



# *Sinn Féin*

## **North West Charter**

**Building Prosperity and Regional Equality**

**Building an Integrated North West**

**Building an Ireland of Equals**

## *North West Charter*

[www.derrysinnfein.ie](http://www.derrysinnfein.ie)



# Sinn Féin

## The Problem: *The Negative Impact of Partition*

Sinn Féin has always insisted that Partition and by extension the existence of the border has distorted the political, social and economic life of the people of Ireland. This is now the widely held opinion of most economists, the business sector and policy developers. While the negative impact of Partition is felt throughout the island it most acutely felt by the people who live closest to it. Resources and public services are duplicated and dislocated. A low wage culture, high unemployment, poor roads, inadequate transport systems, insufficient energy supply and poor broadband access define life in the NW Region.

**THIS MUST CHANGE – WITH YOUR HELP SINN FÉIN CAN CHANGE IT**

## Our Vision: *An Integrated North West Region*

Most of the wealth created on the island of Ireland is located within the Belfast and Dublin metropolitan areas. This must change. To do this requires a new type of planning approach – *Integrated Area Planning*. Integrated Area Planning does not just focus on the Derry/Letterkenny gateway; but also on the incorporation and contribution of other linked areas such as Strabane/Lifford and satellite towns such as Donegal Town, Bunrana, Dungiven and Limavady as well as coastal and Gaeltacht areas. We envision the development of a co-ordinated plan for regional integration that pools our collective resources, creates common public services, and promotes the growth of economic enterprises with a NW regional impact.

To achieve an *Integrated NW region* requires a political party that is not constrained by Partition, an all-Ireland party that has increasing political representation on both sides of the border. A party that will use every ounce of its increased political strength to create an *Integrated NW region*.

The future prosperity of Derry, Letterkenny, Strabane, Lifford, Limavady and other towns and hinterlands of the NW lies with the region becoming fully *Integrated*.

An Integrated NW region can only be realised through the unified efforts of the only all-Ireland party on the island – **that party is Sinn Féin**

*“As Sinn Féin’s former All-Ireland Coordinator I have actively pursued the development of the All-Ireland agenda through-out the island. In my experience one of the most important aspects of bedding down cross-border integration is through the development of joined up regional government. Joined up regional government within the NW would create the institutional framework through which resources can be properly targeted at regional priorities – increasing the overall prosperity of the NW Region”*  
**Martina Anderson**



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## Making Partition and Poverty History: An Integrated Approach to Eliminating Poverty

Partition causes poverty – dislocating public services, economic systems and infrastructure. The Border Corridor Area is the poorest area of Ireland and the North West is the poorest region of the poorest area. The NW needs a dedicated anti-poverty strategy to eliminate poverty in the Region, Sinn Féin wants to see the development of:

- Common Data Sets to measure deprivation in the region.
- A NW Regional Anti-Poverty Action Plan to focus and co-ordinate funds and services to address real need based upon the Four Common principles of EU's National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion. Which are: (1) Facilitating participation in employment and access to all resources. (2) To prevent the risk of exclusion. (3) To help the most vulnerable (4) To mobilise all relevant bodies and actors
- A Ministerially-led Anti Poverty Forum for the North West that will mobilise and include all sectors to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Regional Anti-Poverty Action Plan

## Reconnecting Public Service: Integrating Regional Government

Building an Integrated NW region will mean that local government departments on either side of the border cannot work in isolation from each other. Sinn Féin believes that the creation of the new North West Council under the Review of Public Administration creates unprecedented opportunities for the development of cross-border integration with Donegal County Council. For the first time councils on both sides of the Border will be of a similar size and have similar powers. In this regard Sinn Féin wants to see:

- The Irish and British governments to agree and put in place a clear implementation framework for *the European Grouping for Territorial Co-operation Regulation (No 1082/2006)* to be enacted in Ireland
- Councils in the NW to utilise this new EU regulation that allows councils in border areas to create fully integrated public services for the whole region.
- The creation of an NW Public Service Development Agency that is inter departmental and intersectoral to oversee the integration and delivery of public services within the NW Region
- The pragmatic integration of the *County Development Plan in Donegal* and the *Community Plan* for the proposed new North West Council Area



## Building on Success: *Developing the NW Region Cross-Border Group*

The North West Region Cross-Border Group (NWRCBG) has developed a track record in managing and distributing EU funds and commissioning research within the NW region. However, we believe that the organisation has not reached its full potential; it needs to become more than an implementation body for INTERREG funds. The NWRCBG must move beyond the allocation and financial management of EU funds and increase its capacity to take on a clear 'developmental' role for the NW region. Sinn Féin believes that the North West Region Cross-Border Group has a key role to play in the future development of the North West. In this regard Sinn Féin wants to see:

- The NWRCBG producing a 'forward plan' for the *organisation* that maps out its continued relevance and central role in developing an Integrated NW Region
- The 'Forward Plan' should be properly financed by NW councils and both governments
- The NWRCBG to be assigned a more strategic role in the development of regional priorities for the NW
- The NWRCBG to facilitate the development of strategic NW regional networks working within and between the public, private and community sectors

*"Sinn Féin is increasing its political strength on both sides of the border. We are utilising that strength in co-ordinated fashion to bring about a fully integrated NW region; a developed region and that will have first class road and rail infrastructure; a confident region that creates high quality employment and investment opportunities in an all-Ireland economy. A supportive region that facilitates encourages links between education and business development. As the Party spokesperson on Regional Development I can say with conviction that no other party works harder for the NW than Sinn Féin. We are unconstrained by Partition – our vision for the NW reflects this."* **Raymond McCartney**





## Investing in Infrastructure: *Towards a Statutory Integrated Spatial Plan*

Recently in 2006, the Dublin and British Governments launched their latest plan for the development of the NW of Ireland – it is called the North West Gateway Initiative. This comes after the Dublin Government blatantly neglected the NW in its Transport 21 Plan, and a whole six years after the two governments promised to develop the Derry/Letterkenny Gateway. One of the key features of this so-called “Initiative” is a non-statutory Integrated Spatial Plan. The fact that after six years the best they could come up with is a non-statutory plan is disgraceful. In Sinn Féin we think the people of the NW deserve better. Sinn Féin wants to see:

- A Statutory Integrated Spatial Plan for the NW so that public bodies and government departments actually have an obligation to implement it.
- The Statutory Integrated Spatial Plan should not only focus on the Derry/Letterkenny gateway but should also focus on the development of Strabane/Lifford link and contribution of coastal towns and regional satellite towns, such as Donegal town, Buncrana, Dungiven, Limavady etc.
- An ‘inclusive’ process of consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that needs of the all the people are fully considered in the Plan
- The development of a clear Implementation Framework that is rural proofed, time bound and fully budgeted

## Moving to the Mainstream: *Sourcing and Pooling Central Government Resources*

To date most cross-border funding that promotes integrated regional development has come from the EU – over the next period of EU funding from 2007-2013 a total of 532 million Euro will be invested in the 6 Counties and the Border region. The amount of EU funding is getting smaller but the need for integrated cross border development is becoming greater. This financial dilemma can only be resolved by an increase in central Government funding to the region. Over the next ten years 100 billion Euro is supposed to be invested in all-Ireland infrastructure. In this respect Sinn Féin wants to see:

- The development of a dedicated NW Development Fund financed by government as a defined apportionment of the proposed 100 billion Euro spend on all-Ireland infrastructure
- All NW regional development plans to adhere to planning requirements to ensure a speedy and focused allocation of central government funds
- An additional apportionment of Central Government monies to the NW as part of the “Peace Dividend” funding package



## Strategic Leverage in the EU: *An enhanced role for the SEUPB*

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is an all-Ireland body that was created in 1999 under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. Its role was to ensure the strategic distribution of EU funds in the 6 Counties and the Border Area. Since then SEUPB has proven itself to be capable of managing multi-millions of Euro investment from the EU. Much of those EU monies distributed through the PEACE and INTERREG funds have sustained hundreds of organizations and thousands of jobs. Sinn Féin is the only political party in Ireland that has MEPs in the 6 and 26 Counties and we are working to ensure that the SEUPB has an even greater role to play as a strategic conduit levering in more EU funds for deprived regions of the island such as the NW. Sinn Féin wants to see the SEUPB:

- Liaise with other EU member state agencies to develop strategic trans-regional partnerships to capitalize on Ireland's status in the North West Europe, Atlantic Coast and Northern Periphery funding areas
- Locate PEACE III funding with Local Councils
- Work with the NW Councils and the NWRCEB in a more accountable manner to ensure the strategic targeting of EU funds on NW regional priorities
- Create linkages and cross-cutting programmes of work with the other all-Ireland Implementation Bodies created under the Good Friday Agreement

## Planning for Success: *Developing an Educated Workforce in an Integrated Economy*

It is now widely recognized that Economic Partition must come to an end. The economy in the 6 counties is a basket case and languishes alongside one of the strongest economies in the world in the 26 Counties. However not all regions of Ireland have benefited from the Celtic Tiger. The NW of Ireland remains the poorest region of the country. Sinn Féin believes that the NW has been systematically overlooked by both governments; and political parties constrained by Partition. Sinn Féin wants the NW to become a highly competitive and attractive employment location and a region of excellence and innovation for new ICT/Knowledge based industries. In this regard Sinn Féin wants to see the NW designated as a region of special economic need and we will fight to ensure:

- An integrated review of all existing entrepreneurial programmes with the view to creating a more joined up and inclusive approach to business development and sustainability in the NW region of Ireland
- The creation of a NW Workforce Development Forum as advocated by the NW Regional College, the Letterkenny Institute of Technology and the University of Ulster to plan for future workforce needs.
- The establishment of NW Small Business Task Force facilitated by InterTrade Ireland to develop a comprehensive NW strategy for the indigenous SME sector
- Affirmative action to assist business development and enterprise initiatives from marginalized groups and communities
- Reform of the Údarás grant aid criteria to ensure that preference is given to businesses whose working language is Irish
- Development of NW Clustering Strategy and Fund to create dynamic intersectoral networks that actively target innovation in new product design, sustainable development technologies and ICT



## Health for All: *Integrated Solutions to Health Care*

Health Care like all aspects of Infrastructure is also dislocated and debilitated by the continued impediment of the border. As a result the quality of health care provision is affected by the senseless requirement of having to supply two of every thing in both jurisdictions of the NW. An integrated approach to health care would make best use of limited regional resources and ensure a higher quality and greater range of health care services. For example it is simply not good enough for patients in the NW to travel to Belfast or Dublin for cancer treatment when this could be provided within the region. Sinn Féin will fight to ensure the development an integrated health service on the island of Ireland, free at the point of delivery. In this respect for the NW Sinn Féin wants:

- The upgrading and extension of CAWT's GP out of hours service to cover the whole of the NW to enhance overall primary health care need for the region.
- A NW Regional Health Commission that will develop reasonable cost projections and oversee the integration of healthcare provision in the NW.
- The immediate development of a Regional Cancer Facility and a Medical College for the NW.
- The creation of an NW Integrated Health Strategy that will cover the treatment of 'chronic illness', development of modern primary health care facilities and community health partnerships, pooling of resources for acute care and emergency services and the enhancement and integration of information systems from primary to secondary Healthcare on a NW basis

*"Health Care is a basic human right. As a mother I understand the importance of primary health care provision that incorporates local doctors and social care in the community. In fact primary care services represent 90 per cent of services required by patients. It is therefore absolutely crazy that we have two dislocated primary healthcare systems – for example the patients served by the primary healthcare centre in Carndonagh are actually closer to primary healthcare centres in Derry. In Sinn Féin we are determined to create integrated health care in the NW"* **Lynn Fleming**

