

Alliance  
**Demand  
Better.**

Alliance Party  
Westminster  
Manifesto 2019





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# Leader's Foreword

Brexit hasn't happened yet but it has already brought increased chaos and division. It has paralysed our politics, placed jobs at risk and threatened the stability of our community.

There is no such thing as a good or sensible Brexit. However, if Brexit happens, we're clear that a chaotic no deal must be avoided. But Brexit can still be stopped – together, we must grasp this opportunity.

Democracy did not end in June 2016. We now know the referendum was tainted by lies and dark money. Electoral law was broken – laws that ensure our democracy is fair and open. Over one million young people, who have had no opportunity to have a say over their future and who reject the politics of populism and division, are now eligible to vote.

The extension of the Brexit deadline gives Parliament a chance to listen to the people and provide the clearest, most democratic means to end this chaos and uncertainty. This is your opportunity to elect MPs who will fight to stop Brexit, and protect the Good Friday Agreement and our economy.

Alliance has led the call for a People's Vote – a vote with Remain on the ballot paper. Voting Alliance is the clearest way to demand it and increase the votes in Parliament to deliver it. In a democracy, people have the right to change their mind. To **demand better**.

In May this year, people came together to elect the first Alliance MEP. We now need to come together again and deliver Alliance MPs to stop Brexit, end the political paralysis in Stormont and deliver better for everyone.

The situation with Brexit is still uncertain. This manifesto contains our plans for the next term based on remaining within the EU. However, if this election delivers a Parliamentary majority for Leave, then we have also included proposals to protect Northern Ireland's interests in that scenario.

In this Westminster manifesto we have set out our policy priorities for the next five-year term. We have focused specifically on those matters over which Westminster has direct control or influence.

This isn't a stand-alone document – to get the fullest picture of how Alliance plans to deliver better, it should be read in conjunction with our Local Government, European and Assembly manifestos.

These documents set out our policies for each of those tiers of Government, including key Alliance commitments such as reform of our health service, providing integrated and sustainable education and housing; a fairer system of welfare and benefits to protect vulnerable people; strategic investment in infrastructure, and enhanced environmental protection.



Alliance has a vision for building a united community: a shared society, free from intimidation, discrimination and fear, where everyone is safe, can play their part and is treated fairly and with respect. We believe in a society for everyone.

Diversity is a strength, enriching our lives and making our community more vibrant. It is something to be celebrated rather than exploited to divide us.

We also believe new barriers anywhere within these islands represent a serious challenge to that vision for a more shared and prosperous future, as well as the Good Friday Agreement and our economy.

Brexit is not an orange or green issue and Alliance is not an orange or green party. Each one of us will be affected by the decisions taken in Westminster. That's why we need to **demand better** than Brexit and zero-sum politics: our people, our prosperity and our political stability depend on it.

**On Thursday 12th December, Demand Better.**

**Vote Alliance.**

*Brexit is not  
an orange  
or green issue  
and Alliance  
is not  
an orange  
or green party.*



**Naomi Long MEP**

Leader of the Alliance Party

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Naomi R Long'.

# Key Commitments

In this Parliament Alliance will:

## **Demand Better Than Brexit**

Northern Ireland's interests are best served within the EU, which is why we want to Remain. If a Leave Parliament seeks to pursue Brexit, then we want to minimise the harm. In descending order of preference we want:

- A People's Vote with the option to remain in the EU.
- The whole UK to remain in the Single Market and Customs Union.
- A Special Deal for Northern Ireland.

## **Demand Better Devolution**

Northern Ireland deserves a stable, functioning and locally accountable Assembly based on delivery, cooperation and mutual respect. We support:

- Holding urgent, time-bound talks led by an independent mediator and if agreement can't be reached before the 13th January 2020 deadline, then we need fresh elections. The drift and decline in public services in NI cannot go on.
- Creating a new approach to devolution to ensure that if one or two parties are holding up devolution, those who want to do the job have the opportunity to do so.
- Reforming the petition of concern before the Assembly returns.

## **Demand Better Integration**

We want to create a fairer society, integrating services and delivering social reforms, by:

- Developing a comprehensive approach to promoting a shared future, through prioritising integrated education, shared neighbourhoods and promoting community relations.
- Opposing any repeal of the Human Rights Act.
- Bringing Northern Ireland into line with equality and discrimination law in the rest of the UK by creating a Single Equality Act.
- Requiring all Executive policies to be 'shared future-proofed' to ensure that all major decisions support a united society rather than continuing or enhancing division.
- Creating a Programme for Government outcome on ending sectarianism to drive action across Executive departments.



**Demand Better Public Services**

Due to a combination of political stagnation and austerity, our public services are struggling. We support:

- Reforming the education system so we end annual crises in school budgets.
- Implementing the Bengoa reforms to transform our health service, freeing up resources to pay health sector staff fairly.
- Radically improving our infrastructure to boost economic growth, benefit communities and prepare Northern Ireland for the future.

**Demand Better Governance and Transparency**

We believe in open and transparent politics. We propose:

- Realising full transparency of political donations in Northern Ireland.
- Reforming Westminster by allowing votes at 16, introducing PR elections for the House of Commons and directly electing the House of Lords.
- Delivering MPs who are committed to working for everyone in their constituency, celebrating the diversity of Northern Ireland.

**Demand Better Work and Welfare**

Overhaul the welfare system at Westminster to deliver support for all those who need it. We support:

- Extending the welfare mitigations for Northern Ireland and legislating to reclassify housing associations.
- Repealing cruel UK-wide welfare measures such as the bedroom tax, the two-child limit and the six-month rule.
- Ending the benefits cap and the punitive sanctions regime.
- Supporting increases to Carers Allowance and Statutory Maternity Pay as well as minimum wage equality for young people.
- Expanding free childcare provision to 30 hours per week.

**Demand Better Climate Action**

The world is facing a climate emergency and urgent action is needed, including:

- Reducing the UK's net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030.
- Mitigating the impact of climate change by implementing a comprehensive climate action plan.
- Embedding environmentalism and climate action at the heart of government planning and delivery.

# Brexit

Alliance is a progressive, internationalist and pro-European party. We recognise that in this modern, globalised world we face many transnational challenges from climate change to the regulation of the internet, and we are stronger through co-operation and pooling our sovereignty. The European Union allows us to face those challenges together.

People in Northern Ireland recognise the huge benefits of EU membership, which is why the majority voted to remain.

Alliance is standing up for Northern Ireland and advocating for the best interests of the people of this region, through maintaining political stability, defending the Good Friday Agreement, retaining open borders throughout these islands, protecting our economy and enabling future opportunities.

Northern Ireland only works based on sharing and interdependence, yet Brexit entails new divisions, barriers and friction. Brexit exposes contradictions and ambiguities that are otherwise being managed through the Good Friday Agreement.

Any form of Brexit poses significant problems for Northern Ireland. Our economy depends on sales and supply chains across these islands. Brexit undermines people's ability to enjoy current rights as EU citizens. Brexit brings problems for security and other forms of inter-governmental co-operation.

This is why there is no such thing as a good or sensible Brexit – it is an act of huge self-sabotage. We want to stop Brexit but if Brexit is forced through, we want to minimise the harm.

Our priorities and preferences are in descending order:

- A People's Vote to reconsider Brexit, with the option to remain in the EU.
- The whole of the UK remaining in the Single Market and Customs Union.
- A Special Deal that helps the Northern Ireland economy and defends the Good Friday Agreement.



### **Our Campaign for a People's Vote**

In order to stop Brexit the most coherent, feasible and democratic way forward is a People's Vote.

The 2016 Referendum was an unclear choice between a clearly defined Remain and an undefined Leave option, interpreted as a broad range of scenarios. It was a snapshot in time based on limited information.

Questions persist regarding the fairness and transparency of the process. Many wild and unrealistic promises were made, including the NHS funding pledge on the side of a bus.

Over three years on from the referendum, we now know so much more about Brexit: the complexities, risks and impacts upon so many areas of life; the impracticalities of some of the proposals; and of course the wider political impasse it has caused.

Given all this, it cannot be a betrayal of the people who voted in 2016 to now ask again what they want. There are also over one million young people who have now joined the electorate. In a democracy, people have the right to change their mind and there is consistent evidence to suggest that there may now be a majority across the UK for Remain.

Indeed, it would be a tragedy if the UK ultimately left the EU, particularly in a cliff-edge no-deal, if a majority of people don't want that to happen.

Opportunities to secure a People's Vote have been missed on several occasions – Alliance is committed to using its influence in any incoming Parliament to finally secure a People's Vote.

This will require the incoming UK Government requesting a further extension from the European Council to provide the necessary time to facilitate a proper referendum campaign. Parliament would then legislate to facilitate the referendum with the Electoral Commission advising on the intelligibility of the question.

We now know the shape of any deal that can be done with the EU and neither Theresa May's deal nor Boris Johnson's reflected the promises made in 2016. It is imperative that we put the final deal to the public with Remain as an option on the ballot paper.



## **A Special Deal for Northern Ireland**

If Brexit happens and a softer version of Brexit is ruled out, UK-wide, then Alliance will support a special set of arrangements to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland, building on the foundations of devolution.

Alliance wants Northern Ireland to remain part of a Customs Union with the European Union and the entire Single Market, including all four fundamental freedoms: the free movement of goods, services, capital and people. You can read more detailed proposals in our paper *Bridges not Borders* (November 2017).

We can maximise trade through the rest of world, benefitting from existing EU trade deals and negotiating new trade opportunities from a position of strength. Membership of the EU does not prevent the UK trading with any part of the world. By contrast, an independent trade policy would see the UK chasing trade deals from a position of weakness, and could see compromises around labour, environment, food safety and human rights, and risk undermining key aspects of the NI economy such as agri-food.

While the EU may have fallen a little as a proportion of UK trade, it remains by far the most important market and represents the deepest level of economic integration in the world. This is what the UK would turn its back on in a no deal scenario.

Other aspects of special arrangements for Northern Ireland should include:

- Protection of the rights of EU Nationals in Northern Ireland.
- Recognition of all people from Northern Ireland as EU Citizens.
- Maintenance of the all-island energy market.
- Renegotiated access to EU Structural Funds.
- Continued access to competitive EU funds, such as Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.
- Retained ability for Northern Ireland organisations to be the lead partner in EU programmes, such as INTERREG and PEACE, even as a third country.
- Participation in and access to the key policing, security and judicial mechanisms of the EU, such as the European Arrest Warrant and the Schengen Information System 2.

If Northern Ireland were outside the European Union, there would be an expectation that the UK Government bridge any funding gaps to Northern Ireland. This must not revert to the Barnett Formula, as the existing approach to EU funding reflects the higher relative need of Northern Ireland. This is particularly relevant to any successor to the Common Agricultural Policy and the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund which may replace the Structural Funds.

### **Boris Johnson's Deal**

We believe there is no such thing as a good or sensible Brexit and any version of a Brexit deal will bring its own particular challenges.

The current Boris Johnson deal is more challenging for Northern Ireland than Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement, which included the crucial backstop for Northern Ireland. Theresa May's deal fell well short of our concept of a special deal for Northern Ireland but at least provided a stronger platform from which to build.

The Johnson deal at a minimum only avoids a new border on the island of Ireland and protects the Good Friday Agreement. While any form of Brexit involves some degree of an interface to be managed, this deal entails a more bureaucratic, complicated and expensive framework of checks. There is also in-built uncertainty regarding the ongoing regulatory regime in Northern Ireland due to the requirement for periodic votes in the Assembly.

The Northern Ireland specific provisions only apply to the movement of goods and agri-food. The future relationship negotiations could lead to major gaps in relation to the service economy and the free movement of people. There is also uncertainty regarding Northern Ireland's position on the level playing field provisions, including workers' rights and environmental protections.

There may also be gaps and a deterioration of arrangements in relation to policing, criminal and civil justice co-operation and uncertainty over access to EU programmes such as Horizons Europe and Erasmus+.

Moreover, a harder Brexit for Great Britain and a no deal situation, even at the end of any transition period, would have serious knock-on economic consequences for Northern Ireland.

If Boris Johnson's deal is ratified by Parliament and implemented, Alliance will take the following actions:

- Supporting a future economic relationship based around a Customs Union and full participation in the Single Market.
- In the absence of the above, seeking to minimise declarations and checks on NI to GB and GB to NI trade respectively, plus pushing for further mitigations to reduce the regulatory burden and compliance costs for businesses, through clarification of the existing Withdrawal Agreement via the Joint Committee, further agreements with the EU, and financial assistance.
- Advocating a wider future economic relationship for our region beyond the terms and scope of the current Ireland/Northern Ireland protocol.
- Seeking access to a wide range of EU Programmes.
- Securing ongoing co-operation in policing and justice.

## The Protection of Rights

Alliance believes that rights and equality are central to the cohesion of our society and to the wider European project.

At present, all the people of Northern Ireland have rights as EU Citizens. While those people from Northern Ireland who are Irish citizens have automatic entitlement to be EU citizens, the application of many of these rights may only be operational within the territory of the EU. Brexit therefore risks loss of existing rights to access health care and educational opportunities. By contrast, future recognition of rights only to those who are Irish citizens risks breaching the Good Friday Agreement as those people in Northern Ireland who are solely British citizens would no longer enjoy parity.

We are opposed to any regression or diminution of the existing rights that the people of Northern Ireland currently have through EU membership.

There is a joint challenge for the UK Government, the Irish Government and the EU to ensure continuity and further application of additional rights that become recognised. This should apply to all those who reside within Northern Ireland and these rights should remain fully enforceable through the judicial mechanisms of the EU.

Alliance also wants to ensure that Northern Ireland remains welcoming to all those from elsewhere in the European Union and the rest of the world who have made this region their home, helping to build our economy and enriching our society. In the event of Brexit, some limited immigration powers should be given to the Assembly in order to have a system that better reflects the particular circumstances of our economy.

We want the 1981 UK Nationality Act to be amended to better reflect in law the identity and citizenship terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

We believe the Common Travel Area should be placed on a formal legal basis.





# Northern Ireland

We believe that Northern Ireland deserves a functioning, stable Assembly. Local decision-making, which shapes and delivers services in a way which takes account of local circumstances whilst being accountable at the local level, is vital in order to build confidence in our political system. Moreover, it provides a framework to manage and reconcile our political and societal divisions.

It is unacceptable that we are now approaching three years without a functioning Assembly. Our public services are in crisis with long overdue reforms further delayed, and our economy is increasingly stagnating. We continue to hit roadblock after roadblock where legislative change and Ministerial sign-off is required, and the public have had enough.

As co-guarantors of the Good Friday Agreement, the two governments should:

- Publish a paper on their best assessment of consensus, based on the most recent talks process, and challenge parties to engage.
- Appoint an independent mediator to convene urgent, multi-party talks in order to create political space for agreement and repair political relationships. These talks should be time-limited with a clear focus on accepting, amending or rejecting the governments' paper.

In parallel, the following measures could help clear the deadlock:

- The Secretary of State should consider taking contentious issues – such as the Irish Language and Petition of Concern reform – off the table by legislating in Westminster if necessary. Petition of Concern reform should be taken forward in this way as it must be in place for a restored Assembly, rather than risk it being kicked into the long grass.
- A new Civic Forum should be formed, comprised of a combination of local politicians (33%) and a group of citizens (66%) drawn at random from the electoral register, which would hold a series of debates and evidence-based discussions focused on the restoration of the institutions.

We also note that the period for forming an Executive under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 will expire on 13th January 2020 and believe that this must lead to fresh elections within a reasonable timeframe, unless an Executive has been formed.

If those elections fail to deliver a new Executive within the two-week period, we believe that alternative arrangements for governing Northern Ireland, consistent with the Good Friday Agreement, should be introduced to end the drift and decline in public services and decision-making.

# Governance and Transparency

For too long, investment in public services and the economy has been held back as a result of an almost complete failure of leadership over crucial issues and the breakdown of functioning relationships between the two leading political parties within the Executive. It is clear that things must be done differently at Stormont.

The public deserve better – we should no longer accept the status quo. The current stagnation is stifling social cohesion, damaging communities and the prospects of our young people. Politics must work for the entire community. Stormont needs a reboot.

The major weaknesses of the current system have been exposed by the current political deadlock. A system whereby the two largest parties are able to veto the creation of a cross-community government further reinforces the need for reform to permit a voluntary coalition to proceed. In our current deadlock, this could allow devolved government to continue and avoid the imposition of ‘Direct Rule’.

## Transforming Stormont

Alliance has suggested a number of ways to secure a better functioning and more stable political system for Northern Ireland. These include:

- Ending the process of community designation in the Assembly and replacing it with a requirement for weighted majorities on defined key votes or in situations where a reformed Petition of Concern has been invoked.
- Urgent and meaningful reform of the Petition of Concern system. It should be used in narrow circumstances in line with its original purpose as envisaged in the Northern Ireland Act.
- Creating a coalition decided through voluntary negotiation between parties and subject to a vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Collective responsibility must apply.
- Facilitating an effective opposition made up of parties who do not wish to enter the Executive. This opposition would be accorded additional rights to help them fulfil this role.
- Re-naming of the First Minister and deputy First Minister as “Joint First Ministers”. This would end what has become a potentially polarising contest over which party has a claim to First Minister and which party is “relegated” to deputy First Minister. The Executive Office should remain a joint office, in name and practice.
- Requiring greater co-operation between Ministers, including working together to agreed aims under law.
- Requiring all Executive policies to be ‘shared future-proofed’ to ensure that all major decisions support a united society rather than continuing or enhancing division.



- Modifying the exclusion mechanisms to more clearly define the highest standards of integrity with respect to the rule of law for parties holding office, and to prevent any party being able to veto sanctions against themselves.
- Revitalising the North-South and East-West bodies under strands two and three of the Good Friday Agreement in order to strengthen relationships across the UK and Ireland particularly but not exclusively in the context of Brexit.

These changes would allow us not only to have a cross-community government, but also one in which stalemate between parties does not either collapse the political institutions or prevent progress on economic or social issues.

### **A Changing Constitution**

As the experience of the last Parliament has illustrated, the UK constitution needs to be strengthened. We cannot continue to rely on conventions to safeguard democracy and provide checks on executive power.

We believe there is an opportunity to move to a more sustainable and durable constitutional settlement which supports devolution. We would:

- Support a UK-wide constitutional convention to develop a fully codified constitution. This should explicitly deal with the democratic deficit in England following devolution in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as taking in wider issues, such as reform of the House of Lords.
- Retain a funding formula for Northern Ireland that properly reflects the structural problems in our economy and society, and adequately reflects local circumstances and needs.



### **Our Democratic Principles at Westminster**

Whilst our focus as Northern Ireland MPs will be primarily on Northern Ireland, there are many issues that have indirect impacts on devolved matters. For example, there are often complexities in deciding which areas are affected by a bill, there can also be a financial impact on Northern Ireland from funding decisions concerning England, and there are also general principles debated in Westminster and precedents set which affect how Northern Ireland develops its own policy and legislative approaches to certain issues. Alliance MPs will be consistent in their approach to all these issues: just as Alliance stands for openness, honesty and fairness in Stormont, we will continue to do so in Westminster.

We want to make democracy fairer and more transparent. We will continue to support:

- Making donations to political parties in Northern Ireland more transparent. Changes brought by Naomi Long in November 2013 ensured that all political donations were recorded from January 2014 onwards. However, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland chose only to publish those from July 2017 onwards, so we still have a period of secrecy, which needs to be addressed.
- A fairer electoral system for elections to the House of Commons. Our preferred system is multi-member Single Transferrable Vote, the system we use for all other elections in Northern Ireland.
- Amending the 2014 Lobbying Act to ease restrictions on campaigning activities by affected organisations and to implement a comprehensive lobbying register.
- Votes at 16 for all elections and referendums.
- Votes for EU citizens in all elections and referendums.
- A directly elected House of Lords. Elected representatives could be elected by proportional representation from the 12 regions of the UK, including Northern Ireland and would serve one or at most two longer terms to avoid party politicisation of the roll.





## Work and Welfare

Alliance will continue to argue for a fairer UK-wide benefits system as this will have the greatest impact on what we are able to afford in Northern Ireland.

We want to undo the Conservatives' welfare policies – the government are willing to spend billions of pounds on Brexit preparations and are willing to risk losing billions from our economy due to the effects of Brexit. We can no longer accept the logic that we cannot afford a more generous welfare system for those who need it.

We will argue for a full review of the UK welfare system – preferably by a Royal Commission or panel of experts, to include the option of a Universal Basic Income trial for Northern Ireland – based on the principles of dignity for all, support for those who need it, simplicity for the claimants, eradicating poverty, and ensuring that there are meaningful pathways to work.

More immediately, Alliance will support the following measures within the first year of a new Parliament:

- Repeal of the bedroom tax, UK-wide.
- Ending cruel and punitive sanctions and replacing them with an incentive-based system.
- Reducing the five-week wait for the first payment and offering an interim payment.
- Removing the two-child limit and the benefits cap.
- An overhaul of bereavement benefits.
- End outsourced medical assessments for welfare.
- Scrapping the six-month rule for terminally ill claimants and ending frequent, repetitive assessments for people with lifelong, permanent or deteriorating conditions.
- A wide range of opportunities for claimants to re-skill or re-train, where appropriate.



## **Welfare and Northern Ireland**

While it is clear that Universal Credit (UC) has not worked and must be changed at Westminster, the mitigations that were put in place by the Assembly from 2016/17 are due to expire in March 2020, which risks exposing people in Northern Ireland to some of the worst effects of UC.

As the time in which an incoming Executive could act has now passed, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland should legislate in Westminster to extend the mitigations for at least four years. The contract for independent advisory services should also be rolled over in parallel.

We also want to see the Secretary of State urgently legislate to reclassify housing associations in Northern Ireland. If this is not done in time for the end of the current temporary derogation in March 2020, social housebuilding in Northern Ireland could grind to a halt.

## **Employment Rights**

We believe that people should have secure jobs, with proper rights and fair pay. Alliance will:

- Ensure robust regulation of the “gig” economy, including zero-hour contracts and entitlements and protections for casual workers.
- Support minimum wage equality for young people and a review into minimum and living wage standardisation across age groups.
- Supports an increase statutory maternity pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance to the same level as the minimum wage.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK to which employment law and employment relations policy and practice is devolved. While taking into account developments in Great Britain and the need on occasions for a common framework and approach, we have the capacity to shape employment law and relations policy to take account of the particular circumstances in Northern Ireland. We will ensure continued NI Assembly competence in this area, which is especially important in the context of Brexit.

## Childcare

Childcare provision in Northern Ireland is out of step with the rest of the UK. We want to see the introduction of 30 hours of free, high-quality childcare on a similar basis to that provided in England and Wales, but at the same time learning from difficulties in delivery there, in order to provide childcare that benefits child development and helps parents.

We want to see:

- A refreshed childcare strategy that ensures sustainable funding for high quality, free and affordable childcare, encourages the growth of Sure Start centres, and promotes wraparound care and other flexible options.
- Acknowledgement of the additional challenges for parents of twins and other multiple births and providing additional support. Revision of how childcare costs are supported within Universal Credit.
- Restoration of a UK-wide target on reducing child poverty.

## Carers

Alliance acknowledges the difficult and valuable work carried out by carers in Northern Ireland and the role carers play in providing support to loved ones which allows them to retain their dignity and respect.

We also acknowledge that the work, as well as the intensity of the commitment, can be emotionally difficult and place financial, emotional and physical strain on the carers themselves and the government has a duty to support them.

Alliance will:

- Advocate for an increase in the Carer's Allowance, bringing it into line with Job Seekers' Allowance.
- Support funding and legislation to entitle carers to respite provision so that they can have regular breaks from the responsibility of providing care.
- Push for a Northern Ireland approach to identify and support child carers and a strategy to ensure there is alternative care provision where suitable.
- Ensure that the role played by carers is fully recognised as reform of the health service is implemented.



## Pensions

Alliance is committed to pension provision that enables older people to live independent and dignified lives. We have worked to reduce pensioner poverty and we support many improvements to the state pension system such as:

- Retaining the triple lock on the state pension and ensuring an annual uplift linked to inflation.
- Providing transitional support to those women who have been affected by the decision to bring the date of the increase in the women's retirement age forward, in line with the WASPI campaign.
- Taking independent, objective analysis on the issue of the national pension liability, age of eligibility and how this affects long-term funding arrangements.
- Continuing to support automatic enrolment into workplace pensions. We will seek to balance the need for sustainable finances with the need to ensure people have a dignified retirement and time to adjust to any necessary changes in their pension provision.

## Funding Health and Social Care

Alliance believes that social care should be free at the point of access, funded by collective investment through the welfare state. This is the same for other examples of ongoing treatment of long-term conditions. The cost of this should be borne by progressive taxation and not regressive charges.

We will oppose any proposals to fund social care which are not fair and progressive. We will also work to deliver improvements in the health service so that investment can be directed towards social care.





# Climate and the Environment

The world is facing a climate emergency with potentially disastrous consequences for human existence - consequences that are already being experienced by some of the most fragile species and most vulnerable people on earth. It is vital that all regions, and nations, work together to urgently reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the impact of climate change.

We need to:

- Reduce the UK's net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030.
- Mitigate the impact of climate change by implementing a comprehensive climate action plan.
- Embed environmentalism at the heart of government planning and delivery.

## Energy

Although many energy powers are devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive, renewable energy is a matter that needs to be championed by Northern Ireland's MPs.

Northern Ireland has an incredible opportunity in terms of renewable energy: we have the second highest potential for energy generation through wind in Europe, as well as significant opportunity for tidal, biomass and geothermal energy production.

Alliance will cut carbon emissions through adapting Northern Ireland's energy use. We will:

- Support the continued existence of the all-island energy market. This market is under significant threat from Brexit and any curtailment of it would create significant problems for electricity supply in Northern Ireland.
- End the use of fossil fuels in the UK economy, including banning fracking and the opening of new coalmines and pits, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy.
- Scrutinise every UK-wide energy package to ensure it prioritises renewable energy and acts to keep prices as low as possible.
- Support research funding and revenue streams that promote innovation in renewable energy.

## Mitigation

The impacts of climate change are already upon us and are hitting the most vulnerable the hardest. We are experiencing changing and variable weather and climate patterns, increases in flooding, changes in the natural environment, habitats and biodiversity within these islands, and bringing a financial cost to the Treasury of addressing these and related problems.

Governments must recognise these changes are occurring and be sure that we account for them. In Westminster, Alliance will seek to:

- Green the taxation system to make the polluters pay and to reward progress towards net zero. Ban non-recyclable single-use plastics and replace them with accessible, affordable alternatives within three years, and extend deposit return schemes for food and drink containers throughout the UK.
- Accelerate the rapid take-up of electric vehicles through subsidies and vehicle tax reform, to ensure there are no new fossil fuel cars or small vans sold in the UK after 2030.
- Support innovation in zero-emission technologies, such as batteries and hydrogen fuel cells.
- Introduce a zero-carbon standard for all new buildings by 2021 and support a UK-wide emergency programme to reduce energy consumption from all buildings, including providing insulation to cut emissions and fuel bills, and ending fuel poverty.
- Audit the existing UK flooding infrastructure to establish which areas need priority investment; either improving or constructing defences.
- Work with industry to introduce circular economy models and provide funding to accelerate the introduction of industrial carbon capture and storage.
- Prioritise climate change mitigation in agricultural support systems, including measures to increase soil carbon, tree planting and woodland creation.
- Adopt a UK-wide programme to restore peatlands, carbon sinks and plant an additional 60 million trees a year.

## Climate Frameworks and Finance

In order to tackle the climate emergency effectively, we need to ensure climate action is at the heart of every relevant decision at every level of government. Whilst some schemes need a UK-wide approach, many will also require Northern Ireland to shape and implement local equivalents. Alliance supports:

- Creating a Just Transition Commission to advise on how to deliver a net-zero economy that works for everyone, and Just Transition Funds to support development in those regions and communities most affected by the transition.
- Ensuring climate objectives are a top priority for central government, including appointing a cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury, creating a new Department for Climate and Natural Resources and introducing a requirement on all public bodies to report on the extent to which climate risks pose a threat to their ability to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Investing in zero-carbon infrastructure and technologies by establishing a new Green Investment Bank to steer private investment into these sectors.
- Establishing Citizens' Climate Assemblies to engage the public in tackling the climate emergency.
- Regulating financial services to encourage green investments, including requiring all companies registered in the UK and listed on UK stock exchanges to disclose their level of climate risk and make provisions for the costs associated with meeting targets compliant with the Paris Agreement.



# Agriculture and Nature

## Agriculture

Agriculture is Northern Ireland's largest industry and plays a crucial role in both our economy and in countryside management – but it must not only be a means of creating jobs and delivering economic growth: it can also be a tool for tackling climate change, encouraging sustainable development and protecting our countryside.

We need an approach to agriculture that is transparent, result orientated and that provides a decent standard of living for farmers. We need to support farmers in vital food production work as well as in their crucial role driving nature's recovery, protecting our wildlife and eco-systems and in providing common goods that benefit us all.

In the context of Brexit, we have no clarity as to what support our farmers will receive or whether they will have access to existing markets that are economically sustainable.

In addition, we have received no concrete assurances on how current EU agriculture policy will be implemented. Whether this responsibility will be devolved or sit as part of a UK-wide common policy is unclear.

This continuing uncertainty creates a 'perfect storm' for Northern Ireland's farmers and the absence of the NI Executive means that many of these issues have been left unaddressed. Alliance believe that supporting our farmers is an imperative for any restored Executive.

We will push for the following to be implemented by the UK Government:

- Securing membership of the Customs Union to minimise the adverse effects of Brexit to our farming and agribusiness sectors and ensuring that customers do not see price rises due to tariffs. Access to both markets in GB and the EU is essential for agricultural and rural development in Northern Ireland.
- Ensuring UK farming continues to meet high standards of production such as food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare. These high standards need to be considered when negotiating any future trade deals.
- Greening the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with increased responsibility given to the devolved nations. In the event of Brexit, we will push for the same emphasis on the environment but with funding allocation based on need, rather than the Barnett Formula, in order to reflect that Northern Ireland currently receives around 10% of UK CAP payments while representing less than 3% of the UK population.
- Ensuring that immigration policy means that there is labour available for work on farms and in food processing.



- Farming and agricultural supply chains make up a larger segment of the Northern Ireland economy in comparison to the rest of the UK. Any agricultural and rural development strategy and resultant funding schemes should consider this proportional difference.
- Supporting mechanisms that minimise disruption to the North-South supply chains in agri-food and maximise potential for sales into Great Britain, EU, and international markets. Any barriers to free trade currently available to farmers today should be taken into account when formulating an agricultural strategy in Northern Ireland.
- Continued use of the EU's geographical indicators for food products after Brexit. These indicators provide recognition for Northern Ireland produce such as Irish whiskey and Lough Neagh eels and there are other products which could benefit from this.
- Enhance the power of the NI Assembly in relation to the formulation and implementation of agricultural policy and associated environmental legislation.

It is our firm belief that agricultural support should be devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly and we will strongly advocate for this following Brexit. We will push for any agricultural policy to:

- Ensure that rural development policy helps support rural areas in meeting the wide range of economic, environmental and societal challenges.
- Ensure transparency in supply chains and pricing mechanisms and enhance competition to ensure value stays in the market, enabling a fairer price to farmers and processors.
- Provide increased support for sustainable agriculture and land management, as well as targeted financing for environmental objectives such as nature conservation, protection of biodiversity and carbon emission reduction. This should also discourage harmful practices such as intensive farming and land abandonment.
- Ensure an effective means of knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture and forestry including farm advisory consultative bodies and risk management tools.
- Be formulated using the principles of co-production and co-design, with all consultative information available in the public domain.

## **Fishing**

As with agriculture, fishing is a major industry in many communities. It also faces a series of changes as a result of the proposed withdrawal from the EU. Any replacement for the EU fishing regime must be decided locally in Northern Ireland and ensure that the fishing industry is sustainable, both environmentally and in terms of maintaining stocks for future generations. We will ensure that UK fishing policy:

- Supports the fishing industry's transition to an ecosystem-based management regime that rebuilds healthy fish stocks and supports a more equitable distribution of fishing opportunities.
- Develops a method of deciding fish quotas that is flexible and efficient.
- Incorporates long-term, regional stock management plans to ensure that fish stocks remain at sustainable levels.
- Retains the ban on 'discards,' which results in dead fish being put back into the sea.

## **Nature, Wildlife and Biodiversity**

Part of the environmental challenge that we face is restoring biodiversity and ensuring that nature is protected against climate change. Lower levels of biodiversity and higher levels of habitat destruction profoundly affect our ecosystem. We need to halt the decline in nature and put it on a path to recovery.

We will support nature by:

- Creating an independent Environmental Protection Agency for Northern Ireland that has the powers and resources to enforce compliance with environmental and climate targets and acts as a watchdog on public bodies and the private sector.
- Protecting all existing EU environment directives by placing them into Northern Ireland's domestic law following the proposed withdrawal from the EU.
- Encouraging the development and funding of programmes to restore wildlife and biodiversity. Where appropriate, this would include an all-island approach to wildlife management.
- Implementing the EU Birds and Habitats Directive into domestic law following the proposed withdrawal from the EU.
- Ensuring maximum opportunities to protect and restore our wetlands by ensuring conservation laws at least as strong as the Water Framework Directive. Ongoing investment in our water and sewerage infrastructure is also required.
- Supporting UK-wide legislation to improve decision making around nature issues and to establish long-term targets and powers to meet them.

## Animal Welfare

Alliance has always prioritised animal welfare and sought to tackle cruelty against animals. People who show such brutality are not only a danger to the animals involved, but potentially to our society as a whole. Our priorities include:

- A UK-wide ban on the use of wild animals in circuses.
- Phasing out the use of caged systems in farming and banning the building of any new caged systems on UK farms.
- Improving food labelling and traceability in relation to welfare standards.
- Mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses.
- Ending the overuse of antibiotics in farming.
- Supporting the extension of the 2004 Hunting Act to Northern Ireland and opposition to any attempts to repeal it in Westminster.
- Using the UK's global influence to end 'trophy hunting' and the trade of illegal animal products.
- Outlawing the use of snares.
- Opposing the live export of animals and fattening for slaughter.
- Better regulation of the sale of puppies and kittens, especially when sold on the internet or in pet shops.
- Working to reduce and better regulate necessary animal testing and invest in developing alternative scientific methods and practices.
- Bringing the rest of the UK into line with Northern Ireland's enhanced sentencing for animal cruelty, introduced by Alliance Minister David Ford.



# Building an Integrated Society

## **For Everyone – A Shared Future in Northern Ireland**

We believe radical changes are required to reduce the impact of division on our society and to achieve a shared future. Alliance has a vision for a cohesive, shared and integrated society, where people are safe and prosperous, have opportunities and are treated fairly and with respect. This society would be underpinned by our shared values of equality, respect for diversity and interdependence. We reject the notion of parallel societies and so-called ‘separate but equal’ provision.

Most of the mechanisms for delivering a shared future for Northern Ireland are devolved to the Assembly. However, Westminster has an important role to play in ensuring that a shared future and good relations are central to Northern Ireland’s work.

As there is an inextricable link between the creation of a shared future and the economic transformation of Northern Ireland, we must recognise that continued divisions limit Northern Ireland’s potential. Therefore, any borrowing the UK Treasury and NI Executive embark upon to develop infrastructure should seek to prioritise sharing. For example, investment in new schools should prioritise the integrated sector, and investment in housing and regeneration should be linked to ensuring space is accessible to everyone in our community.

Key elements for Alliance in a shared future, which must be reflected in the UK Government’s spending in Northern Ireland and with some delivered by the Assembly, would include:

- Creating a new Programme for Government outcome on ending sectarianism and division.
- Requiring all Executive policies to be ‘shared future-proofed’ to ensure that all major decisions support an integrated society rather than continuing or enhancing division.
- Working with communities to secure the removal of all interface barriers.
- Requiring Departments to review spending plans to identify the costs of managing a divided society.
- Creating a statutory duty on the Housing Executive to encourage, facilitate and protect mixed housing.
- Strengthening the statutory duty on the Department for Education and the Education Authority to promote the development of integrated education and increasing the number of integrated school places.
- Requiring public bodies to promote shared space in new capital projects.
- Ending tolerance of illegally erected flags and emblems.



- Passing a Single Equality Act.
- Introducing an Irish Language Act as well as appropriate support for Ulster-Scots and non- indigenous minority languages.

We welcome the extension of Same Sex Marriage to Northern Ireland from January 2020 and will continue to support robust protections for faith groups.

### **Parades, Flags and Dealing With the Past**

We believe that the peace process remains under threat as the result of other politicians being unable to come to agreement on tackling the controversial issues of parading, flags and the past. This has the potential to undermine public confidence in politics, in the Northern Ireland institutions, and in the peace process as a whole.

We are clear that these issues need to be settled. In recent years, issues around parading, the display of flags and how we deal with the legacy of the past have all caused significant problems or challenges. Reactions to these have also raised tensions within our community and been cited as a justification for public disorder.

Alliance will continue to support the urgent implementation of the Stormont House Agreement, which reflects many longstanding Alliance proposals. This package will finally offer the opportunity to deliver truth, justice and support services for victims and survivors.

### **Human Rights**

We recognise that human rights are inherent and universal. They are an essential part of modern governance and protect the individual, from any background, from injustices. They also provide sensible and necessary limits on governments and allow governments to plan in advance for these limitations.

Alliance strongly supports the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). We will oppose any proposed repeal of the Human Rights Act or withdrawal from the ECHR.

We believe any Northern Ireland Bill of Rights must:

- Be realistic and capable of being enforced through our own courts.
- Be consistent with European and international standards.
- Be flexible enough to take account of changing circumstances and an evolving Northern Ireland.
- Avoid entrenching any particular view of identity, such as the notion of two separate communities in Northern Ireland and, accordingly, sectarian divisions.

We also want the Secretary of State to urgently introduce legislation which would see the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's legal standing restored.

## Equality

Alliance has a strong track record of opposing all forms of racism and sectarianism, including antisemitism and islamophobia, and we want to see strong equality legislation which both reflects and protects the diversity of identities.

Equality policy is primarily devolved to the Assembly, but it is deeply concerning that no significant progressive reform to equality legislation has so far been passed under devolution: all the major reforms have occurred under 'Direct Rule'. This is not sustainable.

While devolution creates a powerful regional dimension to policy-making, this should primarily relate to decisions regarding the allocation of resources to fit particular economic and social circumstances, rather than creating special rights regimes.

We believe that there should be the same standard of equality provisions throughout the UK. We want to see the creation of a Single Equality Act for Northern Ireland.

## Citizenship

Alliance wants to see the mutually interdependent identity and citizenship commitments within the Good Friday Agreement fully reflected in UK law. We call for the 1981 British Nationality Act to be amended to reflect and protect those who have only Irish identity and citizenship.

The Common Travel Area has evolved over the last century. However, it only provides essentially equivalent treatment for British and Irish citizens within Ireland and the UK respectively through custom and practice. Over recent decades, it has been overlaid by the much more comprehensive and legally enforceable set of mutual rights that come from the joint UK and Irish membership of the EU. Brexit threatens to strip away elements of this framework.

While the memorandum of understanding between the UK and Irish Governments is welcome, Alliance advocates that the Common Travel Area be encapsulated within a British-Irish Treaty.



## Immigration

We are deeply concerned at the tone of the current immigration debate. The language used perpetuates myths and allows anti-immigration views to legitimise racial stereotyping and enable racial abuse. Immigration enriches our society, boosts our economy, provides tax revenue and attracts inward investment.

EU citizens who have chosen to make their life in the UK now face an uncertain situation post-Brexit and are forced to engage with a flawed Settlement Scheme after previous promises of automatic entitlements were reneged upon by the UK Government.

As well as the personal impact on the over two million EU citizens living in the UK, the government's decision to end freedom of movement for EU citizens will restrict the supply of labour in sectors where migrant workers are vital, such as the health service and agriculture.

It also potentially restricts highly-skilled workers in innovative and high-value industries from entering the labour market despite their valuable skills and experience.

Alliance will:

- Provide a role for Northern Ireland in determining skills shortages for Northern Ireland in relation to Tier 2 visas, so that the particular needs of Northern Ireland's labour market are reflected in immigration policy.
- Ensure regional flexibility is built into immigration strategy and legislation, so regions with different wage levels or particular skills needs are able to attract new labour where it is needed, for example by varying salary thresholds to reflect a lower cost of living.
- Guarantee the existing rights of EU citizens resident within the UK and the rights of UK citizens resident in the rest of the EU after Brexit.
- Remove the cap on non-EU migrants as this has been detrimental to attracting high-skilled workers and students to British companies.
- Exempt international students from being counted as migrants during the course of their studies and introduce a two-year visa for students to work after graduation.
- Ensure that any post-Brexit immigration policy remains open to workers in sectors that will have significant difficulty in functioning without migrant workers, such as the health service, agriculture and scientific research.
- Make the visa system simpler and easier for legitimate sponsors to fulfil their role.
- Pursue a rational and empathetic debate around immigration that emphasises facts and objective analysis, whilst remembering the human social dimension to immigration.
- Seek to end the hostile environment policies and establish a firewall to prevent public agencies from sharing personal information with the Home Office for the purposes of immigration enforcement.

## **Asylum, Refugees and Vulnerable Economic Migrants**

Alliance believes we have both legal and moral duties towards people seeking asylum and refuge. The UK should fully honour its obligations to look after people fleeing persecution, disaster and extreme poverty and should work with other European nations to reduce the dangers experienced by those attempting to reach Europe, whether from natural elements or criminal exploitation.

Recent moves from some EU nations to end search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean and to close borders to new overland migrants is creating a humanitarian crisis, often in already impoverished and unstable neighbouring nations. This must be addressed by EU actions to ensure that life is protected, human dignity is maintained and that suitable accommodation can be found as cases are considered.

We believe:

- The current ban on people seeking asylum working results in many struggling to support themselves and their family and finding it difficult to integrate in their communities. People seeking asylum should have the right to work so that they can use their skills and live in dignity.
- The current system of indefinite immigration detention is expensive, ineffective and unjust. No one should be held in immigration detention for migration-related reasons, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, for example, someone who poses a danger to the public.
- The UK should provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary by resettling 10,000 vulnerable refugees each year and expanding family reunion rights. Northern Ireland should lead the way in providing a new home for vulnerable refugees.
- We must work together with other EU member states to deliver a Common European Asylum System and to step up search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea.
- We must end the culture of disbelief in the Home Office, including training decision-makers to deal with cases involving trauma and abuse.
- We need to train decision-makers to better handle complex cases involving the persecution of LGBT people, religious or ethnic minorities who are unsafe in their home country, irrespective of whether the state is the perpetrator. If their home country has not kept them safe, then they must be allowed to claim asylum elsewhere.
- The UK should create robust and flexible routes to documentation so that people can quickly and easily regularise their immigration status.



# Finance and Economy

Alliance is clear that robust and sustainable public spending is essential to underpin economic growth and sustain quality public services. Without a responsible and mature approach to expenditure, we are putting at risk our ability to deliver the sort of economy and society we want.

## Fair and Progressive Taxation

Tax evasion costs both the UK Treasury and the governments of developing nations substantial amounts of money each year.

Brexit will also have a negative impact of the rate of economic growth and accordingly tax receipts. By contrast, stopping Brexit will provide a Remain bonus for current financial planning.

Additional spending power could be used to promote economic growth and improve public services.

Alliance will support taxation that is progressive and fair, so that the wealthiest people in society pay a bigger proportional share. We support:

- Simplification of the payment and administration of income tax and national insurance.
- Increasing the tax-free allowance for income tax so that lower-earners keep more of what they earn.
- An evidence-based approach as to what the highest rate of tax should be.
- Taxes which tackle inequality, such as on very high-value properties or changes to inheritance tax.
- A wider range of VAT exemptions, including zero-rating both sanitary products and sunscreen, and lower rates for hospitality and housing renovation.
- An international Financial Transactions Tax and, at a UK-wide level, retaining the banking levy.

We also support new legislation to:

- Require foreign companies to pay tax on those profits generated from within the UK.
- Review current tax relief schemes to ensure they are meeting their intended purpose and are not being exploited.
- Introduce a General Anti-Avoidance Rule, setting a target for HMRC to reduce the tax gap.
- Reform rules that allow companies to avoid tax in both the UK and in developing countries.

- Improve transparency by opening up companies' reports into their tax activities to the public.
- Strengthen the enforcement of and penalties for tax evasion.
- Create a register of beneficial interests for all international companies.

### **Modernising and Re-balancing Our Economy**

Northern Ireland has lost out as the result of a deeply unbalanced economy within the UK. There is a heavy focus around the south-east of England and those sectors which predominate there. For example, only 3/12 UK regions are net contributors to UK Treasury.

Devolution should allow us to develop our own proposals for economic development, but it is important that those economic functions that remain with the UK Government should be exercised in a way that maximises economic development across the whole of the UK.

To achieve this, Alliance will:

- Seek to best use the current low cost of borrowing to finance infrastructure and capital-spending programmes.
- Support regional industries by boosting research, skills, infrastructure and innovation across the entire UK.
- Continue to support the development of broadband, high-speed mobile internet access and similar telecommunications projects in such a way that ensures all parts of the UK benefit from this technology.
- Support expansion of the British Business Bank to perform a more central role in the economy, to ensure that profitable, viable small and medium-sized businesses have access to capital, even when the rest of the commercial banking system can't provide it.
- Support a legal duty on the UK Government to ensure its economic policies are assessed on their likelihood of reducing regional inequality in the economy.
- Support the introduction of a capital £50 billion Regional Rebalancing Programme for infrastructure spend across the nations and regions of the UK, with local and devolved authorities given a say in how it is used, reinforced by Just Transition funding for areas particularly affected by the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, we want to see Northern Ireland maximise its access to funding opportunities that exist on a UK level. The NI Executive and the UK Government must work together to ensure that Northern Ireland has the skills and ability to attract greater levels of funding from projects such as:

- UK Research Councils, which fund academic research across the UK.
- Continued access to competitive EU funds, such as Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.

### **Supporting Local Economic Development and Trade**

Alliance is committed to developing the local economy in Northern Ireland. Our aim is to make Northern Ireland the most innovative and dynamic regional economy in Europe.

However, to do this, we can no longer rely on what made us prosperous in the past. We must invest in the skills infrastructure and harness the creativity needed to ensure our economy is fit for the 21st Century. Improving our level of productivity is an essential part of any new economic approach.

Alliance believes that despite the challenges facing the economy, Northern Ireland has the resources to become stronger and more competitive. We have an enterprising and resilient business base; a youthful and well-educated population; a strong manufacturing base; excellent research and innovation attributes; a world-class telecommunications network; strong international links; and unique natural and cultural resources. Our strengths far outweigh our weaknesses. Taking advantage of these strengths will create the right conditions for growth and address many of the weaknesses in our economy.

There is a role for Westminster to help Northern Ireland develop these strengths and Alliance MPs will work alongside the Executive to do this.

In order to promote economic development and trade, we will:

- Argue for changes to UK-wide procurement rules that make it easier for small businesses to bid. Examples include improving information available to applicants, tackling the complexity of the process and reducing the ‘bundling’ of procurement contracts.
- Ensure economic policy is assessed for its impact on small businesses.
- If Brexit happens, we will work with the UK Government and Invest NI to ensure that any trade deals struck reflect the business environment in Northern Ireland and enable local businesses to be involved in trade missions.



## Science, Skills and Innovation

Alliance believes that the future of the economy will be based on securing high-tech, highly innovative and highly-skilled jobs.

Creating such an economy needs to be based on work that would be undertaken by both the UK Government and the NI Executive. Both have powers at their disposal that would enable Northern Ireland to invest heavily in the sort of economy we will need to prosper in the future.

In Westminster we will support the following changes to improve the standing of science, skills and innovation:

- Increasing investment in science and research through the UK Research Councils. There is a clear link globally between state investment in science and economic prosperity.
- Abolition of the Apprentice Levy as an inefficient and distorting intervention to support skills investment, replacing it with greater direct government spending on skills programmes co-designed with the business community and other stakeholders.
- Supporting Northern Ireland's universities in drawing down greater levels of science and research funding from both the Research Councils and the EU.
- Specifically identifying where gaps exist in both funding and infrastructure for science in Northern Ireland.
- Investing in a wide range of programmes to assist young people in gaining appropriate skills and working with specific industries where appropriate.
- Ensuring that any immigration system implemented after Brexit enables those who are highly-skilled in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and related disciplines to continue to migrate to the UK to work.





# Crime, Security and Justice

## Policing and Security

Most policing and justice powers were devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2010. However, there is still a role for Northern Ireland MPs to promote crime prevention and public safety in Northern Ireland. Alliance is committed to an effective and accountable police service and to upholding the rule of law.

In order to ensure this, Alliance will:

- Argue for continued UK participation in the European Arrest Warrant and work with the National Crime Agency, PSNI, and police forces across Europe to ensure international policing co-operation, in the event of Brexit.
- Make the case for Unexplained Wealth Orders to be extended to Northern Ireland in order to better tackle paramilitary organised crime gangs.
- Continue our strong opposition to domestic and gendered violence, supporting the Domestic Abuse Bill and its provisions relating to Northern Ireland.
- Continue to support the proposals of the Gillen Review of the law and procedure in prosecuting serious sexual offences, and make the case for a UK-wide approach to delivering the best outcomes for victims, defendants and justice.
- Promote collaborative efforts to tackle global crimes which require an integrated national and international response, including human trafficking, fuel laundering and counterfeiting. We recognise that the profits from these crimes fund illegal organisations locally and globally.



## **Civil Liberties**

Alliance is committed to personal liberty, privacy and civil rights: they ensure that individuals can exercise their own choices and that the state acts fairly. As a party which respects the rule of law, we know how important it is to ensure civil liberties are protected.

In order to do so, Alliance will:

- Oppose any proposed repeal of the Human Rights Act or withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Support ending the bulk collection of communications data and internet connection records.
- Support the principle of net neutrality and oppose wide-ranging restrictions on access from the UK to certain parts of the internet.
- Support the retention of the Freedom of Information Act in its current form.
- Continue to apply an approach to the most difficult issues in Northern Ireland which balances civil liberties and human rights.

## **Delivering Truth and Justice for Legacy Victims**

Alliance has long advocated a new approach to dealing with the legacy of Northern Ireland's past. Alliance refused to support the "Fresh Start" Agreement because it failed to deliver for victims. We remain committed to establishing the legacy institutions proposed in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement.

Alliance proposed the principles set out in that agreement which should guide the Executive and the British and Irish governments as they deal with the past, as follows:

- Promoting reconciliation.
- Upholding the rule of law.
- Acknowledging and addressing the suffering of victims and survivors.
- Facilitating the pursuit of justice and information recovery.
- Complying with human rights.
- Be proportionate, transparent, fair and equitable.

We remain strongly opposed to any statute of limitations or amnesty, be it for armed forces personnel or any other actors in the conflict.

This would clearly violate the above principles and has the potential to cast doubt over the integrity of all who served in Northern Ireland with honour and protected the entire community, with particular consequences for those who still reside here.

Following the Northern Ireland Office consultation on the Stormont House Agreement proposals to address the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, Westminster should legislate for the proposed bodies:

- An Oral History Archive to provide the opportunity of a central place for people from all backgrounds (and from throughout the UK and Ireland) to voluntarily share experiences and narratives related to the Troubles. The Archive will be independent and free from political interference and be complemented by a factual historical timeline and statistical analysis of the Troubles, produced by academics.
- A Historical Investigations Unit to take forward independent, Article 2 compliant investigations into outstanding Troubles-related deaths, including outstanding cases from the Historical Enquiries Team process and the legacy work of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.
- An Independent Commission on Information Retrieval, to enable victims and survivors to seek and privately receive information about the Troubles-related deaths of their next of kin. This Commission would not disclose the identities of people who provide information. No individual who provides information to the body will be immune from prosecution for any crime committed should the required evidential test be satisfied by other means.
- An Implementation and Reconciliation Group (IRG) to oversee themes, archives and information recovery, with the promotion of reconciliation underpinning all of its work. The IRG would encourage and support other initiatives that contribute to reconciliation, better understanding of the past and reducing sectarianism.



# International Affairs

We believe that the circumstances of the global challenges that the UK faces have changed over recent decades. Global co-operation is essential to tackle global problems such as poverty, migration, humanitarian crises and climate change. We must defend international institutions and a rules-based international system against increasing nationalism and isolationism, supporting multilateral organisations such as the United Nations, NATO and WTO which are increasingly under threat, and we must continue defence cooperation across Europe, regardless of Brexit.

## Trident

Alliance has seen no evidence to suggest that the like-for-like renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system is necessary or cost-effective.

We believe that other approaches can be used to ensure the security of the UK, which reflect the security challenges of the future, rather than of the Cold War era. The UK can help combat nuclear proliferation by leading by example in reducing nuclear weapons as part of agreed multilateral efforts.

## Conflict Resolution

War and global conflict has a disastrous effect on international relations, economic stability, the environment, and public finances, and creates human misery and destruction. As a result, Alliance supports:

- Military intervention only as a last resort – any military interventions must be legal, have defined aims and an exit strategy, assurances that the result will be sustainable, and accompanied by non-military attempts at tackling the problem.
- The ‘Responsibility to Protect’ doctrine. We accept that this must be a factor in decision-making about intervention.
- Reforming global institutions to better promote globally agreed objectives and recognise the central role of the United Nations in maintaining global peace and security.
- Based on existing UN Resolutions and our advocacy of an independent state of Palestine, we support a two-state solution.
- Continued and enhanced European cooperation in security and defence, regardless of Brexit. However, we remain opposed to any suggestion of an EU army.



### **Support for the Armed Forces**

Alliance respects and values the difficult work that our armed forces undertake. That is why we believe several changes need to be made to ensure that they are properly remunerated and rewarded for their efforts. This should include:

- An audit of the equipment and training provided to the armed forces to ensure that they are properly prepared for the various types of mission that they face. This audit should ensure appropriate equipment for newer types of deployment such as counter-insurgency and peace-keeping.
- Supporting the full implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Northern Ireland, including regular monitoring of the scheme and individual Executive Departments reporting to the UK Government for inclusion in annual reports.

### **International Development**

Alliance believes that richer countries have both a moral obligation and a strategic interest in international development spending.

We want to build a fair, sustainable world: reducing poverty and inequality, ensuring that the most marginalised groups such as women, girls, people with disabilities and the LGBT community are at the forefront of international development and humanitarian assistance policy.

Therefore, Alliance will:

- Maintain the commitment to spend 0.7% of the UK's gross national income on international development: reducing poverty, defending human rights, protecting the environment and preventing violent conflict worldwide.
- Tackle international tax-dodging which harms the economies of both the UK and the developing world. We will ensure that the UK's tax rules do not have a negative effect on developing countries.
- Support the creation of a register requiring the publication of company ownership information in the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. This would ensure financial transparency and reduce the use of tax havens.
- Support greater investment in water, sanitation and hygiene as a matter of priority. This not only reduces disease and improves sanitation but can help prevent the development of new diseases with a global threat, as well as impacting directly on economic growth and inclusion. Its impact on the safety, security, education, economic and social participation of women and girls is also hugely significant.

- Support a global climate change fund to help ensure that poorer countries can mitigate the impact of climate change. Climate change is disproportionately caused by industrialised nations so we should assist other nations to adapt to it. This agenda needs to have accountable implementation and be supported by a global agreement on climate change.
- Support the financing and delivery of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the commitment made by all UN member states to 'leave no one behind' by 2030.

### **Supporting Human Rights and Political Freedoms**

Alliance respects and promotes human rights, civil liberties and political freedom. We believe that these issues are universal and must be respected by governments across the world. We will always seek to promote our values abroad, promoting a world which is tolerant, respects human rights and supports political freedom. Alliance will:

- Continue to promote our unwavering commitment to freedom of, and from, religion across the world and opposing discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.
- Recognise that civil liberties and the rule of law are a crucial part of developing stable governments and enabling economic growth, and ensure this recognition is embedded in foreign affairs.
- Pay particular attention to protecting the rights and well-being of women across the world, given that women are typically financially and politically disadvantaged in comparison to men. Access to education is a priority.
- Use the UK's role in the Commonwealth to make progress on protecting the rights of women, religious minorities and LGBT people.
- Strengthen the role the international community plays in overseeing elections abroad so that we can continue to promote fair and free elections.
- Continue to support the fight against slave labour and human trafficking.
- Improve control of arms exports and end continued arms sales to countries with poor human rights records.
- Increase overseas financial support for the ongoing refugee crisis, focusing on countries that have accepted millions of refugees.



# Alliance

Westminster Manifesto 2019

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