to increasing all classes of PRSI over time to replenish the Social Insurance Fund to help pay for measures and changes.
Use accelerated carbon tax increases to fund infrastructure investment.	Focus tax increases on negative externalities (carbon, tobacco, sugar, single use plastic).
Promote competitiveness and reduce business costs.	Provide guidance on personal injury claims, enhance and reform the role of the Personal Injuries Assessment Board, consider changes to the Occupiers Liability Act and the Civil Liability Act, and get tough on insurance fraud.
Defend business links with the UK as much as possible while protecting Ireland's place in the single market.	Brexit priority to have a tariff-free, quota-free, trade agreement with strong level playing field provisions, including robust environmental and labour standards.
Introduce a stimulus package to drive renewed employment, consumer confidence and domestic demand post-Covid-19.	July Jobs Initiative and Recovery Fund, a targeted stimulus to increase domestic demand and employment. Focus on SMEs, job creation, decarbonising the economy, and digital future. In October, set out longer-term National Economic Plan. Promote exports with 'Ireland open for Business' initiative.
Help SMEs access credit and capital to support jobs. Help firms balance capital structure and relieve pressure on their cash flow.	Legislate for €2 billion Credit Guarantee Scheme, SURE scheme, and warehousing of tax liabilities. Enhance SBCI mandate to get low cost finance to SMEs. Support the development of sustainable plans to manage potentially higher levels of corporate and SME debt.

Reduce commercial rates burden in 2020; expand eligibility for the Business Restart Grant. Commercial Rent Tax Credit for covid-impacted firms.	State how commercial rates will be treated for remainder of 2020. Review the Business Restart Grant and consider further grant supports for SMEs. Create a code of conduct between landlords and tenants for commercial rents.
Targeted support for the tourism, food and hospitality sector.	Domestic tourism campaign to promote staycations. Make 2023 the Year of the Invitation.
Labour Market	
Put in place a new long term funding model for tertiary education, either through student contributions or increased exchequer funding.	Develop a long-term sustainable funding model for higher-level education informed by recent research. Update the International Education strategy for Ireland, recognising the importance of overseas students and academics to our higher education sector.
Deliver a Modern Flexible Workforce.	Enable increased remote, flexible and hub-working arrangements to support families in their parenting and childcare choices, while also supporting enterprise.
Raise the Universal Subsidy under the National Childcare Scheme. Providing free childcare for most families. Reduce the marginal effective tax rate on second earners. Reform Home Carer's credit.	Increase subsidies for childcare and Home Carer Tax Credit. Reduce the cost of childcare for parents through investment in the National Childcare Scheme with Universal and targeted subsidies. Cap on parental fees, irrespective of income.
Introduce clear guidelines for employers on practical matters of legal responsibility and insurance for remote working practices so that flexible working trends are supported.	Enable increased remote, flexible and hub-working arrangements for better work-life balance, higher female participation, less commuting, and greater regional balance. Facilitate employees in working from home, or from co-working spaces. Public sector employers, bodies and colleges to 20% home and remote working in 2021. Examine tax reform to encourage remote working.
Promote life-long learning and regional skills planning for SMEs in particular, to include upskilling for future of work in a digitised economy.	Increase lifelong learning from 9% to 18% by 2025. Green Further Education and Skills Development Plan. Regional Skills Fora to feed into National Economic Plan.
Sustainability	
Accelerate increase in Carbon Tax to €80 per tonne by 2025 and ring-fence for spend on vital infrastructure projects required for the transition away from fossil fuel use, with a focus on cities.	Increase the carbon tax to 100 euro per tonne by 2030. Carbon tax revenue into a fund to ensure a just transition and national retrofitting programme. Recovery Fund for capital investment projects focused on areas such as housing, retrofitting and public and active transport. Average 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030. Net zero by 2050.
Accelerate use of Green Public Procurement, the use of life-cycle costing, and circular economy principles.	Update all procurement frameworks, in line with green procurement practice over the next three years. Encourage suppliers to adopt practices that minimise their environmental impact and deliver community benefit.
Implement a Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy	Implement Circular Economy Action Plan for Waste. Ensure a whole-of-government approach to the circular economy.
Support indigenous SMEs to innovate in the green space.	Expand the linkages between research and enterprise, with a particular focus on encouraging collaboration with domestic SMEs.
Provide for use of e-scooters and electric bikes on public roads.	Legislate for e-scooters and e-bikes.
Make the Dublin bus fleet low-emissions.	Require that all new urban buses be electric hybrid or electric.