



Social Democratic and Labour Party Manifesto

Devolved Elections, June 2018

Comrade Lannister - SDLP leader and candidate,
Emma - former SDLP leader and candidate



Foreword

The SDLP is a party, which at its very core recognises the right for all inhabitants of Northern Ireland to express their national identity. It is because we hold this conviction, that we have done, and will continue to oppose any legislation we view as unfairly biased towards any one community, and will seek to ameliorate any disparities between unionist and nationalist communities alike.

The SDLP, as attested to in its very title, is a party which upholds social democratic values, and strives for equal opportunity all things. It is only through this that Northern Ireland can have a truly efficient economy that treats both labour and business fairly, and in which dreams are achieved through ability, not through house price.

In summation, we are the only party which can truly offer representation to all communities, regardless of religion, race, nationality, or economic background. We strive for the improvement of the quality of life for all of those who live in Northern Ireland, and we petition Irish and British alike to give us their mandate to build a fairer, stronger Northern Ireland that works for everyone.

Comrade Lannister - SDLP leader and candidate

Business, Economy & Finance

Overview

With regards to economic policy, the SDLP stands, above all for equal economic opportunity. We believe that people from all economic backgrounds should have the same chance to succeed, and to work, using their various talents, for the benefit of society.

Austerity

It is inevitable, in our view, that post-brexiteconomy will have to go through a great change, having to shift a majority of hard trade from within the EU to elsewhere. This is not the time for austerity measures; Government underspending and over taxation could seriously damage a newly-developing economy. We support the taking out of a £10 billion deficit for the improvement and safeguarding of the economy, over the period of the next 10 years, to be paid within the following 20.

Corporation Tax & Co-operatives

We also propose to lower corporation tax to 16% for regular corporations and to 13% for co-operatives. This should effectively reduce the magnitude to which we have seen corporations moving away from Northern Ireland, and into the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore we believe that this measure can also encourage the formation of co-operatives, which are not only healthy for the economy, providing a fairer workplace opportunity for advancement, but beneficial for its workers.



Business-Labour Relations

We are fundamental believers in an economy which rests in the hands of those who work for it, however we also respect the right to private and corporate property. Because of this we encourage the formation of state-aided Meidner funds, and similar schemes, to allow employees to have more of a say in how their company is run, without infringing on the rights of, or significantly damaging the efficiency of business.

Small Businesses & Grants

A healthy economy contains within it, a multitude of small, individual or family-owned businesses. These can ensure a competitive market, with a wide range of specialist and higher-quality products. Small businesses also develop a sense of community, which is essential for nation-wide integration. We aim to spend at the very least £250 million each year of the deficit on grants for the foundation of small businesses in Northern Ireland.

Increasing National Income & Taxation

The key to increasing Northern Ireland's income and subsequently economic development spending is to close corporate tax loopholes, especially for companies operating both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. If elected we will create legislation and work with the Westminster government to ensure all such loopholes are rendered obsolete within the next 5 years.



Fisheries & the Fishing Industry / Tackling Unemployment

EU regulation in the field of fishing being assigned to the UK as a whole has damaged Northern Ireland, with much of the fishing industry having been transferred to the Republic of Ireland and the North East. We recognise that there is great potential for fishing in Northern Ireland, and believe that development in this sector can help tackle unemployment. Those who are out of employment and can provide the government with 50% of the average independent fisherman's monthly haul in mass will be granted a 15% raise in their jobseeker's allowance on a month-to-month basis. Furthermore a government market authority will be established, in order to sell these fish wholesale. This will be carried out with the supervision of paid individuals experienced in fishing trade and markets.

Education

Equal Education

We believe that all native Northern Irish should have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and their language. Because of this, we believe that both Irish and the Ulster Scots be taught in schools as an option subject at key stage four. However, while all should be able to learn about their heritage, we strongly oppose segregated schools. We believe that only mixed schools can foster a true sense of unity, humanity, and recognition of other heritages and opinions.

Investing in Technology

It is hard to deny that technology and information is the economic sector of the future, being the fastest developing these last few decades. It is also evident that there is an evident lack of opportunity or encouragement to go train in this field. We plan to subsidise IT and tech apprenticeships, as well as issue grants (with a low interest) to tech companies willing to synergise and create science parks.

Staffing our NHS and Encouraging Care

One of the keys to solving our staff crisis in the National Health service is through higher education. If elected, we will work with Westminster to increase the number of nursing bursaries issued annually by at least 20%. To our younger children, we want to teach our youth the value of care, and will support more programs involving first aid training, and integration with the elderly.

Health & the NHS

Our NHS

There is nothing bad one can or should say about our overworked doctors, who labour tirelessly to ensure we all remain in good health and able to contribute our share to society. Years of the slow siphoning off of funding to our Health service, and the tide of Brexit have caused our NHS to suffer now like it never has before. It is a shame and a disgrace that people who contribute so much to the function of our society must be subject, by misgovernance, to such an abnormally stressful working environment.

Efficiency

It has come to our attention that many treatments used by the NHS in Northern Ireland are not only more time consuming, but also more costly and with a lower rate of success than others used overseas, some even in England. With Brachytherapy especially, it is absolutely necessary that we update the treatments administered by our NHS, to cut costs and improve healthcare quality.

Solving our Staff Crisis

The number of nurses in our NHS is worryingly low. Beyond education and other encouragement of nursing careers, it will be necessary to accept those from abroad, willing to work for our NHS. We plan to work with Westminster to extend permanent work visas and right of abode to prospective nurses from the Republic of Ireland. This will not only help increase the number of staff in our NHS, but likely improve the quality of life of those coming to live and work in Northern Ireland.



Experimental Treatments

Last year, through the sufferings of a newly born baby boy's parents, we learned the harsh truth about what being denied experimental treatment when no other alternative is available could lead to. We are committed to permitting more forms of experimental treatment in Northern Ireland, whenever the patient gives willing consent.

Justice & Policing

Lawsuits Against the NHS

The NHS isn't perfect, you can't train identical doctors, but unless the mistreatment of a patient is directly a fault of the system, and the regulation surrounding our health service, the NHS should not pay the price. We believe compensation should be provided by the offending staff member, as most cases against the NHS can be categorised as professional negligence on the part of staff. Cases in which the NHS is forced to compensate the mistreated patient do further damage to our health service, damage we cannot afford in these uncertain times.

Dangerous Paramilitary Groups

Northern Ireland has seen an unfortunate resurgence in dangerous paramilitary organisations, often involved with criminal activity, such as the self proclaimed: "New IRA" and "RAGD". The SDLP promises to root out and arrest the ringleaders of any such paramilitary organisation, which given the current political climate could become greatly more dangerous any minute. We promise to establish a special police task force to deal with this issue.

Reformation Over Retribution

The SDLP is a party which believes in doing what causes as little suffering as possible. Because of this we support the current system in recognising that the purpose of punishment is to reform a criminal, to prevent them from reoffending, and to allow them to reintegrate back into society. We believe that many more non violent offences should be punished with community service, or high fines, not with prison which can acquaint them with existing criminal syndicates and radical organisations.

Agriculture & Infrastructure

Industrial Land Appropriation

We support schemes, such as the Carrickfergus Shipping plan, purchasing unused land, appropriating it for development, and leasing it to businesses at a low cost to construct warehouses, light manufacturing and supply depots. This will help bring a variety of competitive businesses and employment to Northern Ireland.

Brownfield Redevelopment

We support incentivising firms to redevelop disused brownfield sites, to bring business back into the cores of our cities. We will work to loosen the procedure of gaining planning permissions in these areas, as well as providing a greater number of low-interest loans to firms undertaking brownfield redevelopment.

Pesticides

Whilst we recognise that pesticides help our agricultural industry produce a greater volume of crops, we also acknowledge that some pesticides can have a detrimental long-term effect on soil. Many Northern Irish farmers are completely unaware of the implications of some of the pesticides they use. We support the prohibition of the use, production or purchase of Mepiquat chloride salts and Arsenic acids as pesticides.



Communities

Community Cohesion Programs

We support the institution of programs, to have youth in Protestant and Catholic areas undergo exchanges. We believe that exposures to different family models and ways of thinking will help foster mutual tolerance and understanding, preventing national or religious conflicts.

Theological Debating Societies

We believe that mutual religious understanding can further be fostered by financing theological debating societies in our libraries, and providing pensions to religious teachers and theologians to speak at various locations.