

2023



Chambers Ireland

Advancing business together



BUDGET SUBMISSION

CHAMBERS IRELAND CONCERNS AT A GLANCE

2023

HOUSING

We need to recognise the importance of cities and towns for our quality of life, our economic resilience, and our wellbeing.

Working, liveable urban centres are fundamental to the National Planning Framework, essential to the Climate Action Plan, and vital to the domestic economy. But the transition demands vigorous efforts and significant Government support.

Creating cities and towns that are attractive urban spaces for living and working will benefit everyone. Government services can achieve economies of scale by increasing productivity and efficiency. Clustering offers massive economic opportunities for both employers and employees. And, for the people living there it means reduced commuting and easier access to community and public services.

Government must invest in our neglected town centres and alter ownership incentives to ensure that it is unprofitable to allow vacant properties to lie idle.

Budget 2023 must:

- Increase funding for the delivery of home so that the National Development Plan targets can be met
- Fast track shallow retrofits at scale to help households mitigate the effects of higher energy costs and ensure the retrofit programme is as effective as possible
- Alter tax incentives through increasing levies so that hoarding vacant properties is no longer a viable business
- Support Local Authorities efforts to make urban Ireland an attractive place to live and work

SKILLS & TALENT

With Ireland consistently having one of the highest growth rates in the EU, almost full-employment, and Britain leaving the European Union, Ireland ought to have one of the most attractive economies in Europe for people seeking opportunities.

Unfortunately, the high cost of living combined with the challenge of finding secure and affordable accommodation means that Ireland has fallen significantly in attractiveness as a place to make a new home.

It will take some time for “Housing for All” to deliver a significant volume of homes, but in the short-term we can begin removing the barriers for workers which are within our control.

Facilitating parents maintaining engagement with the workforce through promoting flexible and hybrid working will be useful, particularly where combined with increased childcare and carer supports.

Ireland also has very poor accessibility for disabled people, relative to our European peers. Significant structural issues prevent them participating in society to their fullest potential and the workplace is often a greater challenge.

Meanwhile, the arrival of Ukrainian refugees has highlighted the flexibility that can be afforded to people seeking international protection when the political will is present. It should be the model which we use for all displaced people who are seeking a safe home in Ireland.

For workers that do not need protection, but seek opportunities in Ireland we must facilitate them, not make the process unnecessarily difficult

One of the consequences of the Russian invasion is that many of those whom we would have expected to migrate to Ireland for these roles will be active in the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

As a result, we will have to be seeking workers from further afield, and we have to reform our labour migration processes to make these pathways to work frictionless.

Given the enormous scale of public works that are involved in the National Development Plan, and the huge increase in housing envisaged by Housing for All we will need a huge number of workers to come to Ireland to help us build.

ENERGY

Like our water, transport, health, and housing infrastructure, our energy infrastructure has been operating for too long at too close to capacity.

The green energy transition is one of the greatest opportunities that our island will ever have. Ireland can not only become energy independent, we have the potential to become a net energy exporter. With a more ambitious offshore energy policy we can enrich our country while also making a significant contribution to the decarbonisation of the EU.

The lack of redundancy within our energy networks has created a strategic vulnerability that discourages investment by multi-national companies.

If we had not delayed the introduction of a planning process for offshore energy generation we would be in a much stronger position to mitigate the energy price impact of the Russian war on Ukraine.

The crisis caused by Russia has heightened the awareness throughout society of the challenges created by delaying decarbonisation and the green transition.

Security of supply is no longer simply a concern of the bigger businesses; every business is feeling the impact of energy uncertainty. The extra port capacity that would come with creating a terminal for Green Hydrogen export would also reduce our vulnerability in the case of an interruption in the Moffat supply.

Increased fossil fuel energy costs will be with us for years to come. Government renewables policy needs to adapt to focus on maximising our offshore generative capacity.

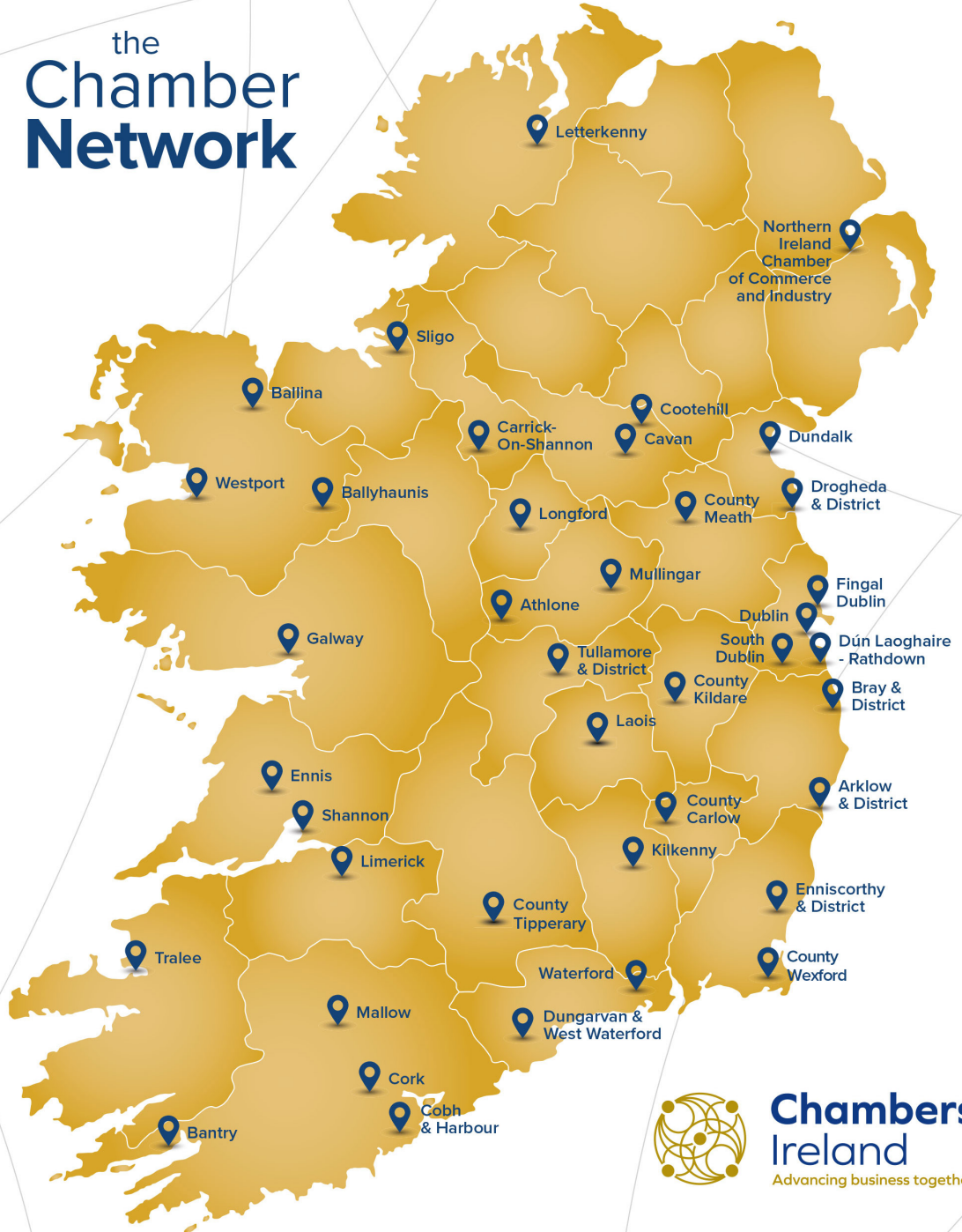
Making the most of our energy opportunity will require:

- MARA to be founded on a strong footing so that it can become an IDA for the offshore energy industry and a one-stop-shop facilitator of the green transition - MARA's core purpose must be maximising the generative potential of our offshore energy resources
- We need to be more ambitious regarding our offshore renewable energy resources, multi-GW targets must be set for landing floating offshore electricity by 2030
- The REPowerEU guidance on 'overriding public interest' should be used to deliver the grid upgrades and reinforcements needed to support high capacity onshore and offshore energy networks
- The Environment and Planning Court has to be brought into operation immediately
- Hybrid connections at the sites of existing thermal plants are required to ensure our grid infrastructure has the capacity to land the offshore energy we need
- The practical hurdles for domestic and commercial users introducing small scale solar photovoltaic supply as a source of microgeneration need to be monitored and adapted on a quarterly basis if we are to avoid a delayed rollout
- A programme of shallow retrofits targeted at those in poverty should be implemented to reduce the impact of fuel costs on the marginalised
- The National Hydrogen Policy should aim for Ireland to be exporting Condensed Green Hydrogen by 2030

To help resolve the immediate shortages in Skills & Talent Government urgently need to:

- Simplify the visa and permit system. We must build upon the treatment of Ukrainian refugees to make our treatment of people who are seeking international protection in Ireland humane
- Expand resources for upskilling and retraining those who are in employment
- Review, consolidate and simplify the employment law legislation including the recent sick leave, remote working, parents leave, parental leave, paternity leave, work life balance act rights, the organisation of work time etc. to ensure that it is not only comprehensive but comprehensible
- Introduce greater supports for carers to ensure that they can continue to remain engaged with the workplace to the greatest degree possible

the Chamber Network



**Chambers
Ireland**
Advancing business together

40 Affiliated Chambers

8,000 business members represented across the country

1,758 Total lobbying returns in 2021, of which Chambers accounted for 48%

BUDGET 2023

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CHAMBERS IRELANDS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

OUR COMMITMENT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

These Goals are an urgent call for action which acknowledge the importance of partnership between all developed and developing countries.

Chambers Ireland and ICC Ireland, together with our nationwide network of affiliated Chambers have unanimously pledged to support the Goals.

Together we have worked with our Chamber Network and our Sustainable Business Council to help to educate the 8,000 businesses we represent about the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our aim is to help businesses realise the opportunities these Goals create and provide companies with the confidence that meaningful results can be readily achieved. We promote how the Goals positively impact businesses, communities, and livelihoods.

All our policy outputs, including our Budget 2023 Submission, are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and seek to help our members address the challenges of an increasingly 'shock prone' world.

Our recommendations include measures that will support businesses to survive and continue to trade throughout this time of volatility and enable our town centres and local economies to thrive.

Our suggestions highlight the importance of investment in infrastructure, the Green Energy transition and the availability of affordable housing that offers security to everyone who makes Ireland their home.

These investments will be vital if we are to be able to attract and retain the talent our businesses need to succeed.

Our cities and towns, our entire country, needs to become an attractive place to live and work if we are to be able to make the most of our opportunities.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Ian Talbot



For our members there are three interlocking struggles which businesses in Ireland are facing.

Housing, talent, and energy dominate the conversations of businesses throughout the county.

Housing shortages are a critical issue for businesses. The ever-increasing cost of housing is driving up wage demands. The costs of the housing policy failures over the last decade is being transferred to employers. We are optimistic that Housing for All will have an effect on this problem, but we are concerned that the scale of the intervention will not be sufficient to remedy the situation at the pace that is required.

When businesses cannot meet these higher wage claims, workers are shifting to other firms or other sectors of the economy. The challenge of finding secure and affordable accommodation is leading to many workers migrating. These impacts are combining to create skill-gaps across large geographies and sectors of our economy. This lack of available staff is undermining a number of existing Foreign Direct Investment projects. Without a credible talent pipeline local leaders are being challenged by international HQs about the viability of proposed projects.

At every level, businesses are being challenged by the increased costs of energy. At the larger level many are querying the security of supply, particularly regarding electricity. Also, given the persistent volatility in Britain, the supplies of natural gas are increasingly at political risk, and there is no contingency in place should supplies be restricted.

On the upside, it has lately been recognised that we have entered a 'shock-prone' world. While this will be challenging, our size, our location, and our educated workforce suggests we have the potential to be nimble. But this also means that we need to be proactive about the problems we are facing. We are able to adapt to the changing international environment because of our scale, in a more volatile world that will give us opportunities to grow relative to our bigger and slower peers.

Many of the problems we are experiencing arose from the decade of underinvestment which afflicted the economy in the post Great-Financial-Crash era. Delivering on the needed infrastructure solutions during a time of increasing costs will be extremely challenging, but will also be essential for our future prosperity.

We have left these issues to fester and they have become crises. This means that they cannot be tackled piecemeal and incrementally. We need government to not only deliver on the ambitions of the Revised National Development Plan, we need them to be delivered at a greater pace.

We also need to take the initiative, our crisis response over Covid was reactive, we need to model how we have engaged with Brexit and be proactive. Climate change, decarbonisation, and international economic shocks are all before us, we need to take action immediately.

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INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9

PLANNING REFORM

- It is vital that we develop a National Industrial Policy for Renewable Energy which focuses on maximising the national benefit from our renewable resources: MARA needs to be founded and resourced as an IDA for offshore renewables
- Strengthen and resource the planning professionals in local authorities and other relevant State agencies
- Reform the planning system to ensure timely and effective decision-making through introducing a dedicated Planning and Environmental court
- Upskill local authority planning departments to allow for consistent and integrated decisions across the regions
- Create guidelines on how Local Authorities apply construction duties and levies to ensure consistency across regions. The rebates of levies and charges should also be used to incentivise the completion of high-density developments
- Introduce targeted reductions in construction duties and levies for developments which are coherent with the National Planning Framework
- Ensure regulatory certainty around high-density apartment planning
- Compulsory purchase powers in line with the Kenny report, must become available to state bodies, this should be supported with a referendum if necessary

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9

- Building upon the National Planning Framework and the Climate Action Plan, there needs to be co-ordinated efforts at regional level to integrate development, land management, and investment in public transport
- Scale up the resources and skills in planning departments at local and national levels so that better planning decisions can be made at earlier stages which can survive scrutiny in the courts
- Deliver on the Programme for Government commitment to introduce an Environmental and Planning Court which can fast-track hearings related to key infrastructure projects and efficiently adjudicate on the merits of the cases before it
- Streamline the planning regime to reduce uncertainty for key infrastructure investments
- Invest in the courts and judicial system so that it can speedily adjudicate on any planning decisions that come before it
- Make greater use of the Regional Assemblies and their ability to create strategic master plans by increasing their internal resources, allowing them to offer high-skilled expert planning services to local authorities, and to guide the integration of Local Area Plans with regional and national infrastructure
- Introduce firm guidelines on the decisions which are taken throughout the planning process and narrow the timelines for submitting objections

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INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- With increased pressure on public finances, we need to ringfence our above-profile corporate tax and fuel excise/VAT receipts in a “Climate Action Fund” which is dedicated to delivering National Development Plan projects that facilitate decarbonisation
- Require Irish Water to deliver increased capacity for new builds and housing schemes, ensuring that they are resourced adequately to meet these demands and the additional inflation associated costs
- Maintain ongoing investment in water infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of supplies into the future and ensuring we safeguard our environment through the elimination of the discharge of untreated water into our rivers and seas
- Draft a roadmap on future taxation policy, detailing how Government intends to transition/replace revenue from VRT/excise/motor tax
- Optimise investment in capital projects and infrastructure by ensuring transparency and an open approach to infrastructure funding models to ensure progress is maintained
- Improve the reporting requirements for all large projects and programmes

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9

- Prioritise infrastructure which aligns with the National Planning Framework, multimodal, and transport orientated development principles
- Ensure that all critical infrastructure investment is aligned with the European Commission's 'Sustainable Finance' definitions
- Move away from the Public Works' standard form contract towards international best practice alternatives
- The speedy implementation of high-speed broadband throughout the country must be prioritised as a key national economic concern
- Ensure there is additional investment for water infrastructure, providing powers to State bodies to finance such investment through land value capture
- Regularise the status under the Charities Act of charitable community-led organisations which have extended their activities to include local tech-hub projects
- Oblige the Land Development Agency to take responsibility for a National Land Management Strategy and to begin directly managing existing state landbanks

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INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9

TRANSPORT AND TRANSIT NETWORKS

- Accelerate the delivery of keystone urban infrastructure transport programmes like Metrolink and the Cork Suburban Rail project which can support new high-density housing developments
- Ensure that Transport Orientated Development principles form the core of all new developments
- Develop inter-urban and intra-urban public transport networks, and invest in the urban built environment to promote local active transport networks which extend the utility of public transport
- Progress the Dublin rail interconnector and Luas extensions
- On existing rail routes, progress research into introducing high-speed sections to reduce the conflict between intercity and commuter services
- Initiate feasibility studies, and cost benefit analyses – including carbon accounting – on upgrading the links between the National Development Plan growth cities through the rail network
- Accelerate the Dart extension projects and establish a timeline towards developing an all-electric rail network
- Extend train lines, where suitable, to integrate freight to our trading seaports
- Prioritise intercity rail transport infrastructure

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9

- Introduce Section 28 town planning guidelines that local masterplans require the inclusion of people-friendly infrastructure, segregated cycleways, and rest spots for mobility-impaired pedestrians
- Resource local authorities to provide infrastructure to support active transit through linking residential areas with civic and economic centres
- Prioritise traffic reduction measures in all our towns and cities while expanding local active travel and public transport options
- Implement BusConnects projects in all NDP growth cities
- Invest in shared cycling schemes and cycling infrastructure
- Pilot a low-income/unemployment cycle scheme with grants for second hand bikes
- NTA should extend the 20% fare subsidies to businesses which the main services are competing with to ensure a level playing field in the market place
- Invest in the urban built environment by resourcing local authorities to provide social and community spaces

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SDG 9

TRANSPORT AND TRANSIT NETWORKS

- Invest in the accelerated rollout of a national fast-charging network for the EVs with a focus on regional areas where alternatives are limited, while providing for public transport in urban settings
- Increase investment in the decarbonisation of public transport, particularly in cities, such as investment in bio-methane vehicles and the electrification of trains and buses
- Ensure that road usage plans prioritise high capacity public transport and active transport uses
- Invest in appropriate infrastructure to support the transition of Heavy Goods Vehicles to low-carbon fuel options like Compressed Natural Gas
- Use ringfenced environmental fund revenues to broaden the coverage and density of shared use schemes (such as City Bikes) in the cities where they are available and expand them to other towns where they are not yet provided
- Expand the usage of Green Hydrogen fueled buses across the city, town and intercity fleets
- Audit of other large state vehicle fleets which could be transitioned to Green Hydrogen and create a timeline for their transition as part of our National Hydrogen Strategy to act as a demand signal which will incentivise Green Hydrogen producers to enter the market

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 11

FUNDING FOR HOUSING

- The Town Centre Initiative (TCI) has potential, but its implementation has been slow. Increased URDF and RRDF funding is needed if this programme is to be effective
- The stock of properties which supply the commercial and residential rental sectors is far below the quality we need if we are to meet our Climate Action targets, given the current incentives. A positive tax rebate for landlords which more than neutralises the cost of environmental improvements to homes will be necessary if we are to see effective action here
- There needs to be an increase in the supply of affordable homes. The target needs to meet and match the social housing target. In the south and mid-west 70% of builds are once off, the remaining scheme homes are putting people into bidding wars with local authorities. There is clear market failure when it comes to the new supply in these areas
- Create a fund to support Co-operative Housing Associations and implement targets for the set-up, promotion, and regulation of this potential market
- Increase funding for the Cost Rental Equity Loan Scheme
- Croí Conaithe Cities funding should be provided earlier in the development process to assist in the upfront costs of construction

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SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES SDG 11

DISCOURAGE VACANCIES

- Empower and resource local authorities to implement planning department one-stop-shops in every town to streamline planning for change-of-use construction projects and above-the-shop conversions
- Create a national vacant land registry of all property in urban areas
- Increase the levies associated with vacancy to commercial properties and derelict or unimproved sites in urban areas
- Implement a strengthened and centralised vacant land levy which acts as a charge on the land regardless of the ownership with revenue being returned to the relevant local authority
- Renew the Derelict Sites Act 1990 to strengthen its elements to incentivise infill and brownfield construction
- Introduce new legislation to expand and strengthen the powers of local authorities to acquire vacant sites through compulsory purchase orders
- Having reviewed the vacancy rates, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage should set vacancy reduction targets for local authorities at the electoral district level
- Substantially increase the capital spending for housing in urban areas identified by the National Planning Framework

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 11

LIVING CITY INITIATIVE

- The Living City Initiative (LCI) should be extended and be established on a long-term basis out to 2030. The existing timeline is too limiting given the nature of construction projects
- The LCI should be expanded to include long-term vacant commercial properties built post-1915
- LCI should be extended to the cities and towns specified in the National Planning Framework and reformed to include acquisition costs of LCI qualifying properties
- For the cities where it is active, the Special Regeneration Areas (SRAs) should be expanded to bring more potential housing stock under the LCI
- To reduce the inheritance/Capital Gains Tax disincentives associated with investing in vacant properties unused capital allowances attached to a property should be transferred with ownership
- Given the challenge in financing the reactivation of older, vacant, urban properties the government should introduce a scheme similar to the 'Help to Buy' to assist home owners that are investing LCI properties to bring them back into use as homes, or mixed use properties
- Residential relief should be extended to all works on any building which qualifies for the LCI

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SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 11

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

- Given the pressing need for homes arising from the number of people seeking international protection in Ireland there are significant increased demands being placed on an already overstretched housing stock. Government should review both the targets for social housing in Housing for All and the means for delivering them
- A procurement framework should be introduced for off-site manufactured housing projects with multi-annual funding and annual fixed targets which would guarantee demand for modular housing
- Temporary housing developments utilising movable modular housing should be considered as a "meanwhile-use" option for landbanks that are unlikely to be developed in the short-term
- A legislative framework of Compulsory Sales Orders (CSOs) should be introduced for residential zoned sites where there has been a consistent failure to develop the lands
- Fund a National Active Land Management policy and through an agency such as the Land Development Agency (LDA) to ensure efficient land banking for the provision of homes through local authorities, Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and other state providers
- As part of Housing for All there should be a core emphasis on direct build through local authorities, AHBs and the LDA
- Increase the Zoned Land Tax (ZLT) to encourage development and discourage hoarding of land to capture a value uplift in the future with funding to be directed towards servicing sites for development using Urban Development Zones

CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13

RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION

- Introduce a subsidy scheme as part of government tendering for Green Hydrogen which ensures that there will be targets for a minimum state demand for Green Hydrogen with an appropriate floor price to incentivise production
- Upgrade our electricity network to provide for long-term energy security by increasing investment in the electricity grid providing additional resources to connect renewable supplies to the network
- Refocus retrofitting programme to deliver a large volume of shallow retrofits at scale and complement this with a scheme for households dependent on peat for fuel to transition to sustainable biomass forms of heating
- Future proof the National Gas Grid by investing in biomethane technologies and systems to provide renewable methane and hydrogen supply
- Commit increased investment in the electricity grid to ensure that it is future-proofed and has the capacity to meet decarbonisation targets, including the progression of the North-South Interconnector and the Celtic Interconnector to ensure energy security
- Increase R&D spending and target funding to support making our gas networks transition ready so that they can be adapted to supply renewable gas and hydrogen
- Strategic investment must be directed into one or more Irish ports for the construction of offshore wind farms to take maximum advantage of the Programme for Government's commitment to offshore wind energy

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CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13

ENERGY SECURITY

- Ensure that funding and resources are allocated to research innovative technologies such as Carbon Capture Storage, Hydrogen, Biogas and Anaerobic Digestion
- The Maritime Area Regulatory Authority must be founded and led with the energy, dynamism, professionalism, and resourcing which we have come to expect from the IDA ensuring that they can act as a one-stop-shop that will co-ordinate the activities of An Bord Pleanála, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and grid operators to deliver energy quickly
- Our grid infrastructure needs to be reinforced so that it can take on the supportive role that is needed for Ireland to seize our offshore opportunity
- The Environmental and Planning Court needs to be introduced at the earliest opportunity to provide the capacity needed to deliver strengthened grid infrastructure that is needed to take the greatest benefit from our renewable energy opportunities
- Biomethane supports must be extended along with the ‘vehicle gas’ excise to facilitate the diversification of our energy supply and help decarbonise the transport industry
- The Renewable Heat Obligation should be put into effect
- The National Hydrogen Strategy must be completed to give certainty to the industry
- Government should set targets for purchasing a minimum volume of Green Hydrogen each year at a fixed price so that the industry will have certainty over customer demand
- Facilitating the generation of offshore renewable energy must be prioritised by all public bodies

CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13

DECARBONISATION

- Investments are needed to ensure our existing gas infrastructure is hydrogen ready and that we have capacity to store and export excess Compressed Green Hydrogen
- All future gas infrastructure must be designed to be compatible with condensed hydrogen
- A strategic risk assessment of our energy supply and storage is required to ensure that there is an energy supply contingency plan in place should Moffat no longer be able to supply Ireland with gas
- Ringfence all Exchequer returns from Carbon Tax and strategically invest in green infrastructure, public transport, and funds that will support communities to transition to green transport and heating alternatives
- Require autoenrollment to invest in sustainable funds and introduce a timeline for occupational pension schemes and master-trusts to adopt net-zero policies for investments
- Introduce IRLGOVT Green bonds coherent with ESG and EU Taxonomy to support NDP investments in green infrastructure
- Expand the network of local authority energy agencies to act as local one-stop-shops providing practical advice to households and businesses on reducing carbon emissions, retrofitting homes and availing of Government supports/advice from agencies like the SEAI or the Climate Action Regional Office
- Classify SEAI supported retrofitting projects as 5% VAT rated products
- Invest in re-training programmes to support the transition from jobs reliant on fossil fuels to low carbon jobs in areas such as energy retrofitting for buildings, sustainable forestry, renewable energy and peatland restoration

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GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5

WORKPLACE EQUALITY

- Introduce a coherent and integrated flexible working policy which aligns hybrid working, Work/Life Balance Act leave, and part-time work are available to all employees so that parents are not discriminated against
- Introduce income subsidy supports for employees that are parents and are unavailable for full-time work due to childcare needs through a mechanism that is equivalent to the EWSS
- Integrate welfare equivalent subsidies for long-term unemployed people who are engaging with workplaces that facilitate part-time work
- Introduce a tapering process for the reduction in welfare supports for people who are re-entering the workplace after an extended absence
- Maintain the Joint Committee on Gender Equality as a permanent Oireachtas Committee
- Introduce specific entrepreneurial training and funding opportunities that are directed at women and other disadvantaged groups. Dedicated supports should be offered to women who avail of entrepreneurial training to seek to open their own businesses
- Introduce dedicated funding for women who are pursuing entrepreneurship within the domestic economy
- Fund microfinancing loans that are targeted at female business owners
- Implement start-up accelerators for female-led businesses organised in conjunction with Irish universities

GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5

CHILDCARE

- Increase investment in childcare services, early education infrastructure and schools that are reopening to facilitate breakfast clubs and after school childcare in all parts of the country to help working parents and mitigate against the reduction in supply of childcare places that has arisen from Covid-19
- Expand mentoring programmes like “Better Start” that aim to improve the quality of childcare and early childhood education
- Ensure continued investment in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Increased investment in services and infrastructure that enable childcare providers to expand places for children under the age of three

SUPPORTING PARENTAL EQUALITY

- Conduct a review of parental leave supports (maternity, paternity and parental leave) that the state provides over the course of an individual childhood, to better understand any obstacles to take-up and barriers to greater parenting equality
- The CSO reported that almost half (45%) of fathers entitled to paternity benefit did not take it in 2018. Budget 2022 must set aside funding to enable a review of Paternity Benefit to better understand any obstacles for take-up to support parenting equality
- Simplify parenting leave options to allow families to decide for themselves how to apportion the various leaves between the parents

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DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SDG 8

DEVELOPING AND ATTRACTING TALENT

- Reform and simplify the work visa/permit process. Ireland is no longer an attractive location for international talent as a result of our high-cost and low-quality housing. We need to minimise the barriers for non-EU citizens accessing our workforce
- Increase Regional Skills Fora resources, both in staff and funding, in line with population to support their efforts to address skills needs around the country
- Expand Education and Training board funding for English language courses for members of all migrant communities which are focused on workplace-orientated language and day-to-day communication
- Expand the payment of €400 for hosting a Ukrainian and apply it to all refugees, regardless of where they are from
- Introduce greater supports for individuals who are seeking international protection to engage with the Irish workforce
- Investment in evidence-based employment supports that help individuals with a disability to enter the workforce
- Facilitate employers accessing free of charge Disability Awareness Training Schemes without the need to identify employees with disabilities through a pre-approved list of trainers and organisations
- Amalgamate all current supports in the Reasonable Accommodation Fund banner into one overall grant and guarantee that funding for specialised equipment is received and controlled by the employee
- Reform the Reasonable Accommodation Fund so that the supports are fit for purpose in a modern workplace
- Expand personal assistant supports for persons with a physical disability to persons in all forms of employment

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SDG 8

- Introduce an Access Employment Programme for people with disabilities. This programme will subsidise a paid work placement with an employer for up to 6 months. It will be applicable to long-term unemployed members of the disabled community who need work experience and to upskill to start or restart their employment journey
- Training portals should be open to level 5 applicants and early school-leavers, with a view towards building micro-credentials and moving up the ladder
- Invest in upskilling and apprenticeships in the construction sector
- Introduce a new skills tax credit to incentivise employers to invest in training for workers with no or low qualifications
- Incentivise unemployed people to attend vocational education by supplementing benefits
- Introduce location-independent building of individual learning pathways. This will be achieved by opening up the national information resources for learning through cooperation between academic universities and universities of applied sciences
- Reform continuous learning, raising the general educational attainment and implementing a digitalisation programme for continuous learning will support smooth transitions from working life to training and back throughout an individual's career
- Training portals should be open to level 5 applicants and early school-leavers, with a view towards building micro-credentials and moving up the skills ladder
- Extend Transborder Worker Relief for cross-border workers
- Increase tax-free voucher bonus scheme for employees

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE ACTION



DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SDG 8

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Reform the Employment Investment Incentive Scheme (EIIS) to simplify the qualifying criteria and prioritise flexibility to improve investor participation
- Reduce the Capital Gains Tax rate of 33% for non-passive investment to promote all-island alignment in tax policy
- Increase the lifetime limit of €1 million in qualifying capital gains under Entrepreneur's Relief to improve the attractiveness for repeat investors and to encourage increased investment in Irish business
- Expand and simplify the eligibility criteria for R&D tax credits to encourage research in medium sized enterprises
- Review and simplify the reliefs which are available, such as Retirement Relief, and integrate it within a more expansive Entrepreneurs' Relief
- Introduce a mechanism where entrepreneurs can apply for a "small business rollover" to support serial entrepreneurship
- Improve conditions to enable greater access to financial, venture capital and private equity markets to grow
- Conduct further review and reform of the Key Employee Engagement Programme (KEEP) to ensure that it continues to be accessible and user-friendly
- Simplify the process for the intergenerational transfer of trading companies

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SDG 8

TRADE

- Resource the Trade and Investment Strategy to facilitate target driven SME engagement with international trade, both within and outside the EU. This will support SMEs to be more productive and will also help SME traders to adapt to the UK being outside the EU
- Support existing trading SMEs to participate in the Team Ireland Trade Mission Week
- Provide additional supports for businesses, including retail, who wish to expand their activities in e-commerce with a view to becoming more engaged in the Digital Single Market
- Broaden the range on industries that are considered for trade supports to include Green and Sustainable products, Skills, Culture and greater supports for all SMEs that seek to export to the EU

TOURISM

- Publish a national aviation strategy that will target and allocate multi-annual funding for CapEx, OpEx and marketing expenditure. These supports for airports will help those vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic to retain existing routes and develop new routes further afield, which will subsequently support growth of tourism and economies in these regions as part of the post-Covid-19 recovery
- Resource state agencies to increase levels of investment in niche areas that distinguish Ireland as a destination, such as Ireland's growing potential as a place for unique and high-quality food and active tourism

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



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AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



POLICY PRIORITIES

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
Planning Reform
National Development Plan
Transport and Transit Networks

Sustainable Cities and Communities
Funding for Housing
Discourage Vacancies
Living City Initiative
Housing & Development

Climate Action
Renewable Energy Generation
Energy Security
Decarbonisation

Gender Equality
Workplace Equality
Childcare
Supporting Parental Equality

Decent Work and Economic Growth
Developing and Attracting Talent
Entrepreneurship
Trade
Tourism

