

## A chara,

It is a privilege to represent you in Dáil Éireann. I will continue to be a voice for all of the people and communities of Dublin Rathdown. I look forward to hearing from you if there are any specific issues that need to be addressed.

Cuirim fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras trí Ghaeilge.

Le gach dea-ghuí agus athbhliain faoi mhaise duit,

*Catherine*



## Dundrum Local Area Plan

The initial stage of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council's new Local Area Plan, the Pre-Draft stage, was open for public consultation during November and December.

I made a submission which highlighted the need for key inclusions in the Local Area Plan:

1. A civic and community centre for Dundrum
2. A pedestrian-friendly civic open space/plaza for Dundrum Main Street
3. A focus on making Dundrum as cycling and walking-friendly as possible
4. Secure, affordable, publicly-owned, universal public housing for the Central Mental Hospital site
5. Increased focus on services for the area around the Central Mental Hospital with the new development

I look forward to engaging with residents, local groups and the Council again when the next stage of the Draft Plan is published later this year.

## Public Meeting – Let's Talk Climate Action!

**Where? – The Goat Pub, Goatstown**

**When? – 31st January 2019 @ 7:30pm**

I will be joined by Dr. Cara Augustenborg (UCD and Friends of the Earth) and Davie Philip (Cloughjordan Ecovillage) to discuss what needs to be done and what we as a community and country can do to tackle climate change and build a greener, cleaner and fairer future for our children.

**All are welcome – I hope to see you there!**

*On your side - ag seasamh leat*

# WE NEED CLIMATE ACTION!

The need to act on climate change is becoming increasingly urgent. We believe that the Government needs to take immediate, decisive and effective action to prevent the most devastating crisis facing humanity.

In switching to a new, green economy there are real opportunities to build a cleaner, greener, healthier and fairer future for all of our children.



## 1. Provide real transport alternatives

One of the key messages of the Citizens' Assembly was the need to change the ratio of transport spending between public transport and road infrastructure. We currently spend twice as much on roads as we do on public transport. This needs to be reversed for public transport in both rural and urban areas, while also including a substantial increase in spending on walking and cycling infrastructure.

If Government provides real, safe, cheap alternative options to the car it will help ease the gridlock that takes hours of free time from Dublin's commuters and costs the economy hundreds of millions of euro every year.



## 2. Reward green energy in homes and businesses

People are eager to invest in renewable micro-generation – from homes to farms to schools – but Government is not making it easy for them to do so. Currently, people cannot sell back their excess energy produced by their own solar panels to the State.

The Citizens' Assembly members recommended that legislation should be made in order to enable the sale of excess micro-generated energy to the State at a price at least equal to the wholesale price. Government needs to listen.



## 3. Fast-track the Waste Reduction Bill

The Green Party's Waste Reduction Bill seeks to introduce a deposit refund scheme on drinks containers, and to ban single-use plastic tableware. This would drastically reduce the amount of plastic waste produced in Ireland and reward people for returning beverage containers. The Dáil has now voted twice in support of the Bill. Despite this, Government continues to block it.

Government needs to fast-track legislation like this and other important opposition legislation on climate, like the Climate Emergency Measures Bill and the Microgeneration Bill, to make it easier for people to be greener.

## Climate Targets

Ireland is way off-track to meeting our climate targets. According to the Climate Change Performance Index Report in December, we are currently the worst performing country in Europe and 48th out of 56 countries overall.

In October the UN's IPCC told the international community that we have 12 years to reduce emissions or else the planet faces a temperature increase that will have enormous and catastrophic effects. Within a month of that report, a WWF report told us that there has been a 60% decrease in the species population of vertebrates between 1970 and 2014.

We need to move away from fossil fuels and move to a fairer, green economy. That means no more dangerous drilling for oil and gas off our coast, and a stop to the building of expensive Liquefied Natural Gas terminals full of fracked US gas. It is clear that we need a radical shift in climate thinking and we need it now.



At the Extinction Rebellion Climate Protest

# WE NEED HOUSING ACTION!

The current housing and homelessness crisis is an appalling tragedy. Since July 2017 the number of people homeless has increased by 24%, and there are more than 3,000 children homeless in Ireland today. This crisis is having long-term effects on these children, and seriously affecting the physical and mental health of families across the country.

It's clear the Government's approach to tackling the crisis has not worked. In the Dáil, I have repeatedly called on the Taoiseach and Government to listen and adopt ideas from opposition TDs, because a change of strategy is needed to tackle this unprecedented crisis..

## 1. Strengthen tenants' rights

At the moment, many people renting in Dublin and across the country lack security in their tenancies. A lack of adequate security of tenure measures means that tenants are being evicted from their homes in cases where the property is being repossessed. Further, people are being evicted from buy-to-let properties that are being put up for sale.

Government needs to strengthen the rights of tenants, including stopping evictions on buy-to-let properties for the purpose of sale.



## 2. Bring vacant properties back into use

The current Vacant and Derelict Site Levies are failing to bring more than 20,000 unused sites in Dublin back into use. While there will be some changes to the levy this year, it will still be too low a rate to be properly effective, and still only applies to large sites which have not been built upon. This leaves out a large proportion of urban vacancy.

To tackle the growing homelessness problem effectively this levy needs to be increased and expanded. This will ensure that the 20,000 homes currently lying unused in Dublin will be brought to use as quickly as possible, and help restore vibrant communities across the city.



## 3. Invest in cost-rental public housing

Government needs to ensure that the State has enough homes to provide a sustainable stock of housing for the future. This needs to be tackled on both national and local levels and large-scale investment in **cost-rental public housing** – which caters to people of all incomes – needs to be at the centre of this strategy.

Government needs to build on state land banks in our cities and look for off-balance sheet financing options.

The Central Mental Hospital in Dundrum is a perfect site for this new type of universal public housing and options for the site need to be fully explored.



## New school for Goatstown and Stillorgan

The opportunity to participate in the process of choosing a patron for the new school opening in Goatstown and Stillorgan was made available to parents of children aged five and under. It ran from 10th December until 15th January, and the choice of patrons included Scoil Sinéad, An Foras Pátrúnacha, Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB, Educate Together, and Lifeways Ireland.

The patron that is chosen will be announced soon and the school is due to open in September 2019.



## Get involved!

Getting involved in politics can be enjoyable, exciting and you can really make a difference at both a local and national level.

I am always very grateful for any help people are willing to give. If you would like more information, please send me an email at [catherine.martin@oireachtas.ie](mailto:catherine.martin@oireachtas.ie)

## Speaking at the House of Commons



Addressing the Women MPs of the World Conference in the House of Commons, Westminster

In November, I travelled to the House of Commons in London to attend the first Women MPs of the World Conference, which coincided with the centenary of women first winning the right to vote in the UK.

More than 100 female politicians from over 40 countries were in attendance, and I was humbled by the diversity of knowledge and experience that was represented during the event.

It was an honour to be the first female Teachta Dála to speak in the chamber of the House of Commons. I spoke about the work we are doing in the Women's Caucus to strengthen women's engagement with political and public life.

## Gathering in Stormont



Women's Caucus and Vótáil 100 Committee visit to Stormont

November was a busy month for the Irish Parliamentary Women's Caucus. In November a group of us travelled to Stormont to visit the Northern Ireland Assembly's Caucus for a joint meeting to mark the centenary of women's suffrage.

## Oireachtas Survey on Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace

I was delighted to secure, as Chair of the Oireachtas Women's Caucus, the commissioning of a survey of working conditions in Leinster House, including harassment, bullying, and sexual harassment. This survey will take place in the early part of this year.

A similar survey carried out in Westminster revealed that 1 in 5 workers in the Houses of Parliament in London had experienced sexual harassment. The goal of this survey is to ensure that each and every person working in Leinster House (up to 1,500 people) works in an environment of dignity and respect.

## Constituency Clinics

Friday 1st February, 10:30am to 12 noon – Ballinteer House, Ballinteer

Friday 8th February, 10:30am to 12 noon – The Glenside Pub, Churchtown

Friday 15th February, 10:30am to 12 noon – Dundrum House, Dundrum

Friday 22nd February, 10:30am to 12 noon – The Step Inn, Stepside

## Catherine Martin T.D. Working with



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# On your side – ag seasamh leat