Aontú agree with the aims of the Irish language and Gaeltacht community.*

1. The appointment of a senior Minister for Irish and for the Gaeltacht, who has Irish, so that there is stronger Irish language input at the Government table and in the budget
2. An additional investment of €18 million in an Irish language and Gaeltacht plan to expand the use of Irish and to create 500+ new jobs
3. That a Policy for Irish in the Education System from Pre-School to 3rd Level be developed and implemented
4. To support the strengthening of the Official Languages Bill 2019, in particular to add a target date of 2030 to the provision that 20% of candidates recruited to the public sector will be competent in the Irish language

Also that Raidió Rí-Rá, the Irish language youth radio station, be supported and funded to provide a full-time FM service nationwide

*From correspondence with Aontú

An Ghaeilge

The Irish language is one of our most important cultural resources and must be conserved for future generations. We are fully committed to supporting a vibrant national approach to the development of our first language. We will therefore:

- Fully implement the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030.
- Support the full implementation of the Official Languages Act in the Republic and the Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland.
- Propose the establishment of an Irish Language Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach.
• Call on public bodies to actively publicise their bilingual services and for the Language Commissioner to be granted additional powers to ensure that public signage in Irish is errorfree.

• Conduct a comprehensive review of the teaching and learning of Irish at primary and post-primary level, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland.

• Propose that one subject in addition to Irish be taught through Irish to every child at primary school and that two Irish language syllabi be developed at post-primary level: ‘Irish Language’ and ‘Irish Language Literature’.

• Provide Irish-language services for children with learning difficulties and establish a national system of scholarships to enable young people to attend Irish language summer schools.

• Commission Foras na Gaeilge, in cooperation with stakeholders such as the Languages Centre in NUI Maynooth, to accredit a national adult education system for Irish.

• Increase the grant for TG4 and RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta.

• Provide Irish language classes, free of charge, to all immigrants who request them, as is the case with English language classes at present.

• Recognising the importance of Gaeltachtaí as the heart of a living language, increase funding to Údarás na Gaeltachta to stimulate employment and sustainable industry in Gaeltacht areas.

• Pilot an Irish Language childcare scheme in our cities, to support families raising their children through Irish.

• Continue to support the enhanced status of Irish as an official working language of the European Union and work to ensure that the status is implemented in full and that the derogation of that full status which is currently in place be lifted.
**Teanga beo**

A vibrant national language in a vibrant republic Our national language is an invaluable cultural asset that all Irish citizens share. It is a unique part of our collective heritage and at its best helps form a social glue for our people. Fianna Fáil is committed to protecting and promoting the language in all its cultural facets. We will:

- Fully implement the 20-year Strategy.
- Ensure the Údarás na Gaeltachta board is democratically elected.
- Boost Údarás Na Gaeltachta Funding by €10m.
- Increase Foras Na Gaeilge funding by €3m.
- Increase TG4 funding by €6m.
- Protect Irish as a core subject in our secondary school curriculum.
- Enhance Irish as a working language of the EU.
- Ensure the Irish Language Commissioner office is adequately resourced.
- Strengthen the Official Languages Act and ensure a clear deadline is set in the recruitment of Irish speakers to the public service.
- Restore direct funding to Gaeltacht Improvement schemes for infrastructural development. Cost €4.2m.
- Increase funding to An Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscoilíochta by €1m.
- Review the current patronage system and procedures for the establishment of Gaelcholáiste for second level education through Irish.
- Draw up an Irish language policy for thirdlevel education.
Growing the use and enjoyment of the Irish language

The Irish language has a bright future and Fine Gael will help to realise it. We are committed to doubling funding for the Irish language by 2025 compared to 2017, when Leo Varadkar became Taoiseach. Our approach is to not just preserve but to promote the Irish language. It is driven by the ambition to improve how our native language is taught, to grow Irish-medium education, increase the number of daily Irish speakers, recruit more Irish speakers into the public service and to ensure that services are provided through the language. We are committed to the targets in the 20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 to grow the number of Irish speakers outside education from 83,000 to 250,000; to increase the Gaeltacht’s Irish speaking population by 25%; and to have 2 million people with Irish by 2030. In 2018, we published a five-year action plan (Action Plan 2018-2022) to help drive implementation and achieve the targets in a coordinated and comprehensive way. In addition, we will double investment in the Irish Language and the Islands from €46.7 million to more than €92 million from 2017 to 2025. We recognise the need to provide public services through Irish to Irish speakers, in particular for the 26 Gaeltacht planning areas, but also the 16 Service Towns and the three Irish Language Networks in Clondalkin, Ennis and Loughrea. We are committed to developing a new Irish Language Centre in Dublin, as a flagship focal point for the language, as well as new Irish Language networks, where there is a desire to do so.

Landmark Irish language legislation

We have already published a new Official Languages Bill and this landmark legislation involves a fundamental rethinking of the approach to the provision of services through Irish, as well as upholding the rights of Irish language speakers. We will ensure that it is enacted as a matter of urgency.

Everyday use of the language

We want to increase the number of Irish speakers and will expand the opportunities available to all to learn, develop and use the language in everyday life, particularly outside the Gaeltacht. We want to promote the language in social settings and in workplaces, such as through Irish language tables in workplace canteens. As part of our doubling of funding for the Irish language, we will increase the funding to the Irish Language Support Scheme, which provides financial assistance to organisations to help fund new projects like Irish language cafes, theatres and cultural centres. We will also expand the ‘Teanga Tí’/Family Language Scheme and explore the introduction of similar schemes to further support and develop the language across the country. We will ensure that the Houses of the Oireachtas leads the way in this regard.

Supporting the provision of Gaelscoil and Gaelcoláiste

Fine Gael has started the development of a comprehensive Irish-medium education policy. We will work towards doubling the number of young people currently in Irish-medium schools. We will provide a Gaelscoil or Gaelcoláiste in any area where there is strong demand for Irish language-medium education.
Innovations in Irish language education

To further support Irish language education, we will expand pilot programmes that we have introduced, including Seimeastar na Gaeltachta for third-level students and the scholarship fund for summer courses for DEIS pupils and resource third-level Irish language courses in Ireland and abroad. We will continue to support and fund recent innovation in Irish language medium education, such as the TechSpace technology curriculum for second-level schools. Following the enhancement of funding to Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta, and in recognition of how crucial early years education is to the future of Irish, we will introduce an Irish language module within existing early years practitioner courses. Having expanded and extended the Irish Language Assistants Scheme in Gaeltacht schools, we will introduce a programme to support the teaching of Irish in schools across the country. Innovations such as these and others within Irish language education need to be continuously advanced. To this end, we will create a €2 million annual Irish language education fund modelled on the School Excellence Funds.

Oral Irish for Junior Certificate

We will increase the emphasis on spoken Irish within the classroom, developing projects that engage pupils and build communities of language use within the school and wider community. We will give greater prominence to spoken Irish within the Junior Cycle, by increasing the focus on each student’s oral Irish in the final assessment at Junior Cycle.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a means of embedding the Irish language further into school life

Over the lifetime of the next Government, we will build on the recent introduction of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Programme. Following a three year pilot, we will introduce a national programme in which every primary school will teach PE through the medium of Irish. We will work with secondary schools to increase the number of schools under the CLIL Programme and the range of subjects, with an initial focus on PE.

Using the virtual classroom to give more subject choice in Gaeltacht schools

We will test the potential for virtual classrooms to allow for more subjects to be taught through Irish at Senior Cycle in the Gaeltacht. We will broaden the footprint of innovative and high-tech projects, combining Irish-medium education and technology in schools and youth centres in all regions. Our aim is to develop the leading creative technology network for youth development through Irish, with a focus on creating digital media and STEM material.

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1. The appointment of a senior Minister for Irish and for the Gaeltacht, who has Irish, so that there is stronger Irish language input at the Government table and in the budget*
Our emphasis is on a whole-Government, cross-departmental approach to Gaeilge and the Gaeltacht. It is not a question of a silo mentality with one Minister and Department against others. We support an overall increase in funding for Irish and the Gaeltacht.

2. An additional investment of €18 million in an Irish language and Gaeltacht plan to expand the use of Irish and to create 500+ new jobs

We commit to a substantial increase in funding for the full implementation of the 20 Year Strategy on Irish. We are also committed to ensuring effective economic stimulus programmes for Gaeltacht areas, and to working with local communities to ensure their voices are heard in terms of resources, financial and otherwise.

3. That a Policy for Irish in the Education System from Pre-School to 3rd Level be developed and implemented

We commit to developing a policy for Irish in the Education system from pre-school to 3rd Level.

4. To support the strengthening of the Official Languages Bill 2019, in particular to add a target date of 2030 to the provision that 20% of candidates recruited to the public sector will be competent in the Irish language

We commit to fully implementing the Official Languages Bill 2019 and to liaising with Conradh na Gaeilge and other relevant bodies in terms of its rollout. We wish to see an increased number of public sector employees with Irish and will seek to ensure the rights of Irish language speakers to deal with public bodies through Irish.

1. That Raidió Rí-Rá, the Irish language youth radio station, be supported and funded to provide a full-time FM service nationwide

We commit to liaising with the Conradh and any other bodies to see how Raidió Rí-Rá can be resourced in meeting its needs.

*From correspondence with the Social Democrats

**IRISH LANGUAGE**

Labour will launch an ambitious campaign to promote the spoken use of the Irish language. Despite the efforts of State agencies and grants, the large majority of people in Ireland do not speak Irish. While nearly 40% claim to be able to speak Irish, only 17% actually do so and only 1.8% speak it daily. In contrast, 11% of adults in Wales speak Welsh daily, with the same level of language use across all adult age groups. Labour will learn from best practice in Wales and elsewhere to launch a new effort to promote everyday use of spoken Irish, including more opportunities to stay in Gaeltacht areas and the creation of urban Gaeltachtaí where speaking Irish is prioritised.

Labour will develop a new Irish language education policy, from pre-school to third level, in line with the #Gaeilge4All campaign.
Irish language

The current government has shown little interest or enthusiasm in promoting the Irish Language. People Before Profit will:

• Support measures to revive the economic base of Gaeltacht areas.
• Insist that all public officials dealing with the Gaeltacht have full proficiency in the language.
• Increase the use of the Irish language on the national broadcaster. Expand and develop TG4.
• Provide free Irish language classes in areas where there is local demand.

Equality for Irish Language Speakers

The decline of the Irish language has accelerated under the watch of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael Governments with a recent 11% decline of daily Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht. Clearly Government policies are not working.

The decline is largely due to the neglect of the national language and the Gaeltacht, the failure of the education system and a lack of any real willingness or urgency to strengthen the language. Sinn Féin will restore and increase thereafter the slashed budgets of Foras na Gaeltachta and Údarás na Gaeltachta and ensure adequate funding for other language organisations and schemes. We will work to ensure the demand for Irish language schooling is met and that the Department of Education becomes a persuader for same, playing the fullest role in the delivery of a strategy for education through the medium of Irish from pre-school to third-level inside and outside the Gaeltacht. We will commit to reversing the decline of Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht by giving Údarás the status and powers of the IDA and Enterprise Ireland in this region, ensuring greater
investment in infrastructure, enterprise and initiatives in these areas to counter economic and social decline. Sinn Féin’s manifesto would deliver the programme set out by Conradh na Gaeilge and others in their Irish Language and Gaeltacht Investment Plan and more.

Sinn Féin priorities:

• Restoring Foras na Gaeilge and Údarás na Gaeltachta’s funding to its pre-2007 levels and increase year on year
• Reinstating elections for Údarás na Gaeltachta abolished by Fine Gael
• Properly funding language planning areas and associated schemes

Irish medium education

The challenges of Irish medium education inside and outside the Gaeltacht must be funded to ensure its ability to compete on a level playing field with the more dominant English language schools adjacent to the Gaeltacht and throughout the rest of the country. Our overarching aim is to be able to provide Irish language education at all levels for those who would seek it. There is a dire need for an Irish language education plan inside and also outside of the Gaeltacht where demand far outstrips places in schools. There is a need for the Department of Education to immediately draw up a plan for both responding to and encouraging demand for Irish medium education.

Sinn Féin priorities:

• Establishing a unit within the Department of Education to facilitate the transition of English medium schools to Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí to meet demand for Irish medium schools
• Increasing the Irish language proficiency, training and professional development of practitioners in Irish-medium early years educational settings in Gaeltacht areas as well as state-wide, including a programme of Irish to be delivered to those who work in pre-schools as part of their training modules FETAC Levels 5-8. Modules on Irish language and immersion education to be delivered for level 7 and degree courses
• Accelerating Capital build budget to address the dilapidated or prefab school buildings in many of the Gaelscoileanna
• Up to date production of textbooks and teaching aids in Irish for all subjects
• Establishing an immersive teacher training course through Irish so that student teachers would get the full benefits of an Irish medium education
• Increasing funding for the Gaeltacht costs for trainee teachers to allow for an additional week’s training
• Introducing a Gaeltacht bursary for eligible applicants to attend an Irish-language summer college and experience the Irish language in all aspects of daily life and also help stimulate the economy of the host Gaeltacht regions

**Irish language and the state**

Sinn Féin are committed to Irish being a living language and thus will increase the use of Irish in our state system by facilitating Irish language speakers who wish to do their business with the state in their native language. We would appoint a senior minister with fluent Irish with responsibility for the Irish language and the Gaeltacht to ensure that the language is given due consideration in cabinet. With the right political will and investment it is possible for 20% of new entrants to the civil service to be proficient in Irish by 2025 and increasing each five years until 50% of the civil service are bilingual as would be laid out in law in amendments to the Official Languages Act, which Sinn Féin will progress in Government. Sinn Féin would ensure that there was a full-time Irish language officer in each county and city council as well as a coordinating officer of the council’s activities to promote the language and will also ensure that it is delivering its services as Gaeilge as well, while we would appoint an Irish language officer to both the Arts Council and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

Sinn Féin priorities:

- Appointing a senior minister with responsibility for Irish language and Gaeltacht
- Introducing legally binding targets for proficiency in the civil service
- Appointing Irish language offices to a range of state bodies and agencies

**A living language**

Irish-language centres (Cultúrlann) should be developed or expanded as central hubs for language-related activities across the country in large urban areas including Dublin, Galway, Waterford and Cork. Sinn Féin would increase funding for the Irish language publishing sector to assist with the production, development and marketing of Irish language material in print and online. In addition, we would encourage Oireachtais na Gaeilge to develop four Cúige Oireachtais located annually in Gaeltacht regions before Oireachtas na Samhna to further encourage and harness the emerging talent of Irish language musicians, singers, dancers, poets and authors.

TG4, through their innovative, original broadcasting, provide a vital service for Irish speakers throughout the country and beyond. We would increase funding to support Ireland’s Irish language television station to ensure TG4 is broadcasting as Gaeilge fully and continues to deliver quality programming as Gaeilge.

Finally we also propose the establishment of an Irish language radio fund to allow for the creation and promotion of Irish language programming and, in particular, to support dynamic Irish language stations such as Radio Rí Rá becoming national and also to provide for the monitoring of other stations to comply with their legal obligations, vis a vis the Irish language.

Sinn Féin priorities:

- Establishing Cultúrlann
- Promoting Irish language publishing, broadcasting and the arts