



OUR PLAN FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

**REAL ACTION AT
LOWEST COST
ON THE ISSUES
THAT MATTER
TO YOU**

Who we are....

The DUP is the party for the people whose identity is focused on their Northern Ireland heritage and our place in the United Kingdom. For over 50 years we have been the party for Northern Ireland and have earned the reputation to be the people's party by virtue of our work in and for the community. The DUP takes its position, democratically bestowed on it, to make Northern Ireland the best region in the United Kingdom.

What we seek....

The DUP wants to contribute to make Northern Ireland a place of peace, stability and prosperity. We want to ensure that the people in every district and community benefit and see their standard of living improve and their way of life become more enjoyable. We want to normalise our institutions and political arrangements to demonstrate that democratic standards apply and fairness and equality of opportunity is the right of all. We will strive to make Northern Ireland the most prosperous part of the United Kingdom.

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Introduction

This election will be an important opportunity to determine the next four years in our 11 local councils as well as helping shape the future direction of Northern Ireland.

The DUP is in the business of laying solid foundations for Northern Ireland so our children and grandchildren can succeed. We know that Northern Ireland is a great place and that its people have even greater potential.

Our goal for every council is to deliver the best services at the lowest possible cost to rate-payers.

That means focusing on what matters rather than political pet projects.

In this election campaign we pledge to you that we will seek to re-establish the Northern Ireland Assembly on a fair and sustainable basis by **finishing the job of protecting NI's place in the UK and its internal market.** We will work within Councils to **protect and deliver core services at real value and lowest cost** to ratepayers. We will build stronger and safer communities by targeting **Council spending on what really matters** to local ratepayers. We will promote and **deliver regeneration** for our villages, towns and city centres and in our King's Coronation year, we will **co-operate with other unionists**, to strengthen our rich heritage and culture.

The Democratic Unionist Party and its candidates are pledged to **put Northern Ireland first.**

We are taking our message to doorsteps in every village, town and city across Northern Ireland.

The work of our local government councillors in Northern Ireland is important even if sometimes it does not receive the spotlight it deserves. I am pleased that we

are fielding 152 candidates from all walks of life, with a vibrant mix of skills, youth and experience.

The last election must act as a wake-up call for Unionists. Divided votes handed seats to the opponents of the Union. Some said the DUP would "weaken" after that election. It was a lie then and we are pledged to continue to stand firm after this election until we have properly secured and protected our place within the United Kingdom.

The DUP supports **greater unionist co-operation** and is the **only unionist party large enough to challenge Sinn Fein.**

On May 18th Unionists have a **clear choice.** They can back the Democratic Unionist Party candidates and **strengthen our position** as we seek to finish the job of restoring Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom following the harm done by the imposition of the Protocol or **unionism can divide and splinter**, costing seats and influence in our councils and helping to hand seats and influence to those who would further weaken the Union.

Now is not the time for more division.

At this election vote to strengthen our hand and ensure Unionism speaks with a strong and united voice.

On 18th May, if you want Northern Ireland to move forward together where everyone is respected and feels at home then vote for your local Democratic Unionist candidates and then transfer to other pro-Union candidates.



**Rt Hon Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP
Leader**



OUR PROMISE TO YOU

USE YOUR VOTE TO SUPPORT US AND WE WILL ...

- 1** Seek to re-establish the NI Assembly on a fair and sustainable basis by **finishing the job of fully restoring NI's position in the UK.**
- 2** Work within Councils to protect and **deliver core services** at **real value** and **lowest cost** to ratepayers.
- 3** Build stronger and safer communities by targeting Council **spending on what really matters** to local ratepayers.
- 4** Promote and **deliver regeneration** for our villages, towns and city centres.
- 5** In our King's Coronation year, co-operate with other unionists, to strengthen our rich heritage and culture. We will **put Northern Ireland first.**

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT

UNITY IS OUR STRENGTH

The last election must act as a wake-up call for unionists. Divided votes handed seats to the opponents of the Union.

The DUP supports greater unionist cooperation and unity.
The DUP is the only unionist party that can challenge Sinn Fein.

After supporting your DUP Council candidates, transfer to other unionists.



Finishing the job of fully restoring NI's position in the UK

We seek to re-establish the Northern Ireland Assembly on a fair and sustainable basis by finishing the job of fully restoring Northern Ireland's position in the United Kingdom.

The DUP has consistently campaigned to ensure that the Protocol is replaced by arrangements that restore our place within the United Kingdom and those arrangements must be capable of commanding the support of Unionists as well as Nationalists.

The Protocol upset the delicate political balance in Northern Ireland and was not supported by the Unionist community.

Our judgement and our principled position in opposing the Protocol in Parliament and at Stormont has been vindicated. When others said there would be no re-negotiation and no change our determination has proved what can be achieved.

The outcome of the recent UK-EU negotiations, the Windsor Framework, while undoubtedly representing significant progress across a number of areas does not deal with some of the fundamental problems at the heart of our current difficulties.

The Democratic Unionist Party, whilst welcoming progress, has carefully assessed the Windsor Framework and taken time to consult the wider public through the establishment of a panel to hear the views of a wide range of stakeholders across Northern Ireland.

Having received the report from our Panel and assessed all elements of the Windsor Framework the Democratic Unionist Party has concluded that the Framework **does not**

meet our seven tests as set out in our 2022 Assembly election manifesto.

Consequently, more work is required by the UK Government if we are to secure the necessary conditions for a return to the Northern Ireland Executive.

At this election we are seeking support to finish the job and build the necessary solid foundations for a return of local accountable government at Stormont. We want to see the restoration of the Assembly and Executive on the basis that democratic decision making is in the hands of locally elected representatives rather than having no say over laws governing our economy and our people.

Following our assessment of the Windsor Framework we have identified a series of key areas of concern:

- ✓ The fact that the proposals do not in themselves adequately remedy the harm done by the Protocol to Article 6 of the Acts of Union and our ability to trade with the rest of the United Kingdom.
- ✓ The UK Government gave a commitment in the New Decade New Approach Agreement to protect Northern Ireland's place in the UK Internal Market and this remains unfinished business. Notwithstanding the proposal to remove certain barriers to trade between GB and NI under the Framework, we will want to see further work in this area, consistent with the NDNA commitment that protects our place in the internal market and our economic rights under Article 6 of the Acts of Union.
- ✓ The implications of the continued application of EU law without consent in Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework. For example, for those



Northern Ireland businesses that do not trade with the EU and only trade within the United Kingdom, why should they be required to follow EU laws? This area will need further exploration and resolution by the Government.

- ✓ Greater flexibility is needed in the operation of the proposed Green and Red lanes, with unnecessary checks and paperwork dispensed with to ensure that goods moving within the UK Internal Market can flow more freely.
- ✓ The proposed remedy for the democratic deficit (for amended and new EU laws) in Northern Ireland - the Stormont Brake. For these proposals to truly remedy this aspect of the democratic deficit in Northern Ireland (namely amended and new EU law) we must be clear that any mechanism exercised by 30 MLAs is effective in law and will enable locally elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland to determine whether amended or new laws are vetoed by the UK Government. That is why the DUP voted against the legislation in its current form in Parliament.

We are continuing to campaign to secure further advancements in these areas. We continue to work intensively to solve these issues, doing so in the knowledge that what has already been achieved has been because we were not prepared to accept the undermining of Northern Ireland's place within the Union.

The Democratic Unionist Party will do everything possible to prevent a situation where Northern Ireland diverges from its most important market, that being the rest of the United Kingdom.

We want to see a return to the delicate political balance within Northern Ireland where the views of unionists are valued and respected and cross-community consensus is the way that we deliver stability and prosperity for all our people.

As Northern Ireland's largest unionist party we have the ultimate responsibility of ensuring we get the right outcome that respects Northern Ireland's place in the Union for the long-term. At this election Unionism can strengthen our hand and ensure Unionism speaks with a strong and united voice.



Remembering Victims

Victims and survivors must have the right and opportunity for justice. Disgracefully, far too many have never had justice for the murder of a loved one or for the injuries caused by terrorism and violence. The DUP continues to strongly oppose an amnesty for troubles related crimes.

That is why we oppose the Government's current legislation on legacy. If passed, this will bring about an amnesty for many of those guilty of the most appalling crimes and the terrorism that was a scourge in Northern Ireland for decades.

The UK Government should immediately drop this legislation.

After a long campaign, a Special Pension for those severely injured is now in place. This pension rightly excludes perpetrators and the DUP were proud to have played our part in putting this in place. However, we need to continue to build on the support available to those who have suffered the most - the victims and survivors of terrorism. We will continue to work to protect and enhance support. Victims must never be forgotten. We are determined to ensure your voice is heard.

Improving Access to Sports for All

It is well accepted that pursuing exercise is one of the best ways of improving mental and physical health, and local government, as a key provider of sporting leisure services, has a crucial role to play.

A Sports Pitch Near You

Many councils have large, under-used landbanks. They also have a lack of pitch space. In this context councils have the opportunity to use appropriate unused land for pitch development in order to improve access to sports. Not all pitches need to have 4G surfaces. Many people still prefer grass surfaces and being able to train and play in their own locality. Travel makes sporting activity less attractive, especially to young people.

The DUP Council teams commit to seeking and supporting:

- ✓ An audit of their council's current and potential pitch space
- ✓ A strategy to convert potential pitch space into pitches
- ✓ A strategy to maximise the use of existing and new pitch space



Swimming Lessons for Your Children

Learning to swim is a key childhood experience. Many of us will remember swimming lessons at school or the local leisure centre. Whether swimming in a pool, or the sea, swimming is widely recognised as the best available full body work out. It is great for mental health and wellbeing and a good way of making friends. However, we understand the challenge some parents have securing access to affordable swimming lessons and are not prepared to accept a situation in which children are denied the opportunity to learn to swim.

The DUP Council teams commit to seeking and supporting:

- ✓ An audit of their council's swimming lesson provision against local demand;
- ✓ A strategy to ensure that no child is denied the opportunity to learn to swim.

Work within Councils to protect and deliver core services at real value to ratepayers

Reclaiming Our Focus

Local Government needs to get back to focusing on its core services and responsibilities. Since the formation of Northern Ireland's eleven new local councils, some have become progressively distracted by an ever-increasing list of additional activities and 'pet' projects which have duplicated the work of others or have been of questionable value to the ratepayer. All too often, councillors have wasted time and money debating motions on foreign policy, for which they have no responsibility, and attempts to reinvent the wheel, duplicating the work of central government and public bodies. This has to stop.

It would be wrong at any time to compromise securing excellence in the provision of the services that are the responsibility of local government, by allowing the allocation of scarce resources to be distracted by other interests. To do so, however, during a cost-of-living crisis, when there is an imperative to keep rate increases to a minimum, would be particularly inappropriate.

The whole of the United Kingdom, and indeed much of the western world, has experienced the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis driven by increases in prices, especially energy prices, impacted partly by the war in Ukraine. In Northern Ireland, however, the crisis has been further compounded by the impact of the Northern Ireland Protocol which has reduced the supply of goods in Northern Ireland as the

number of goods coming from Great Britain (whose supply chains benefit for significant economies of scale resulting in lower prices) has fallen, as some 200 GB suppliers have ceased trading with Northern Ireland. In this context, as prices rise, there is inevitably huge pressure on local authority budgets and pressures for an increase in the rates.

The DUP will work tirelessly to minimise both domestic and non-domestic rates increases in the coming years while protecting the essential services which are needed by everyone in the community. We will rise to this challenge in four ways:

FIRST, by ensuring that every council focuses on core service delivery

SECOND, we will undertake a review of the allocation of council resource to ensure that the rates are spent in the most efficient and effective way possible. The recent experience with the COVID pandemic demonstrated that our services and structures can adapt to change when they are forced to.

THIRD, by adopting an approach to problem solving that involves our Councillors, MLAs and MPs working together in their engagement with Executive Departments, Whitehall Departments and public bodies etc. to ensure no tier of governance is allowed to waste scarce resources on duplication, but that instead each tier adds value in the delivery of policy solutions to each local authority area.

FOURTH, by continuing to make the case for replacing the Northern Ireland Protocol



with an arrangement that passes our seven tests and which does not place an additional upward pressure on prices in Northern Ireland both within local authority budgeting and beyond.

Working closely with the wider third sector, we will also review the advice and support provided by all local authorities to ensure that services and advice are provided in the most effective way to both support and empower citizens as they deal with the implications of the cost-of-living crisis.

Future of Rates

The DUP is committed to securing the lowest possible rate increases in the context of the very considerable pressures of the moment. There is a need for reform of business rates, reflecting commercial realities and business trends.

At this election we commit to:

- ✓ Getting the best possible deal for ratepayers for the next Council term;

- ✓ Continuing to promote an Anti-Avoidance Programme, to identify those failing to pay - People who avoid paying rates cost you more;
- ✓ Expanding the rate base through ambitious economic development strategies in each council area;
- ✓ Improving council efficiency by initiating intensive reviews to ensure that each council maximises its income streams; identifying new income stream opportunities which fit with the council development strategy and reallocating non-core services which could be managed better by others.

Collaborative Working

We believe there are still opportunities for greater co-operation between councils, in areas such as waste management and procurement. In challenging times, we must be agile to get the best deals for the ratepayers and that remains the DUP's priority. We will support greater

collaboration, and encourage this during rate-setting processes and at every other opportunity. Northern Ireland is a relatively small space, we can do much more, much better with the resources we have.

Waste

Having your bins collected regularly and on-time is a core council service upon which we all depend. We are concerned that an increasing number of people are finding that their bins are not collected on time for a variety of reasons. This is not acceptable. We need to create more efficient waste management systems, improve recycling and reduce waste. Solutions are needed to ensure this core service keeps pace with modern communities and changes in behaviour.

Your DUP team commits to supporting:

- ✓ A Waste Collection Strategy for each council to guarantee regular bin collection;
- ✓ Moving towards the development of a new fleet of smaller, environmental-friendly vehicles reflecting changes in accessibility in neighbourhoods;
- ✓ Greater use of technology to report missed collections and vandalism;
- ✓ Innovative solutions towards glass collections include collection bins generating income for local communities;



- ✓ Fly-tipping and illegal dumping being subject to increased fines and prosecutions;
- ✓ Greater investment in local education campaigns challenging dumping and littering;
- ✓ A single circular economy strategy for local government.

Burial Costs

Burial costs are a burden on families and should be handled in a sensitive and understanding way.

The DUP believes that Councils should review their policy of 'non-resident' fees, and where necessary, in the cases of relatives who have this status due to boundary changes or those who were long-term residents but were in care at time of death, families should be charged at the same rate that applies to a resident.

Build Stronger and Safer Communities by targeting council spending on what really matters to local ratepayers

The development of stronger and safer communities is all the more achievable when built on the foundation of a prosperous local economy. The DUP is committed to supporting value for money targeted spending that increases prosperity and productivity.

Growing Our Economy

One of the key functions of local government is economic development. This will be particularly important in the next council term given that economic growth is the ultimate antidote to the cost-of-living crisis.

The DUP has a strong record of supporting our local businesses and attracting new businesses to Northern Ireland, and we will continue that at all levels of government.

Business Support

We want to see our local communities thrive and give those with an entrepreneurial spirit the opportunity to set up in business. Councils are well placed to develop localised business support programmes, especially in relation to start-ups and ambitious micro and small businesses that are looking to expand.

Working with Invest NI, DUP MPs and DUP MLAs, DUP Councillors will:

- ✓ Make the case for a new relationship-based business support programme;

- ✓ Seek more support for rural-based businesses to grow and diversify;
- ✓ Promote self-employment as a viable career option for all age groups;
- ✓ Seek to improve access to local government procurement for local SMEs;
- ✓ Promote greater local authority awareness of and support for social enterprises;
- ✓ Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Invest NI and the Department of the Economy, to ensure that the economic development efforts with respect to the local authority area, add-value and don't duplicate the work of the other tiers of government.

Maximising land for economic benefit

There are huge swathes of publicly owned land which currently lie derelict but have the potential to be regeneration sites in many communities. The DUP has supported the BUILD campaign on the Shankill Road in Belfast since its inception and we support land in communities put to use for economic development or housing.

Planning

Planning is an issue frequently raised by both constituents and businesses as failing to deliver for them. Despite multiple reviews there remain serious problems which must be addressed in the next term.



The DUP supports:

- ✓ New, stronger deadlines for statutory consultees to meet or face penalties;
- ✓ Requirement times set between approvals and the issuing of notices;
- ✓ The creation of Stakeholder Engagement Forums within Councils to promote positive development and identify problems at an early stage;
- ✓ Environmental requirements clearly identified and adhered to by both applicants and local authorities;
- ✓ Adequate funding of enforcement teams;
- ✓ Monitoring of conditions and consistency of approach across the eleven councils;
- ✓ More effective means of neighbourhood notification of planning applications - erection of notices and use of social media;
- ✓ The creation of powers to allow Councils to tackle dilapidated buildings.

Tourism

Tourism is a key economic driver across Northern Ireland. The sector is rebounding strongly following the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and is expected to continue to grow strongly for the foreseeable future. Northern Ireland has won numerous plaudits and awards, and is frequently cited as a 'must see destination.' However, we have so much potential yet unrealised.

Northern Ireland offers a wealth of cultural activities which have the potential to be developed further to create unique experiences, both for domestic and overseas visits, such as the St Georges Market in Belfast City Centre, the Heaney Centre in Bellaghy and the Apprentice Boys Museum in Londonderry. Local cultural strategies should be devolved to local government, which is best placed

to recognise this potential and develop specially tailored programmes to realise their tourism potential.

Working with Tourism NI and DUP colleagues, DUP Councillors will make the case for local government economic development capacity to be focused on:

- ✓ Support for the growth of neighbourhood tourism and encouraging its development in both rural and urban environments;
- ✓ Seek greater investment to restore significant historical sites which have strong tourism potential but have fallen into disrepair;
- ✓ Continue to work towards securing large, prestigious events to be hosted right across Northern Ireland mindful of value for money considerations;
- ✓ Ensure East-West tourism links are sufficiently recognised as part of a UK promotion of tourism;

- ✓ Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Tourism NI and the Department of the Economy, to ensure that the economic development efforts of the council, Tourism NI and the Department of the Economy add-value and don't duplicate for the benefit of the people of the local council area.

Strengthening our Communities

We all benefit from living in strong and safe communities. For the towns and cities of the future to be attractive to both visitors and residents, cleanliness must be at their core. There are several reoccurring issues which must be addressed, such as graffiti, dog fouling, chewing gum waste and air pollution. This is imperative not just because clean town centres are nicer to live in than dirty town centres but because dirty town centres create an environment



and an atmosphere that is more conducive to anti-social behaviour. The DUP will urge Councils to invest in the latest cleaning technology to tackle dog fouling and graffiti, two issues which are frequently cited as key concerns for residents.

DUP Councillors will help to strengthen our communities through:

- ✓ Reimagining the community centre network to broaden use across all age groups. The activities that take place in local halls often constitute the heart of rural communities; Your local DUP team will support capital and revenue programmes to maintain these crucial local assets;
- ✓ Exploration of how the council community centre network can be better utilised to provide additional services in the evenings, especially for youth clubs, societies and advice services;
- ✓ The development of allotment space including use of vacant council land for new allotments;
- ✓ The development of 'repair shops' facilities and events, encouraging a reuse and recycle ethos;
- ✓ Exploring the benefits of Community Improvement Districts, which include a mix of regeneration and community entrepreneurship.

Senior Citizens

The DUP is proud of its record protecting our senior citizens. We will build on this by requesting that Police and Community Safety Partnerships' offer a free burglar alarm to every senior citizen household, and where bulky waste collections are currently charged for those over 70, these should be free of charge going forward.

Caring for Others

During the last term, many Councils have undertaken period poverty initiatives. This was championed by DUP representatives and has had a positive impact for many



in our community. Likewise, we have encouraged measures to be introduced which would encourage Council facilities to have quiet spaces for those with Dementia/ ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and breastfeeding mothers. We will continue to champion and support such measures in council buildings and facilities.

Community Asset Transfer Powers

We are supportive of community asset transfer powers on the basis where local communities want to take responsibility for a community asset from the council, and can demonstrate they can do so by adding value, they are given the opportunity to do so. We are also supportive of community asset transfer powers where local communities identify an asset that comes on the market as being of community benefit that they get first refusal in seeking its acquisition. We want to empower communities by giving them the opportunities to develop new projects and manage spaces more effectively than can be done by government.



Modernising engagement with communities

DUP Councillors are at the forefront of engaging with their communities. They will encourage greater communication between the Council and those they serve, both from constituents to the council, in reporting problems, and from the council to constituents, in making them aware of relevant council-run community events, funding opportunities and to let them know what is happening on their behalf. We will encourage better communication, both through more effective use of technology, like social media, and through greater face-to-face contact on a regular basis.

Promoting Safer Communities

The DUP is committed to promoting safer communities across Northern

Ireland. We want to build a society where the rule of law is respected and where people of all backgrounds can live, work and raise a family free from harm. In the past four years, your local DUP team has successfully fought for additional resources for neighbourhood policing. Through the work of Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP), we have also ensured that there is a sustained focus on a multi-agency response to tackling crime and other threats to public safety.

Anti-social behaviour

While some progress has been made in recent years, anti-social behaviour continues to blight communities across Northern Ireland. The DUP wants to divert young people away from this unacceptable behaviour through earlier intervention and offering greater opportunities for young people. Successive DUP Education Ministers brought forward measures for tackling educational underachievement, and

there is a need to communicate more effectively with young people themselves to determine their needs and ambitions.

The DUP will:

- ✓ Seek to strengthen Council bye-laws in connection with tackling Anti-Social Behaviour;
- ✓ Press for increased and targeted PSNI patrolling in hotspot areas;
- ✓ Support the commencement of Sections 68-72 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 to deal with on-street drinking;
- ✓ Support new closure powers to crack down on premises known to be associated with persistent Anti-Social Behaviour;
- ✓ Promote specific interventions relating to Anti-Social Behaviour associated with the night-time economy, including wider use of CCTV;
- ✓ Seek regular reviews of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Community Safety Strategy to determine effectiveness and how it can be strengthened;
- ✓ Continue supporting the work of community wardens and street pastors to address low-level crime;
- ✓ Appropriately expand the roll-out of RAPID drug bins;
- ✓ Ensure Anti-Social Behaviour is effectively recorded and support research into factors that lead to under-reporting;

Prioritising policing

In recent years, the fight against crime has been boosted by the addition of extra neighbourhood police officers in each DEA (District Electoral Areas) across Northern Ireland. These gains were long overdue and must be sustained despite the looming financial pressures facing the PSNI. The recent freeze on officer recruitment will inevitably impact on operational resources in the future. The DUP believes visible and effective policing must be prioritised going forward.

Communities deserve to have confidence that crime and anti-social behaviour is being dealt with robustly. They want to play a more active role in helping prevent, detect and deter this type of behaviour and in the next four years we will place an emphasis on building stronger relationships between communities, PCSPs and the PSNI.

The DUP will:

- ✓ Oppose any reduction in neighbourhood police numbers or operational police resources
- ✓ Call on the PSNI to better promote neighbourhood policing as an established career path
- ✓ Seek to address high turnover of staff in NPT (Neighbourhood Policing Team) roles to promote continuity and retain local knowledge

Partnership working

There is a need for greater working together to ensure that we are making a difference in the communities we serve. People want results, and to meet this expectation we will:

- ✓ Enhance the role Councils and PCSPs play in providing multi-agency wraparound care for those identified as vulnerable, including repeat victims of crime;
- ✓ Encourage greater uptake of the PSNI Next Door App and other communication tools;
- ✓ Embed awareness of signs of trafficking or domestic abuse among frontline Council staff;
- ✓ Work collaboratively with the Policing Board and PCSPs to enhance grassroots opportunities for ratepayers to engage with the PSNI;
- ✓ Seek to roll-out the Probation Board service for removing graffiti across more Council areas.

Promote and deliver regeneration for our villages, towns and city centres

The future of the Town Centre

Our cities, towns and villages will see huge changes over the next few years as the way in which we shop, live and travel develops in our internet, post-pandemic age. As we design and shape the places where we work, live, and play in the coming years, we should pursue a child and family friendly-led approach. There is a real opportunity to drive this change as we emerge from the health pandemic.

To this end the DUP will support:

- ✓ Reinvigorating the 'Living over the Shop Scheme' as part of rethinking our town and city centre future master-planning;
- ✓ Incentivising those with vacant 'above shop' sites to maximise residential opportunities via the domestic rates system;
- ✓ Improving public toilet provision, especially for those with disabilities and children;
- ✓ Online mapping of toilet facilities to assist those with disabilities;
- ✓ Updating planning guidance which takes better account of digital marketing;
- ✓ Pedestrianisation streetscape programmes with the approval of key local stakeholders;
- ✓ The creation of 'pocket parks' and 'urban forests' to enhance the green landscape;
- ✓ A new Small Business Research Initiative Town & Cities Challenge Fund;
- ✓ Protecting the character of our Town and City Centres

Rural Issues and the Environment

Our rural communities are the heart of Northern Ireland. Each town and village has its own individual character which we will strive to protect as change impacts our shopping habits and lifestyle choices.

Your DUP team will: -

- ✓ Continue the push for economic development across rural parts of Northern Ireland;
- ✓ Seek the establishment of a formal body consisting of members of coastal councils, the Department for Infrastructure, DAERA and other relevant stakeholders to discuss and explore means to meet the challenges of coastal erosion on coastal communities;
- ✓ Preserve public transport services in rural areas.

The environmental agenda will continue to present both challenges and opportunities for local government with increasing



expectations around recycling. Targets require Councils to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, with failure resulting in a penalty in the form of the imposition of additional costs on both Councils and ratepayers. We want to see greater innovation in this area, taking advantage of new technologies and working in partnership with both the private and social enterprise sectors.

The DUP will support:

- ✓ The growth of the green economy and encouraging local entrepreneurs in this sector;
- ✓ Exploring how Councils can develop in-house green energy resources to fund their estate;
- ✓ Building on current programmes to increase tree planting including the development of the urban forest concept;
- ✓ Examining how to significantly grow the Electric Vehicle charging network on the council estate;
- ✓ Investing in Open Spaces and enhancing our parks as well as public access to our forests.

Play Parks

Building on our campaign to increase facilities and access for the disabled we will continue to promote the need for improved facilities which are accessible by all. We welcome the improvements that have been made to date but much more can be done. DUP Councillors will continue to push for additional playpark facilities across Northern Ireland and ensure they are accessible to every child in the community.

Alleyway Adoption

Significant space remains unadopted, especially in urban areas, and therefore not subject to cleaning and health and safety checks on a regular basis. The DUP wants to see a new partnership approach between local councils, the local community, DFI, and



the Housing Executive to adopt those which are currently 'unadopted' and instigate a programme of basic maintenance and cleaning alongside existing works.

Greenways and Active Travel

Northern Ireland is changing. There is increasing interest in travelling via active means, e.g. to walk or cycle, rather than travel by car, bus, or train. In this context there is a need to support active travel options through the further development of initiatives like the existing 'greenway networks' (a growing network of travel routes designed specifically for cyclists and walkers) by opening new routes, connecting our villages, towns and cities, providing the basic infrastructure to facilitate their continued growth.

The DUP supports the conducting of a feasibility study to consider how the successful 'Belfast Bike' model could be replicated across Northern Ireland. We will also seek to grow the greenway network, investing in its infrastructure so it can be used all year round.

In our King's Coronation year, co-operate with other Unionists, to strengthen our rich heritage and culture

The Democratic Unionist Party is the party for the people whose identity is focused on their Northern Ireland heritage and our place in the United Kingdom. We are the party that unapologetically puts Northern Ireland first and we have earned the reputation to be the people's party by virtue of our work in and for the community.

The Democratic Unionist Party supports greater unionist co-operation and unity and we pledge that all our candidates elected to local councils will co-operate alongside fellow unionists to strengthen our heritage and culture.

Our goal has been and remains to strengthen the Pro-Union voice in Northern Ireland. Growing the support for our cause must be the on-going objective.

Drawing together all the strands of people who are Pro-Union is not easy but the consequence of allowing unionism to continue fracturing will be a Northern Ireland led by Sinn Fein whose goal is to remove us from the United Kingdom.

We are democrats and whilst we respect the outcome of elections we do not believe a majority of those living in Northern Ireland want to spend the next decade talking about a border poll.

At this election we want to see Pro-Union voters working together to ensure more unionist councillors are elected. If unionists want to see more unionist seats across the 11 Councils then they need to vote for it.

As unionist parties we share a great deal more in common than divides us. More effective co-operation is something unionists across Northern Ireland want to see, regardless of their party preference.

It is most important in Councils where unionism is in the minority, or where Pro-Union representatives can gain an additional seat that voters maximise the impact of their ballot by voting DUP and then transferring to other Pro-Union candidates.

After supporting your local DUP Council candidates we strongly encourage Pro-Union voters to maximise their vote by transferring to other Pro-Union candidates and particularly those who support closer Unionist co-operation.

Culture and identity

Every citizen has the right to celebrate their culture and identity without fear of intimidation or discrimination. 2023 is an historic year because of the coronation of King Charles III, the first to have taken place in almost seventy years. This event has undoubtedly impacted across communities and will continue to do so for the remainder of the year for those who regard themselves as British.

Your DUP Council team has worked and will continue to work with the community to ensure this significant milestone is marked in each local council.



The wider issue of the treatment of the Unionist culture and identity is one which we will champion energetically. We will consistently challenge discrimination against Unionists.

Ulster Scots - Ulster British Commissioner

The DUP insisted on the provision of an Ulster-Scots, Ulster British Commissioner who will start work at some point in the next twelve months. We were the only unionist party to champion this across every stage of the legislative process in Westminster in both the Lords and the Commons, speaking more in the debates on the legislation than any other party. The Ulster-Scots, Ulster British Commissioner is a statutory position with responsibility for promoting the language, arts and literature

associated with the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition in Northern Ireland. This includes the full spectrum of unionist culture, where 'Ulster British' describes the unionist culture of unionists who do not regard themselves as Ulster Scots. The Commissioner will have responsibility to advise all public authorities, including the eleven local councils, about what they should do in order to promote the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster Scots and the Ulster British tradition in Northern Ireland.

Strengthening powers to protect minority communities

It is clear that in areas where Unionists are in a minority, their rights and concerns are





often overlooked and ignored in the council chamber. We see this regularly when even minor matters are ignored, Unionist celebrations are refused, and funding is denied. This cannot continue and makes a mockery of those who proclaim they want a shared space. The DUP will take the lead in challenging this discrimination at every turn.

The Castlereagh Foundation

The DUP has secured Government commitment for the provision of the Castlereagh Foundation think tank, named after Viscount Castlereagh, who led the way in securing the Act of Union in 1801. The working group is chaired by former DUP First Minister Baroness Arlene Foster.

Military History

Northern Ireland has a wealth of military heritage which must be better protected and promoted both as an education tool and for its tourism potential. We

will look to invest in restoring and protecting our built heritage and working with organisations such as the NI War Memorial, to ensure that artefacts are preserved and available for display.

Supporting Band Culture

We want to see our vibrant band and music culture supported and promoted through new initiatives and opportunities to showcase the talents that exist. We will continue to support their development and encourage greater engagement between bands and wider initiatives within councils.

Protecting and Promoting Unionist Heritage in the City of Belfast

DUP Councillors in Belfast have committed to building on their work to date to protect

and promote Unionist heritage and ensure it is accessible for all to see and learn from. This includes a plan to restore Fernhill House and Craigavon House, work with the Loyal Orders to revamp OrangeFest and encourage the Unionist story to be told through community tourism initiatives and greater use of digital technologies.

Capacity Building

Continual, long-term funding and support is needed to significantly improve the capacity of many groups in Unionist communities, to apply for funding and other resources. We have made progress on this issue during the last term but there remains more work to do and each DUP group will organise regular meetings between local groups and funders from their respective areas.

Connecting with New Communities

There are many in new communities now resident in Northern Ireland who have a natural affiliation with Unionism in relation to which there is greater scope for building closer relationships. We will develop a cultural engagement programme to better

explain the Unionist position and identify how we can further work together for the benefit of Northern Ireland

Veterans' champions

The DUP commends the contribution made by men and women from Northern Ireland who have served in the United Kingdom's Armed Forces in many theatres of conflict across the globe. We remain committed to the full implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland. Each DUP council group will actively support and elect a Veterans Champion for the new term to promote the interests of veterans within their council area.

Promoting Sport

Sport is an important part of our culture that has the capacity to draw different communities together. Northern Ireland has a proud history and heritage across a wide range of sports, including rugby, boxing, football and motorcycle racing. This should be better recognised and so DUP councillors will work to promote sport effectively in partnership with relevant sporting bodies and fans. Motorcycle racing is a long-standing tradition, and we want to see it grow going forward.





Protecting Life

The Democratic Unionist Party is a Pro-Life party and we will continue to support Pro-Life policies and reject abortion.

Until 2019 Northern Ireland had some of the strongest protections for the unborn in the United Kingdom. Sadly Westminster, in a free vote for MPs, imposed the UK's most liberal abortion regime on Northern Ireland despite the Assembly voting to express its opposition.

The DUP is committed to promoting a culture of choosing life in Northern Ireland and this value must flow through into support and services provided.

We champion greater support services for women in crisis or unexpected pregnancy and continue to take a Pro-Life stand in all democratic forums into which people elect us.



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