

Our Plan for Northern Ireland

The DUP Manifesto
for the 2016 Northern Ireland
Assembly Election



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Introduction by Arlene Foster, DUP leader

Nine years ago, devolution was restored to Northern Ireland. In that time many challenges, local, national and international, have been faced up to and overcome. Despite many ups and downs since 2007, Northern Ireland has enjoyed the longest period of stable devolution in half a century. As a result of our system of government, progress on occasion has been frustratingly slow, however a great deal has still been achieved..

By addressing many of the issues that have held us back over recent years, last November's 'Fresh Start Agreement' has paved the way to better working relationships and since then the Executive has performed much more effectively. After the election a number of other aspects of the Agreement will be implemented allowing government to function better in Northern Ireland.

In the next five years, I want to see a step change in how the Executive performs and a greater concentration on the issues that really matter to the people of Northern Ireland. I want to see an Executive with a reputation for taking decisions and getting things done.

Although I have only been First Minister for a few months I believe that this transformation in the performance of the Executive is within our grasp.

I did not seek election as DUP Leader or First Minister simply to hold the posts but because I wanted to bring about positive change for the people of Northern Ireland and to help them achieve their dreams and ambitions.

This document sets out dozens of policy proposals across government for the next five years. This Plan for Northern Ireland sets out my goals and ambitions and represents an undertaking to the people of Northern Ireland as to the direction we want to take this country.

All of that will only be possible if a strong team of DUP MLAs is returned to the Assembly to help us drive change.

On 5th May, I am asking the people of Northern Ireland to endorse this plan and give me the mandate to deliver on it.

Arlene Foster

Arlene Foster
Leader, Democratic Unionist Party
First Minister of Northern Ireland



Arlene's Vision for Northern Ireland

I want to see a strong, safe and stable Northern Ireland...

- ... where every child has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their background,
- ... where economic prosperity is achieved and shared across Northern Ireland,
- ... where business can grow and create more jobs,
- ... where we value people from every background,
- ... where a dependable health system looks after us when we need it,
- ... where everyone takes pride in our country,
- ... where we change the way we do politics,
- ... where paramilitaries are gone for good,
- ... where victims can see justice done,
- ... where no one is permitted to rewrite the past,
- ... where we play a full part in the United Kingdom,
- ... where we make unionism stronger by bringing us together.

I need your help to make these goals a reality. I can't do this on my own, I can only achieve these goals with your support. That's why, if you share my vision for Northern Ireland, I'm asking you to back my DUP candidates in your area so that I can make this vision a reality for all of us.

With your help we can make Northern Ireland an even better place for everyone

Arlene's Plan for Northern Ireland

At this election I'm seeking a mandate for my plan to keep Northern Ireland moving in the right direction.

1. More jobs, rising incomes
2. A world class health service
3. Education - every child given the opportunity to succeed
4. Rebuilding Northern Ireland
5. Rewarding hard work
6. Safer streets and smarter justice
7. Creating stronger communities
8. A friend of the farmer and our natural heritage
9. Changing politics and government in Northern Ireland
10. Taking pride in Northern Ireland

More jobs, rising incomes

At the beginning of the Assembly term we made clear that growing the economy and creating jobs was our top priority and this commitment was reflected in the Executive's Programme for Government. This focus on generating jobs and growth has gained significant results and helped rebuild and reshape our economy in the years after the global economic crisis.

Northern Ireland has seen the unemployment rate drop from 58,644 in 2011 to 39,320 in 2016.

This record of success was built on:

- supporting the promotion of over 40,000 new jobs – smashing the target of 25,000;
- £2.9 billion of investment – almost three times the target of £1bn;
- £585 million on research and development investment – almost double the target of £300m and
- 72% of new jobs supported under the Rebuilding Our Economy Programme have been above the Northern Ireland Public Sector Median salary.

In areas like tourism, Government action, in partnership with the industry, has delivered real advances. For example, we took control of Air Passenger Duty on long haul flights leaving Northern Ireland and reduced the charge to zero. Northern Ireland has also achieved:

- over one million more visitors in the last three years;
- a year on year growth in tourism spending, with it reaching £752 million in 2014; and
- a year on year growth of cruise ships docking in Northern Ireland – 80 vessels and an estimated 145,000 guests will come to Northern Ireland in 2016.

It is not a coincidence that these positive developments have occurred with sustained devolution.

On business taxes, the DUP:

- continued the policy of industrial derating, which has ensured tens of millions of pounds have been saved for local businesses, protecting jobs and encouraging investment;
- protected the Small Business Rates Relief scheme, which has benefited many small businesses across Northern Ireland, by approximately £18 million per year;
- delivered a Northern Ireland wide rating revaluation, resulting in reduced rates bills for many businesses and
- 525 new businesses have benefited from the introduction of Empty Premises Rate Relief since 2012.

For years, business organisations campaigned for the need to devolve Corporation Tax and setting a lower rate by Government. It has been described as a potential game-changer for our economy. While other parties had second thoughts and gave up on achieving it, the DUP persisted and we have now secured the power, with a date set for lowering the tax in 2018 to a rate of 12.5%. This will build on the strength of our workforce and comparative cost base that makes Northern Ireland an attractive investment opportunity.

The DUP wants to go even further in the next Assembly term. This is our Plan for more jobs and rising incomes.

1. 50,000 MORE JOBS

The DUP does not wish to rest on its laurels in terms of job creation and we recognise that in some sectors and some parts of the region, economic recovery has been slower and companies have closed their doors for good. We want to combat that and keep our economy moving forward positively by creating more and better jobs. This will be vital to raising people's incomes. This target will be achieved not solely through the work of Invest NI but the range of measures in this plan including action on corporation tax, an upscaling plan, a rural jobs focus and investment in skills. This should enable Northern Ireland to keep its most talented people and attract back those who have left.

2. OUR COMMITMENT ON CORPORATION TAX

The DUP is committed to delivering the 12.5% Corporation Tax rate in 2018. The shift at a UK level to lower UK Corporation Tax means the DUP is open to looking at lowering the rate to 10%.

3. A BETTER BUSINESS RATES SYSTEM

The DUP supports devolving to Councils the power and the ability to lower business rates in their Council area by up to 3%. We will enhance the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme and maintain Industrial Derating.

4. UPSCALING SUPPORT PLAN

There are many leading and talented small companies within Northern Ireland but many do not fulfil their full potential in terms of expansion and employment. This is caused by a range of factors including access to finance, business culture and purchase by larger often multi-national corporations. Therefore, the DUP will commission a plan that will enable more of our companies to make the step change to larger employers and added value.

5. A NEW ENERGY STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The DUP will carry out a fundamental review of energy policy to ensure that consumers and businesses have a secure energy supply that moves ever closer to the EU median price. This review will include how best to support further development of the renewable sector at least cost to consumers and businesses and better interconnection.

6. OUR FAIR SHARE OF THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

A Treasury initiative, the DUP is committed to ensure Northern Ireland receives in full what is paid in by NI companies under the new Apprenticeship levy. Northern Ireland also needs flexibility to spend this resource on a broader skills agenda with Further Education Colleges.

7. JOB FOCUSED SKILLS

The DUP want to greater align the skills provision from our colleges and universities to match the need of both indigenous companies and Foreign Direct Investment and fully realise the potential of an integrated Enterprise and Skills Department.

8. STRENGTHENING OUR MANUFACTURING BASE

The number of jobs within the manufacturing sector has increased over the last five years. Despite this there are a number of manufacturing companies who are either reducing the number of people they employ or closing their factories in Northern Ireland. The DUP will place the development of manufacturing at the centre of our economic strategy with focus on how to support the sector to ensure that it can continue to grow, increase the number of employees and increase the value of exports.

9. INNOVATION UK AND NI

Northern Ireland's leading entrepreneurs are proven successes on the world stage. However, NI remains the only part of the UK without a dedicated innovation agency. The DUP believes the best solution would be for Innovation UK to establish a Northern Ireland base. This will provide the support needed and linkages into the UK network. Across a range of sectors, with this support, they can reach new heights – exploiting the knowledge economy to its full potential and harnessing skills in sectors and markets such health, agriculture and technology. The focus of the work will be dedicated to supporting those indigenous, high growth sectors that are underpinning the new private-sector led Northern Ireland economy. It will implement the published Innovation Strategy, with a focus on cross-cutting initiatives, better exploiting the work already underway in local departments, agencies and private companies.

10. A £1 BILLION TOURISM SECTOR

Northern Ireland has seen its tourism sector flourish in recent years, but there is still untapped potential. The DUP is committed to driving up tourist spend in Northern Ireland to £1 billion every year by 2020.

A world class health service

Health matters to each and every one of us in Northern Ireland. All of us, either directly or through a close friend or family member, rely on our Health and Social Care system on a regular basis.

The importance of Health and Social Care to everyone in Northern Ireland has been reflected by the priority given to it by the Democratic Unionist Party in this Assembly term. During the past 5 years, the DUP has produced a record to be proud of during its time in charge of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

- People are living longer. Key mortality rates like cancer mortality in under 75s and avoidable mortality are falling;
- We have invested over half a billion pounds more in Health;
- We have employed 275 more consultants, 1,200 more nurses and midwives, and 500 more allied health professionals;
- We have delivered over £800 million in efficiency savings to reinvest in the frontline;
- We have built new, state of the art health and social care facilities such as the new Critical Care Building at the Royal Victoria Hospital, new Health and Care Centres in Ballymena and Banbridge, the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin and large scale redevelopment of the Ulster Hospital and
- We have developed new services like a HEMS air ambulance and a world leading mental trauma service.

We recognise that our NHS in Northern Ireland is under pressure and faces a range of tough challenges now and into the future. Yet, the focus of some on what isn't perfect within the system distracts us away from what is working well and the many improvements that have been made. Ours is a Health and Social Care system which, in spite of the many issues it must contend with, has improved performance and increased productivity over the past 5 years.

Under DUP leadership:

- the number of people admitted to hospitals in Northern Ireland has increased by over 25,000 between 2010/11 and 2014/15;
- the average length of stay in hospital has fallen from 6.7 days in 2011/12 to 6.0 days in 2014/15;
- the number of domiciliary care contact hours has increased by 12% from 2011 to 2014 and
- the Ambulance Service has responded to 13,000 more Category A emergency calls between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

However, we must continue to improve. For example, much needed guidance for our health professionals dealing with terminations has been provided. An expert panel on the issue of pregnancies with severe life limiting conditions has been established.

The DUP has a vision for a sustainably financed Health and Social Care system that puts quality, safety and the patient at its centre by providing world class outcomes for our population. This is our Plan to achieve it.

1. A BILLION POUNDS MORE FOR HEALTH

The DUP pledges to seek to increase spending on Health by at least £1 billion by the end of the next Assembly term to specifically help in tackling waiting lists and investment in innovation and reform. We will continue to invest in the transformation of Health and Social Care services by ensuring that a Transformation Fund of at least £30 million remains in place for each year of the next Assembly term.

2. MORE FRONTLINE STAFF

The DUP will invest more resources in increasing frontline staff numbers and will employ at least 1,500 more Nurses and Midwives and 200 more Consultants by the end of the next Assembly term.

3. TRANSFORMING MENTAL HEALTH

We will continue to increase spending on mental health each and every year of the next Assembly term. We will appoint mental health champions across the public sector and establish a world leading mental trauma service.

4. A HEALTH SERVICE FIT FOR THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The DUP will reduce bureaucracy and encourage innovation by passing legislation through the Assembly to close the Health and Social Care Board, moving responsibility for commissioning services primarily to the Department with more autonomy for the Trusts in certain areas. We will support the work of the Expert Panel led by Professor Rafael Bengoa as they seek to remodel Northern Ireland's Health Service to overcome looming challenges like our growing and ageing population, the rise in the number of chronic conditions and the impact of unhealthy lifestyles.

5. GETTING TO GRIPS WITH WAITING LISTS

The DUP will support the additional investment of a minimum of £80 million to tackle waiting lists in each year of the next Assembly term. This extra money will be focused on increasing capacity inside the Health Service in Northern Ireland but will utilise the independent sector where and when appropriate. It will help people to get close to 200,000 appointments, treatments and procedures each year with the target of getting waiting lists well below 2013 levels by 2021.

6. ENCOURAGING ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING

The DUP will establish a Commission on Adult Care and Support to provide expert, independent analysis of the challenges facing the system and to think radically about what changes must be made to safeguard it for future generations. The Commission on Adult Care and Support will be tasked with producing a set of recommendations to reform the system and its funding structures to ensure its future sustainability. We will pay particular attention to 'best practice' examples like the acclaimed Buurtzorg community care model in the Netherlands and Italy's new models of care in managing the chronic conditions of its ageing population and we will actively examine the opportunity for rolling out similar models in Northern Ireland.

7. SUPPORTING PRIMARY CARE

The DUP will further support primary care by working progressively towards having 110 GPs a year in training by 2020, continuing to support the development of GP Federations, implementing the recommendations of the GP Working Group and maintaining a Financial Transactions Capital funded GP Modernisation Scheme. The DUP will support the Northern Ireland wide roll out of the physiotherapy direct access scheme and will develop similar projects in other specialisms.

8. DELIVERING DIGITAL HEALTHCARE

The DUP will develop a new Electronic Health and Care Record for Northern Ireland to help revolutionise the delivery of health and social care for patients. This would provide accurate, up-to-date and complete information about patients at every point of care, reduce discharge delays and enable safer and more reliable prescribing of medication as well as increase the time that doctors, nurses, therapists and social workers have to spend with patients - allowing the use of data analytics to improve population health and care planning and it will help our Health and Social Care system to become 'paperless.'

9. PROMOTING PUBLIC HEALTH

The DUP supports a continuation and amplification of the cross-Departmental approach to tackling health inequalities in Northern Ireland, building on the progress made by the Making Life Better public health strategy, as part of the next Programme for Government. We will also consider the success of initiatives like South Australia's Health in All Policies (HiAP) and examine if a similar approach could work in Northern Ireland.

A world class health service continued >>>

10. INVESTING IN NEW HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

The DUP will provide support for further investment in improving healthcare facilities across Northern Ireland. This includes the new regional mother and children's hospital at the Royal Victoria Hospital, further redevelopment of the Ulster Hospital and redevelopment of Craigavon Area Hospital. We will also take forward the development of more Health and Care Centres in Lisburn and Newry and examine the scope for places like Newtownards, Bangor, Armagh, Dungannon, Lisnaskea, Carrickfergus and Larne.

11. PERINATAL HOSPICE CARE FOR LIFE LIMITING CONDITIONS

Public debate has focused on the needs of women who are pregnant with a child diagnosed with a severe life limiting condition. The DUP believes that women who find themselves in these most difficult of situations need the best medical and emotional support. The DUP is committed to establishing a perinatal hospice care service or facility in Northern Ireland.

12. BEATING CANCER

The DUP will continue increasing investment in cancer care by at least an additional 10% and introduce a new comprehensive cancer plan for the next decade. We will endeavour to improve 5 year cancer survival rates by 20 percentage points from the establishment of devolved government, continue to promote awareness and prevention, establish further innovative new services and provide more nurse specialists.

13. ASSISTING NURSING

The DUP recognises that the contribution made by nurses and midwives is invaluable to the functioning of Northern Ireland's Health Service. Equally, we acknowledge the pressures facing the profession especially around staff numbers. We are proud to have worked closely with the Royal College of Nursing to address a range of the challenges facing nurses. During the next Assembly term, the DUP will support nursing by implementing the recommendations of the newly created Nursing Task Group, retain Nursing Bursaries in Northern Ireland and continue to increase the number of nurses and midwives in training and in practice.



Every child with the opportunity to succeed

The DUP has worked hard to improve the educational outcomes of our children through its leadership of the Education Committee. Moreover, we have launched a series of programmes through the Department of Social Development and the Office of the First Minister. The DUP has sought to promote excellence in our education system and maximise the potential of every young person by tackling educational underachievement.

These initiatives have included:

- almost 300 newly qualified teachers employed to deliver numeracy and literacy support, benefiting over 18,000 young people with big improvements reported;
- 300 young people supported under eight month full time United Youth Programme - tackling NEETs;
- almost 4000 young people participating in Summer Camps across Northern Ireland and
- 700 families supported under new Parenting Support Programme including enhanced health care visits.

The early years of a child are crucial in their development, as is access to school places. The DUP secured:

- 20 Nurture Units supported under 'Delivering Social Change' with incredible feedback from the 20 primary schools who participated and
- £12m for an innovative childcare strategy focusing on affordable models. Current actions will provide 8000 affordable places.

The DUP ended the under-representation of the Controlled Sector by securing the creation of Controlled Sector Support Council (CSSC). This is part of the DUP's broader equality agenda in education.

The DUP kept student fees in Northern Ireland to year-on-year inflationary uplifts.

1. PROMOTING EXCELLENCE

The DUP will defend the parts of our education system that produce some of the best educational outcomes in the United Kingdom – in Northern Ireland 67% achieve 5 GCSE's Grade A*-C including English and Maths, compared to 56% in England. These outcomes are a crucial factor in maintaining and promoting social mobility. We maintain our support for academic selection and wish to see a transfer process that is accessible and straightforward for children and parents.

2. GREATER AUTONOMY FOR SCHOOLS

The DUP wants to empower school Principals and Governors to end the top-down culture of the Department of Education. This can be achieved by giving control over budgets and resources to schools. Direct spend by schools in Northern Ireland is the lowest in the United Kingdom. The DUP will support schools to change this. Additionally, the DUP will restore a portable, accountable and open market in exam qualifications for schools.

3. A DIGITAL SKILLS REVOLUTION

With the growth of the knowledge economy and need for digital skills amongst the next generation, it is vital our education system is adaptable. We must enable young people to become digital citizens, digital workers and digital makers and ensure parents can help them develop these skills. This will involve embedding this programme at every stage of our education system. This will also require the development of new qualifications to demonstrate job skills and meet future business needs. This will be a central plank in our agenda to provide the broadest range of education pathways including vocational.

4. EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND INTERVENTION

Working alongside our commitment to increased investment in childcare, we will continue to work with family support mechanisms to develop an effective 0-3 strategy. We recognise the benefits of meaningful and timely early intervention and diagnosis. We will work to build upon the commitments of the SEND Act 2016 to ensure better and more timely co-ordination between education and health professionals, effective pupil tracking at school transfer and more specific training for classroom assistants and SENCOs.

5. DRIVING UP STANDARDS

The DUP is dedicated to driving up standards within our education system by tackling under-achievement and maximising the potential of every young person in Northern Ireland. We took the lead in creating the All-Party Group in Education Disadvantage to focus attention on those being left behind including working class Protestant males. A central element will be mainstreaming the Numeracy and Literacy Signature Project that increased teacher time with pupils to raise standards. The positive impact of the project was clearly demonstrated and it was a key failure of the Department of Education not to take it forward.

6. THE NEXT STEPS IN AN EDUCATION EQUALITY AGENDA

The DUP will seek to deliver equality for all school sectors including special needs schools. This includes tackling the preferential treatment of Irish Medium in school build, the abolition of the Catholic Teacher Training Certificate, an end to the Article 71 exemption for teaching from Fair Employment as well as a fairer and better funding formula for schools.

7. INVESTMENT IN SHARED EDUCATION

In the Fresh Start Agreement the DUP secured a £500m Treasury commitment to invest in shared education and housing over the next decade. The DUP will fully implement this programme. The DUP has also supported the Shared Education Bill. The DUP believes that sharing can produce educational, societal and economic benefits, without undermining sound academic standards or the values of schools.

8. UNIVERSITY FEES

The DUP remains fully committed to maintaining University fees at a level that will keep University places affordable and allow access to everyone in our society.

Rebuilding Northern Ireland

After years of underinvestment in our infrastructure during Direct Rule, Northern Ireland is starting to see the benefits of the Executive's spending on rebuilding our region. Since 2011, over £5 billion has been invested in a range of new infrastructure projects that have improved Northern Ireland.

These include:

- new roads including the A8 Belfast to Larne dual carriageway, A2 Shore Road, Greenisland dual carriageway, A26 Frosses Road and the Magherafelt bypass;
- new schools such as Bangor Grammar, Strathearn Grammar, Magherafelt High School and Whitehouse Primary School in Newtownabbey;
- new colleges like Belfast Metropolitan College in the Titanic Quarter and the North West Regional College;
- new healthcare facilities such as the new South West Acute Hospital and Health and Care Centres in Banbridge and Ballymena and
- new tourism assets like Titanic Belfast.

Infrastructure investment brings multiple benefits to Northern Ireland. It assists in the delivery of improved public services. It increases our economic competitiveness and it creates much needed work for local construction companies and workers. Put simply, investing in infrastructure is good for Northern Ireland.

This is our Plan for Rebuilding Northern Ireland.

1. INVESTING IN NEW ROADS

Northern Ireland needs to keep investing in new and improved road networks to keep our region competitive. Investment should be focused upon improving connections between our key towns and cities and schemes that are of strategic and economic importance. We will support projects such as:

- the dualling of the Newbuildings to north of Strabane section of the A5;
- dual carriageways for the Londonderry to Dungiven and the Randalstown to Castledawson sections of the A6;
- the York Street interchange;
- the Ballynahinch bypass;
- the Newry Southern relief road and
- the Enniskillen Southern bypass.

2. IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Department for Regional Development has steadily improved public transport in Northern Ireland. Passenger numbers are rising, customer satisfaction is good and service reliability and punctuality is high. We have invested in enhancing services including:

- new buses, new bus stations and new park and ride schemes across Northern Ireland;
- new trains including an upgrade to the Enterprise service, track improvements on the Coleraine to Londonderry line and upgrades to Portadown and Antrim railway stations;
- support for rural and community transport providers and
- new ferries for the Rathlin and Strangford to Portaferry services.

We want to see that success continue. The DUP will take forward key public transport schemes such as:

- the Belfast Rapid Transit Scheme;
- the Belfast Transport Hub which will be a high class gateway for Belfast offering improved access for commuters and also create investment opportunities;
- extending the network of Park and Ride Schemes at places like Portadown;
- an integrated Bus and Rail ticketing system similar to the Oyster Card.

3. A SINGLE DEPARTMENT FOR DELIVERING INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Northern Ireland has been validly criticised for taking longer than the rest of the UK to deliver major infrastructure projects. An Infrastructure Action Plan has been developed by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) which will see DFP designated as the sole delivery department for all infrastructure projects, with the exception of water, roads and transport because of their specialist nature. Departments would retain responsibility for prioritising projects but the Executive as a whole would benefit from economies of scale plus consistency in how projects are delivered, allowing a significant reduction in the time to construct a scheme with one department solely responsible for all aspects of project delivery. We propose that the Infrastructure Action Plan is implemented with the Department of Finance responsible for the delivery of all non-Department of Infrastructure projects.

4. BETTER MANAGEMENT OF PUBLICLY OWNED LAND

Much positive progress has been made with the creation of the Asset Management Unit (AMU) and its work on developing a register of all publicly owned land in Northern Ireland. The AMU has helped the Executive dispose of unwanted land and assets and helped to realise sizeable efficiency savings through the better management and utilisation of assets, but this is the tip of the iceberg in terms of our ability to efficiently manage publicly owned land and assets. The DUP proposes that examination is given to how the role of the AMU could be enhanced including through, for example, the possible transfer of the title to all land to the AMU to help make the management, disposal etc. of land simpler and more efficient. Ultimately, the DUP would like to explore the potential of creating one single entity akin to Public Wealth Funds that operate in places like Sweden and Singapore to effectively and efficiently manage all central government owned land and assets in Northern Ireland.

5. ESTABLISH A £1 BILLION NORTHERN IRELAND INVESTMENT FUND

In 2014, the DUP announced its intention to establish an Investment Fund for Northern Ireland. The Fund would use Financial Transactions Capital as well as drawing in support from the private sector to create a Fund to help finance projects in areas such as social and affordable housing, energy efficiency and renewables, telecommunications networks and urban regeneration. Detailed discussions have been ongoing about leveraging in further finance from the European Investment Fund with the aim of creating a £1 billion fund to support the private sector in financing schemes. The DUP will press ahead with realising the ambition of a £1 billion Northern Ireland Investment Fund.

6. INVESTING IN WATER

The DUP will make the necessary investment in our water infrastructure utilising the increases in capital funding in recent national budgets. If necessary it will utilise the asset sale flexibilities in the Fresh Start Agreement to fund capital investment.

Rewarding hard work

The DUP wants Northern Ireland to be a society where hard work is rewarded. We are on the side of those who get up early in the morning, get their children ready for school and go off and do a hard day's work. We are on the side of those who aspire to own their own home. We are on the side of those who have worked hard all their lives and want to enjoy their retirement.

People who strive to improve themselves and their families want to see Stormont provide good public services for them, their families and their communities when they need them and they want government to do so efficiently and at minimal cost.

Over the past five years, the DUP has created opportunities for hard working people across Northern Ireland:

- by freezing the regional rate in real terms and deferring water charges, we have saved the average householder in Northern Ireland over £2,500 in the last 5 years compared to their counterparts in England;
- as Northern Ireland has the lowest household taxes in the whole of the United Kingdom. For 2015/16 the average household bill was £842 in Northern Ireland compared to £1337 in Scotland, £1,465 in England and £1,550 in Wales;
- as we have maintained free travel on public transport for over 60s;
- in providing the Lone Pensioners Allowance which has helped thousands of ratepayers aged 70 or over and living alone save a total of £5.2 million annually on their rates bills and
- in assisting almost 5,000 families to buy affordable homes by investing £168 million between 2011 and 2015.

The Democratic Unionist Party will continue to stand on the side of hardworking families across Northern Ireland. This is our Plan to reward hard work.

1. A NEW CHILDCARE STRATEGY

Access and affordability of childcare is a common difficulty for those in work and those seeking work. The DUP is committed to the new Childcare Strategy which will establish 44,000 affordable places. In addition we will support greater flexibility in the starting age for children commencing nursery and primary education.

2. KEEP HOUSEHOLD TAXES IN NORTHERN IRELAND LOW

Whilst other political parties at Stormont are open about their desire to put more pressure on family budgets by hiking rates or introducing water charges, the DUP recognises that times remain tough for many in Northern Ireland. We also believe that Stormont should not be asking you to dig deeper into your pockets to pay more if our government is not as efficient as it should be. We will therefore:

- keep NI household taxes the lowest in the UK;
- defer water charges in the next Assembly term.

3. PROTECT PENSIONER BENEFITS

Many older people in Northern Ireland fear losing some of the supports Stormont has given them since the restoration of devolution. The DUP wants to protect hard earned pensioner benefits in recognition of a lifetime of hard work by our older generations. We will:

- maintain free public transport for over 60s;
- keep the Lone Pensioners Allowance.

4. HELP YOUNG PEOPLE ON TO THE PROPERTY LADDER

The economic downturn made it more difficult than normal for many families to pursue their dream and place a first foot on the property ladder. That is why the DUP decided to double the annual funding for the hugely successful Co-Ownership Housing Scheme in Northern Ireland. The overall property market is improving and the economy as a whole is getting better but many young people will still face difficulties in purchasing their first home. The DUP will continue to support Co-Ownership and support the purchase of 3,000 new affordable homes over the next three years.

5. SUPPORTING CARERS

Over 67,500 people in Northern Ireland are in receipt of Carer's Allowance. Many more look after loved ones without the help of social security benefits. We understand that many face financial hardship because they have to forego employment in order to carry out their caring responsibilities. Much of the ability to assist carers who are in hardship rests in Westminster through welfare and taxation but the DUP wants to better acknowledge the invaluable role carers play in our society. We will examine ways to support carers who are facing financial difficulties by looking at ideas such as:

- a scheme for Carers to provide free public transport;
- a Rate Relief Scheme for Carers.

Safer streets and smarter justice

The DUP's track record of delivery on Justice shows what can be achieved through strong leadership of the Committee and fully utilising the opportunities of legislation in the Assembly.

Through both these opportunities the DUP was able to deliver on its manifesto commitments to:

- provide a Victims' Charter – this Charter will prioritise the needs of victims within our criminal justice system and set the minimum standards of what support to expect;
- introduce Sarah's Law – a new law to increase the information available to the public through a new child protection disclosure scheme;
- provide better protection for ambulance staff – a new law so they will receive the same legal recognition as police officers and firefighters;
- provide smarter justice - a new fines and enforcement bill to allow fines to be deducted from benefits etc to tackle the problem of people serving public sentences for non-payment of small fines;
- provide tougher and better sentencing - a new law to ensure anyone given conditional early release must serve remainder of sentence doing community service.

In addition the DUP has:

- delivered new 'revenge porn' laws – bringing Northern Ireland in line with the rest of the UK;
- campaigned for greater action on animal cruelty – the Public Prosecution Service has new powers to appeal lenient sentences; helped expose mismanagement in the prison service and led the campaign for change; stood by its commitment to family values and marriage and will continue to do so.

The recent callous murder of Adrian Ismay was a reminder of the violent and backward agenda of dissident republicans. The continuing existence and criminal activities of all paramilitary groups is unacceptable. The DUP tabled the motion in the Assembly which led to the full introduction of the National Crime Agency (NCA) to Northern Ireland. In the Fresh Start Agreement the DUP secured:

- £160m new resources for the PSNI to go after paramilitaries;
- a £50m cross border task force of the NCA, PSNI and Tax authorities to ensure no safe havens;
- a new anti-paramilitary strategy to remove this lingering scourge;
- a new international monitoring body.

The DUP has prioritised the needs of victims and will always do so. In all its work the DUP applies three tests:

- there must be no amnesty for wrongdoers;
- there must be no rewriting of the past;
- there must always be help for victims to get justice.

We have used devolution to quadruple the level of funding provided under Direct Rule. The DUP has also overseen a fundamental reform of support services. We have attempted to overcome the past failure of the UUP to get a proper definition of victim and to achieve a pension for severely disabled victims.

1. LET VICTIMS DECIDE

A plan on dealing with the past was the one element that eluded the Fresh Start Agreement but the DUP believes substantial consensus was reached. The DUP believes that the Draft Bill should be published. Victims should be allowed to see what is on offer and provide the opportunity for them to give their opinions.

2. FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRESH START ANTI-PARAMILITARY MEASURES

The DUP will pursue the full implementation of the measures to tackle head on the lingering poison of paramilitarism. The way of the terrorist gun and bomb was never acceptable and never will be. Those who refuse to change must be pursued by all legal means and put out of business.

3. PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

Aspects of our present system are failing victims. Repeat offending goes unaddressed and thus creates more victims. In appropriate cases a different approach is required to prevent criminality and keep communities safer. The DUP will support establishing problem solving courts across Northern Ireland with a particular focus on domestic violence courts and drugs courts. Evidence shows that this approach can reduce reoffending and save the taxpayer money in the longer term.

4. OPEN POLICING AND JUSTICE

The DUP supports utilising technology to help the citizen have greater access to justice and to improve the efficiency of the system. We therefore support the digitisation of the courts and the full introduction of body cameras for police officers – this would assist in evidence gathering, driving up standards and in addressing vexatious complaints about the police. Furthermore, the DUP supports the introduction of cameras into some of our court rooms e.g. the Court of Appeal.

5. ONLINE CIVIL JUSTICE

The pursuit of lower value civil disputes can be problematic for both the courts and those seeking redress. The DUP supports the adoption of an online dispute resolution system, similar to that operating in the Netherlands and Canada. This system would provide appropriate legal advice and judicial oversight available throughout the process. It is also quicker and improves outcomes whilst also reducing the cost to the individual.

6. LEGAL ACCESS FUND

Legal Aid budgets continue to come under significant pressure, and this can create problems in regard to access to justice for some family or domestic violence cases. The DUP supports the introduction of a central pro bono fund that can provide assistance in cases where legal aid is not available. This can be funded by allowing courts to make 'pro bono cost orders' in cases when the winning party is represented wholly or partly pro bono.

7. A NI REGISTER OF ANIMAL CRUELTY OFFENDERS

A difficulty in enforcement of banning orders for those convicted of animal cruelty is the disjointed nature of offender monitoring. Therefore, the DUP wants to see the introduction of a NI Register of Animal Cruelty Offenders.

8. FULL PROTECTION FOR ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY STAFF

With five physical and verbal assaults every day on A&E staff, the DUP supports extending the same legal recognition of firefighters, police and ambulance staff to the staff of Accident and Emergency facilities.

9. GREATER PROTECTION FOR THE ELDERLY AND VULNERABLE

The DUP will increase the maximum period of imprisonment for offences involving violence or neglect directed against the elderly or vulnerable.

10. PARADES AND PROTEST

The DUP supports new legislation for a fresh start on the how parades and protests are dealt with in Northern Ireland.

Creating stronger communities

Strong communities are at the heart of a renewed Northern Ireland. We want people to live and work in communities that are rejuvenated and revitalised and which engender a sense of pride.

Over the past 5 years, especially through our stewardship of the Department for Social Development, the Democratic Unionist Party has ensured ongoing investment and support directed towards strengthening our communities. Investment has been focused on improving housing, supporting our town centres and high streets and tackling disadvantage. For example

- between 2011 and 2015, £400million was invested, alongside £315million of private finance, in providing social and affordable housing across Northern Ireland. Over 8,500 new social and affordable homes have been constructed over the period;
- by end of March 2016, £70m will be committed under the Social Investment Fund, for the first time benefiting churches, Orange Halls and many new areas not included under traditional DSD schemes;
- hundreds of new social enterprises created under the Social Enterprise Hub project;
- tackling Fuel Poverty through Boiler Replacement and Warm Home schemes.

- we have introduced legislation permitting the creation of Business Improvement Districts with pilot schemes commencing in seven areas including Ballymena, Belfast and Newry;
- tens of millions of pounds has been invested in new public realm schemes to improve streetscapes in places like Bangor, Newtownards, Cookstown, Dungannon and Larne;
- enabled Community Asset Transfer where Third Sector organisations such as voluntary and community sector groups, faith based organisations and social enterprises can use surplus public sector assets to regenerate communities;
- negotiated extra safeguards and support for benefit claimants in NI providing the best system in the UK.

This work of investing in our communities and neighbourhoods must continue. This is our Plan to create stronger communities.

1. INCREASING INVESTMENT IN NEW SOCIAL & AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The case for investment in social housing is an unarguable one. House building has a hugely positive impact upon the local economy, creating and sustaining jobs not just in the construction sector, but also in professional services and retail. A safe, secure and warm home also produces health and educational benefits. The DUP commits to delivering a further 8,000 social and affordable housing units by 2020.

2. A TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION CHALLENGE FUND

We will examine the scope for the introduction of a Town Centre Regeneration Challenge Fund which local Councils, Chambers of Trade and others could bid for annually to help them develop a range of projects in their towns or high streets to improve their social and physical infrastructure. This would complement our commitment to public realm works.

3. REINTRODUCE A 'LIVING OVER THE SHOPS' SCHEME

The future of our town centres does not depend solely upon enhancing their retail offering. Town centres must become places where people do more than shop. They must become places where people live as well. We will further develop the work already started to reintroduce the previously successful 'Living Over the Shop' scheme where landlords were assisted in converting space above shops or offices into residential accommodation.

4. COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOMES

Community Land Trusts are a long-term solution to the issue of affordability and assist in community regeneration. Land prices are a key component in driving up property prices. This model places the land in trust and thus removes it from the cost of the home. Future selling prices are linked to a multiple of local incomes which allows the owner to see appreciation of their investment but still maintaining any re-sale price at an accessible level. The DUP will introduce schemes in different property hot spots across Northern Ireland.

5. RE-BIRTH OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE (NIHE)

The DUP supports the transformation of the NIHE to a strategic housing body. This should include the transfer of its stock to fully utilise assets to make social housing more self-financing. In addition, the NIHE would receive additional powers to tackle the issue of empty homes.

6. ENERGYWISE AND WARM HOMES

The DUP is committed to the full implementation of the Energywise Scheme in Northern Ireland to help improve the energy efficiency of homes and tackle fuel poverty. Furthermore, it will fight for NI to be included into Westminster's Warm Homes Discount Scheme.

7. BULK BUYING FROM PRIVATE SECTOR LANDLORDS

The DUP wants to drive up standards in the private landlord sector. It will introduce a bulk-renting scheme from combines of private landlord properties. In return for a guarantee of income the properties entered into the scheme must be equipped and maintained to higher standards.

8. HOMELESSNESS

The growth of on street homelessness is of grave concern. This problem persists even when there is adequate hostel and other provision. This is a result of the complex needs and difficulties of those who find themselves in this situation. The DUP will bring and co-ordinate all public agencies to provide the breadth and depth of support these people need.

A friend of the farmer and natural heritage

The agri-food sector continues to be a cornerstone of the Northern Ireland economy. Despite the global downturn, the sector has continued to grow over the last ten years and employs tens of thousands throughout Northern Ireland.

Over the last mandate the DUP ensured that the Common Agricultural Policy supports productive agriculture; we were instrumental in the development and delivery of the agri-food strategy “Going for Growth” and are responsible for recognising 2016 as the ‘Year of Food’ for Northern Ireland.

Despite the sector’s success over the last five years, there are many challenges facing it. These are a result of global price volatility, exchange rate movements, geopolitics affecting the trade of food into regions such as China and Russia and continued deflation of food prices in the major UK multiples.

The DUP through its various offices have held Department For Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to account over the period of the last mandate and focus is to continue to make DARD deliver for its customers. We want a Department FOR Agriculture and Rural Development and not an EU police force. The DUP have ensured direct support has been maximised to support and drive forward the backbone of the NI economy. We have also delivered on ensuring DARD are not gold plating EU Cross Compliance rules for single tag penalties. Our natural heritage is part of what makes Northern Ireland a unique place to live or visit. It is something we wish to pass on to future generations in a beautiful, strong and sustainable form. This will also involve improving the public’s access to that heritage and how the public treat it.

1. SUSTAINABLE PRICES

The DUP will want to see the industry bring forward supply contracts that minimise price fluctuations and see a greater sharing of profits along the entire supply chain. The DUP will continue to champion the Year of Food 2016, ensuring our produce takes top spot on the global stage for years to come.

2. ALTERNATIVE FINANCE

The economic downturn within many of the sectors has resulted in many farmers facing significant cash flow challenges. The DUP will look at alternative financing models, including finance from the European Investment Bank, which allow existing businesses that are highly leveraged to survive and continue to sustainably grow.

3. ACTION ON ‘GOING FOR GROWTH’

The DUP are committed to working with the industry to implement recommendations arising from ‘Going for Growth’. The DUP support the introduction of a ‘Farm Business Investment Scheme’ and a marketing body to promote food from Northern Ireland. The DUP believe that greater emphasis needs to be placed on research and development within the sector

4. A NEW ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

Following the merger of the Department of Agriculture and Department of the Environment the DUP will create a new environmental advisory division within the new department to help improve the natural environment. We wish to see NIEA prosperity agreements, which reduce environmental impacts while creating prosperity and well-being, rolled out to the wider economy.

5. JOB FOCUSED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The DUP want to see the next rural development programme target rural businesses who are helping create new jobs in rural areas. This funding will either directly go towards businesses or towards infrastructure that will help develop and grow new businesses in rural areas.

6. GREENWAYS NI

The DUP is committed to developing a Greenway Network across Northern Ireland that provides traffic free space for walkers and cyclists for both leisure and commuting. We believe that this presents a perfect opportunity for partnership work and funding between the new Department of Infrastructure and the newly created 11 councils to develop such projects across Northern Ireland.

7. DON’T MESS WITH NI

The ‘Don’t mess with Texas’ campaign has been one of the most successful in changing public attitudes to public littering. It led to significant reductions in the amount of litter on public roads. The DUP wants to launch a campaign that aims to be as successful in NI. Northern Ireland public advertising led the way on changing public attitudes on issues such as drink driving. Litter not only harms our environment but also is a key cost to Councils.

8. REACHING OUR WOODLAND TARGETS

The DUP believes that Government must do more to deliver on targets set for woodland creation. The DUP is committed to increasing carbon sequestration, fully utilising public assets to plant more woodland, and creating greater incentives for farmers to plant marginal land in trees to reduce incidents of flooding. We want to build a more sustainable renewable sector in the future. By increasing the amount of woodland in Northern Ireland we are delivering for the environment and our citizens.

9. REMOVING THE RURAL DIGITAL DIVIDE

Affordable and reliable broadband is essential for all families and businesses regardless of where they are located throughout Northern Ireland. The DUP will strive to ensure that there is greater rollout of the fibre and mobile network in rural areas. The DUP will introduce a Broadband voucher, funded through the rural development programme which will allow rural homes and businesses to get access to affordable high speed broadband.

10. FAIRNESS FOR OUR FISHERMEN

The DUP will continue to fight for our withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) but until that happens our focus will be to ensure a fair and proper regionalisation of the CFP. The DUP will focus our attention on delivering funding for local fishing business or wider infrastructural projects to encourage job creation and sustainable growth, alongside reducing unwanted EU gold plating which is a financial burden on the industry.

11. COASTAL PROTECTION

The DUP is committed to taking forward the work of the Coastal Management Forum with the aim of establishing a single lead department and overhauling the fifty year old protection framework.

Changing politics and government in Northern Ireland

Devolution has delivered for the people of Northern Ireland but Stormont is far from perfect. The Assembly and the Executive may have achieved much, but there is a great deal to do and room for improvement.

The DUP – whilst always being pro-devolution – has argued consistently since 1998 that the system of government at Stormont was too big and too bloated. We have, through perseverance, begun to shrink the size of Stormont. As a result of DUP determination we have delivered:

- a reduction in the number of Government Departments from 12 to 9;
- a reduction in the number of Special Advisors;
- a reduction in the number of MLAs per constituency by one from 2021.
- a reduction in the number of councils from 26 to 11.
- arrangements for an Opposition in the Assembly.

The DUP were responsible for establishing the Northern Ireland Public Sector Innovation Laboratory in the Department of Finance. This novel approach to policy making is based on the principles of co-design and co-production and has seen government officials work with academics, business leaders and Third Sector representatives to examine and suggest policy solutions. Areas which they have focused on include dementia, regulatory impact assessments and citizen services. We believe that innovative approaches to policy making are important especially as the challenges facing society are growing.

The DUP has also been the drivers of an ambitious programme of Public Sector Reform across Departments, with the European Union recognising Northern Ireland as “one of the European Regions most active in the field” of public sector innovation. Public sector reforms and innovations that have advanced in recent years include:

- engaging the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to conduct the first ever sub-national Public Governance Review;
- entering into a digital partnership between Northern Ireland and Estonia;
- establishing key elements of public sector innovation architecture such as the Northern Ireland Public Sector Innovation Laboratory and
- creating a £30 million Change Fund in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 Budgets to support reform-orientated, innovative, preventative and collaborative projects across the public sector.
- the SBRI fund contained within the 2016/17 Budget.

The Northern Ireland Executive has also been aggressively pursuing efficiencies across the public sector primarily through the work of the Department of Finance and Personnel. Key examples include:

- between 2009/10 and 2013/14, 31,619m² of DFP managed office estate has been vacated and £16 million has been saved in rent, rates and service charges;
- energy consumption has been reduced by 10% between 2011 and 2014 across the DFP managed office estate;
- £1.8 million has been saved since 2014 using Collaborative Procurement contracts across government for common goods and services;
- Network NI has reduced the cost of network services by almost two-thirds over 4 years, saving £12 million and
- IT Assist has reduced the cost of IT provision per user by more than 30% in 3 years and has saved over £29 million.

Furthermore, individual Departments have driven out inefficiency within their own budgets with significant reform programmes such as the Review of Public Administration and the creation of the Education Authority.

We want to continue to reform our public sector and improve our political system. This is our Plan to change politics and government in Northern Ireland.

1. MAKING POLITICAL DONATIONS OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND FAIR

The DUP believes that the time is now right to reform the system of political donations in Northern Ireland. In the spirit of encouraging openness, transparency and fairness in political donations, we support implementing the same regime that exists across the UK. This would include barring Northern Ireland political parties from accepting donations from outside of the United Kingdom and the publication of donations.

2. CHANGING HOW ASSEMBLY EXPENSES ARE ADMINISTERED

Public confidence in the expenses system at Stormont has been undermined. We strongly believe that it is imperative that the system is changed so that confidence can be restored. We support moving to a system similar to the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) which operates at Westminster which independently oversees and regulates MPs business costs and expenses.

3. REFORMING STORMONT

Good progress has been made in removing the ‘ugly scaffolding’ at Stormont. We are reducing the number of Departments, the number of MLAs and we have created the capacity for an official opposition but we want to go further.

We still firmly believe that the best form of government for Northern Ireland would be a voluntary coalition Executive with weighted majority voting in the Assembly of around 65%. This would bring an end to Community Designation.

This will remain our long term goal. We have made slow but sure progress on reforming Stormont and will continue to focus on this important issue during the next Assembly term.

4. A NATIONAL REFORM PLAN FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The DUP believes that all parties should subscribe to a proper, structured, long term, cross-government National Reform Plan for Northern Ireland.

A Reform Plan should be agreed between Executive Parties and complementing the direction laid out in the Programme for Government. It should have measurable targets and agreed implementation dates with official lead for its delivery handed to the Department of Finance and Personnel with Ministerial oversight via the Executive Sub-Committee for Improving Public Services.

A National Reform Plan should have several elements and not have the sole purpose of helping the Executive to save money and live within its means. While this objective is important, improving public services is every bit as much if not more about adapting government structures, processes and methodologies to delivering better outcomes for our citizens as well as increasing economic competitiveness.

Elements of a National Reform Plan for Northern Ireland could include:

i) ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Other jurisdictions have been successfully experimenting with alternative models of service delivery. These alternative models – like Mutualisation and Payment by Results contracts – are aimed at producing better outcomes for citizens. The DUP proposes that the Executive agrees to examine these options further with a view to commencing pilots by no later than 2017/2018.

ii) A CIVIL SERVICE REFORM PLAN

The NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme has successfully started but we believe that a reduced Civil Service is not enough. The DUP proposes the commissioning of a Civil Service Reform Plan which will focus on developing the skills and capabilities needed to meet the challenges of the future.

iii) A DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

People are increasingly getting used to accessing services on their phones, via tablets or through their PCs. If citizens are used to booking taxis or ordering their shopping online then demand for interacting with government services on mobile devices and online

Changing politics and government in Northern Ireland

continued >>>

will only increase. People will rightly demand the same accessibility to government services as they get from businesses.

The Northern Ireland Executive has made good progress in its roll out of digital services, surpassing its original ambitions. The Digital NI project has seen services such as applying for rate relief, applying for free school meals and school transport, applying for fishing licences, registering a birth, death or marriage and applying for DARD grants now available online.

We propose that Northern Ireland sets an ambition to emulate places like Estonia where all government services are accessible online with high rates of uptake by digitally aware and engaged citizens. We will support putting in place the necessary infrastructure including a Citizens ID, Citizens email account and cross-public sector interoperability system to move Northern Ireland towards realising a truly digital government.

iv) EXPANDING SHARED SERVICES

Northern Ireland has developed a range of shared services which are amongst the best in the world. Opportunities exist to expand our shared services further. In particular, we will work towards amalgamating the work of Enterprise Shared Services and the Business Services Organisation (which operates within Health and Social Care) with the aim of having one shared service organisation providing HR, IT, Network, Records and other services as soon as existing contracts permit.

v) A CHANGE FUND

In order to continue the positive work funded through the 2015/16 and 2016/17 Change Funds which supported projects like the Condition Management Programme, Collaborative Skills and the All-Island Congenital Cardiac Service Model, a Change Fund should be created in future Budgets with the quantum of funding to be determined during Budget negotiations.

5. A UK FIRST ON DATA ANALYSIS

The DUP is committed to a UK first by establishing an Office of Data Analytics. This office will examine existing government data to find better ways of doing things and tackling difficult issues. This model has been successfully developed in New York and other US cities delivering better results for people and government.

6. WHAT WORKS NI

Northern Ireland is the only part of UK government that has not established a What Works Centre. These centres enable policy makers, commissioners and practitioners to make decisions based upon strong evidence of what works and to provide cost-efficient, useful services. The DUP is committed to establishing a What Works Centre and participating in the existing network of such centres.



Taking pride in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is a great country, full of potential and bouncing back after the dark days of the Troubles. Despite the negativity generated by some, there has been a growing pride in Northern Ireland and the achievements of its people, coinciding with the restoration of devolution. There is a clear opportunity to build pride amongst everyone in Northern Ireland and in particular, our future generations.

The achievements of our sporting heroes like Rory McIlroy, Carl Frampton and the Northern Ireland football team have contributed to this process.

Northern Ireland has been showcased to the world through successfully hosting major events like the MTV awards, the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards, the Tall Ships and the Giro D'Italia.

The DUP has been to the fore of promoting Northern Ireland across the globe. An example was the 'NI 2012 Our Time, Our Place' tourism campaign in 2012. This helped attract 1,000,000 visitors to Northern Ireland and was worth over £40 million to the local economy. This year we are showcasing our strengths in the agri-food sector with our NI Year of Food and Drink.

The DUP sees this as only the beginning of what Northern Ireland can be at home and abroad. With Northern Ireland fast approaching its centenary year in 2021, we want to see more people, regardless of their community background, taking pride in Northern Ireland. 2021 presents us all with the opportunity to build positively on the events of recent years and to develop a series of events and initiatives that will celebrate this historic milestone and build community pride.

This is our Plan to help us all take pride in Northern Ireland.

1. MORE INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The DUP believes we can continue to shine on the international stage by securing more and bigger international events. The DUP believes we should be seeking to attract events such as:

- the Grand Depart of the Tour de France, building on the outstanding success of the Giro D'Italia in 2013;
- after hosting the Commonwealth Youth games in 2021, a bid to host a future Commonwealth Games in Belfast should be developed and
- the 2023 Rugby World Cup with stadiums in Northern Ireland playing a major role in the tournament.

2. A PUBLIC HOLIDAY AND FULL 2021 CENTENARY PROGRAMME

Northern Ireland was established as a legal entity on 3rd May 1921. The centenary of this date should be made a one-off public holiday and for that day and year a full programme of events developed to celebrate and examine our history.

3. THE FIRST CHILDREN OF OUR NEW CENTURY

The DUP believes that 2021 should not be marked solely by events but also by illustrations of our values. In our centenary year, every child born will receive a Baby Box with every child having an equal start. This Baby Box will be based on the long-established and highly successful Finnish model.

4. OUR LIVING INHERITANCE

In our centenary year, we should recognise all of those who have lived through our first 100 years. Each Centenarian in Northern Ireland will receive an award of £1,000 and a personal oral history project to document their memories.

5. A LASTING LEGACY

The DUP wants a lasting legacy to the centenary celebrations. It will support public art and environmental projects such as a centenary wood and a centenary greenway.

6. FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MILITARY COVENANT

Our pride in Northern Ireland is matched by our pride for those who serve and have served in our Armed Forces. The present estimate of 95% implementation of the Military Covenant here is unacceptable to us. The DUP wants to secure the full implementation of the Military Covenant and see the end of any legal barriers to its full enjoyment by servicemen/women and veterans.

7. OUR NATIONAL FLAG

An open and full expression of pride should include the display of our national symbols. The DUP remains committed to the display of the national flag from public buildings on a '365 day' basis.

8. INSTITUTE OF ULSTER-SCOTS

The DUP is committed to establishing the Institute of Ulster-Scots to drive forward a positive research and educational agenda for this vital strand of Northern Ireland's identity.



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