

Sinn Féin –
**Blocking Housing
Construction** in Dublin



Introduction

The following report examines Sinn Féin's voting record on housing developments in the Dublin area and looks at three local authorities, Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, and Fingal County Council since 2018.

Sinn Féin have voted against almost 6,000 homes in one form or another in Dublin in the past three years alone.

Fine Gael Dublin Bay South Bye-Election candidate, James Geoghegan, in his own local authority of Dublin City Council, has voted in favour of over 3,000 homes which include a mix of social, affordable and affordable rental.

Sinn Féin's populist national political strategy and centralised control over their local representatives forces their own councillors to vote against housing projects that, in many cases, they themselves had originally designed and pushed forward at a local level.

Sinn Féin councillors, who at the time led Dublin City Council, sought the delivery of more than 1,600 homes in O'Devaney Gardens and Oscar Traynor Road, only to vote against those very homes after millions had already been spent.

Most recently, they led a majority of councillors to prevent the construction of 1,000 new homes in Santry which would have been built in three years and will now be eight years away.


In Dublin Bay South, all parties - including Sinn Féin - agreed to the affordable scheme which will see 600 affordable and 300 social homes built in Poolbeg on the Glass Bottle Site. However, during this campaign, the candidate for Sinn Féin has wavered in her party's commitment to the scheme.

James Geoghegan's record on Dublin City Council on housing includes;

- Voting in favour of more than 3,000 homes.
- Successfully passing an all-party motion seeking higher state subsidy for affordable homes to buy and rent on Dublin City Council land.
- Delivering an audit on construction costs of public homes to drive down cost and increase affordability.
- Member of the special committee on homelessness which has led to reforms of how the Dublin Regional Homeless executive interacts with service users with a much greater focus on wrap around care and scrutiny over service providers.

Sinn Féin's housing policy is one centred almost entirely on public investment which won't deliver the 40,000-home target set by Tánaiste Leo Varadkar as outlined at Fine Gael's recent Ard Fheis. The state is currently building 1 in 3 homes and that commitment for 40,000 homes is backed by actual funding which will be delivered.

Only the public and private sector working together will deliver our housing targets and ensure we get back to the 70% home ownership target that is essential to have equality of opportunity in this country.



Fine Gael believes we need to take a more rounded approach to housing in general. Rather than banning different types of housing or housing investment, we need all sorts of housing and lots more of it, whether it is social housing for people on the housing list, affordable rental or private homes for people to buy at affordable prices. Housing policy must be about providing homes for everyone.

We must never repeat the same mistakes of the past. We need mixed tenure integrated housing development.

Fine Gael fundamentally believes these developments are the way forward and having a balanced mixture of social, affordable, cost-rental and private housing together will build better communities.

We must give people the best start in life, which means access to housing and the amenities that go with it, including recreational space and access to community services. This means well-built homes close to essential services like schools, shops, playgrounds and public transport.

Sinn Féin has consistently voted against many of these exact type of developments over the past three years in Dublin City Council, South Dublin and Fingal County Councils.

This theme is common across the three councils. A total of 5,946 homes have been objected to since 2018.

One of Geoghegan's key priorities in the Dublin Bay South Bye-Election is delivering more affordable purchase homes to buy and rent. Ireland needs stability of Government to ensure that the rapid escalation in supply of housing can be delivered with certainty for the future.

Dublin City Council: Total 3,252

- **In November 2019, Sinn Féin voted against the development of 824 homes in O' Devaney Gardens.**
- **In November 2020, Sinn Féin voted against 853 homes in Oscar Traynor Road in 2020.**
- **In March 2020, Sinn Féin voted against the rezoning of industrial lands which would provide up to 1,575 homes.**

O'Devaney Gardens (DCC)

- In 2017 Sinn Féin initially voted for the plan, with a mix of 30% social, 20% affordable and 50% private "following two years of negotiations between council officials, the Department of Housing and city councillors".¹
- The deal was championed by Sinn Féin, which was the largest party on the council at the time.
- In 2019, Sinn Féin flipped their position and they voted against the same scheme. This was because "they do not like the specific deal done with Bartra, because they say it does not represent good value for money."
- They then said that "it should be 33 per cent social, 33 per cent affordable rental and 33 per cent affordable purchase".
- In November 2019, councillors approved the Bartra deal in Nov 2019. In the end, councillors said that they had "secured a commitment" from Bartra that 30% of the total units will be purchased from the developer at market price and offered as "affordable-rental" in an attempt to end the deadlock.²

- In May 2021, Bartra lodged long anticipated plans for the €400 million development of O'Devaney Gardens.
- A published planning notice submitted by the company confirms that the "fast track" scheme is to comprise 1,047 residential units across 10 apartment blocks.³
- Dublin City Council have said that the breakdown of the housing would be 30 percent social, 20 percent affordable and 50 percent private. At least 50 percent of the private units will be developed for cost rental.

Oscar Traynor Road (DCC)

- In November 2020, Sinn Féin, alongside some other parties, voted against 853 homes in Oscar Traynor Road. The proposed mix was 50% owner-occupier, 30% Public Housing and 20% affordable purchase, equating to 428 private, 253 social, and 172 affordable houses.⁴
- Sinn Féin voted against it because of the inclusion of private housing. They argued "it needs to be social, affordable and it needs to be cost rental" instead.⁵ The plan was rejected.

- In March 2021, a new plan was passed 40% social homes, 40% affordable or cost-rental scheme, 20% affordable sales.⁶
- However, there are severe problems with this new plan for the Oscar Traynor Road. It will take longer to deliver.
- Dublin City Council's Deputy Chief Executive with responsibility for housing said the revised plan could take up to eight years to implement.⁷
- Four years of planning have been lost⁸ and development plans are "back to square one".

Rezoning of Industrial lands (DCC)

- In March 2020, the Council originally proposed to rezone 20 industrial sites to allow for up to 3,500 new homes.
- After local objections this was reduced to rezoning for 1,575 homes, on 17 sites.⁹
- On 10th March 2020, 17 rezoning's were voted on and 16 were passed.
- Sinn Féin voted against the majority of these rezoning projects (a majority of SF councillors voted Yes on only 3 of the rezoning projects, and No on 14).¹⁰
- The rezoning proposal that failed was for a site at Greenmount industrial estate in Harold's Cross which could have seen the development of 100 homes.¹¹
- Sinn Féin's reasons for voting against rezoning more land for houses were vague and non-specific.
- Cllr Mícheál Mac Donncha of Sinn Féin said the rezoning was being proposed "within a deeply flawed planning and zoning system".¹²
- Eoin Ó Broin said "Sinn Féin is open to the rezoning proposals for industrial and commercial land in Dublin City and South Dublin County, however crucial conditions must be applied."¹³
- List of 14 votes that SF voted against Housing in DCC (10.3.20)
 - To rezone Mornington Business Park, Malahide Road, Dublin 5 to Z10 (Mixed)
 - To rezone 109-114 Cork Street, Dublin 8, from Z6 (Employment) to Z10 (Mixed Uses)
 - To rezone a site on Esmond Avenue, Fairview Strand, Dublin 3, from Z6 (Employment) to Z1 (Residential)
 - To rezone Goldenbridge Industrial Estate, Tyrconnell Road, Dublin 8, from Z6 (Employment) to Z10 (Mixed Uses) and Z9 (Open Space).
 - To rezone a site at Harmonstown Road, Dublin 5 to Z10 (Mixed Uses)
 - To rezone sites at Malahide Road (adjacent to Mornington Grove), Malahide Road, Dublin 5
 - To rezone Clearwater Retail Park, Finglas Road, Dublin 11 from Z6 (Employment) to Z1 (Residential).
 - To rezone White Heather Industrial Estate, Dublin 8 from Z6 (Employment) to Z1 (Residential) and Z9 (Open Space)
 - To rezone Brickfield House and Sunshine Estate, Crumlin Road, Dublin 12 from Z6 (Employment) to Z10 (Mixed)
 - To rezone a site on Davitt Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12, from Z6 (Employment) to Z1 (Residential)
 - To rezone a site at Herberton Road/Keeper Road (Glenview Industrial Estate), Drimnagh, Dublin 12 from Z6 (Employment) to Z10 (Mixed)
 - To rezone Greenmount Industrial Estate. Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W, from Z6 (Employment) to Z10 (Mixed Uses) and Z1 (Residential) [FG also voted against this]
 - To rezone a site at Chapelizod Bypass/Kylemore Road, Dublin 20, to Z10 (Mixed)
- To rezone lands at Old Kilmainham/South Circular Road, Dublin 8 from Z6 (Employment) to Z1 (Residential) and Z9 (Open Space)

South Dublin County Council: Total 1,494


- **In October 2018, Sinn Féin voted against the development of 975 homes in Kilcarbery.**
- **In March 2020, Sinn Féin voted against the development of 500 homes Killinarden.**
- **In January 2021, Sinn Féin voted against the development of 19 social houses in Lindisfarne in Eoin O’Broin’s constituency.**

Kilcarbery Housing Development

- In October 2018, Dublin South County Council agreed a joint development plan for 975 homes at Kilcarbery in Clondalkin. The mixed development would see 30% of the project set aside for social housing at 294 units.¹⁴
- In December 2019, An Bord Pleanála granted permission for 1,034 houses and apartments at South Dublin County Council lands at Kilcarbery in Clondalkin.¹⁵
- “Under the deal Adwood will pay the council €38 million and will deliver the 30 per cent (294) social homes at what the council says will be “competitive rates”.
- Sinn Féin voted against the development. They used their regular line of opposing the plans to transfer ownership of the site into private hands.
- Mark Ward said “Sinn Féin has campaigned for five years for a Council led mixed-income and mixed-tenure development on this site. Clondalkin needs social, affordable rental, and affordable sale homes, alongside community and economic infrastructure”.¹⁶

Killinarden

- In March 2020, a proposal for 500 new homes in Killinarden was voted through at a South Dublin County Council.¹⁷
- Projected maximum costs for the affordable two-bed apartment/duplex (113 units) is €212,500, three-bed house (185 units) is €263,500 and four-bed house (two units) is €289,000.
- The Killinarden site is one part of the allocation of €18 million in 2019 to South Dublin County Council by the then Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government through the Government’s Serviced Sites Fund to support the development of three sites earmarked for the delivery of affordable homes.¹⁸
- Cllr Louise Dunne (SF) urged the council to look at other models, citing the 49 unit Ó Cualann co-operative in Ballymun. “These are not affordable for people who are looking to buy. We propose the council build it and provide 300 affordable and 200 social housing”.¹⁹

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- Sinn Féin Housing spokesperson Eoin Ó Broin TD disagreed with the vote. He voiced his disappointment that “a majority of councillors on South Dublin County Council last night voted to support the sale of public land to a private developer to deliver homes in Killinarden in Tallaght”.²⁰

Lindisfarne

- In January 2020 South Dublin County Council approved its proposal for 19 social housing units on the green between Lindisfarne and Melrose.²¹
- The initial plan was for 28 houses, but this was reduced to 19 social homes with lower density and greater green space for recreation.
- Sinn Féin tabled an amendment seeking to reduce the number of homes at Lindisfarne to 16.²²
- Sinn Féin housing spokesperson Eoin Ó Broin opposed this social housing development in his own constituency and claims he was just listening to the views of local residents.²³
- However, the council had already taken into account submissions and objections to the original planned development of 28 homes on the site and reduced it accordingly.
- In December, Sinn Féin asked for a vote on the development to be delayed to allow councillors more time to consider the project.
- “Given the strength of local opposition to the proposed council development, Sinn Féin believes that the development should not proceed as proposed,” the party said in a submission signed by Mr Ó Broin and his Dáil colleague Mark Ward.²⁴
- Clondalkin Cllr William Carey (SF) who tabled the amendment, said “It is important we get this right rather than worry about delays. These houses are going to be here for the next 80 years”.²⁵

Fingal County Council: Total 1,200

Ballymastone

- In May 2021, Fingal County Council approved its proposal for 1,200 homes.
- The vote secured the disposal of public lands at Ballymastone, Donabate, to the developer Glenveagh Living and was supported by council management. It passed by 31 votes to 9.
- This plan will see the construction of 1,200 homes, with 20% going towards social housing and a further 20% towards affordable housing, with guaranteed pricing of between €250,000 – €270,000.
- The CEO of Fingal County Council welcomed the decision.
- “Our mandate from Government is to provide housing and, since 2015, we have used many mechanisms to ensure the construction of social, affordable and private homes across Fingal”.²⁶
- We have spent the last three years developing this particular model, which can deliver mixed tenure residential development as outlined in the Donabate Local Area Plan”.
- Sinn Féin opposed the deal and councillor Ann Graves said in opposition “We supported the development on the lands but what we wanted was affordable homes for working people”.



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