

## 'BULLDOG' EVAN FERGUSON IMPRESSES

Sports  
Monday



**“We are doing everything we can to ensure that you Europeans see war only on your television screens**

**Lara Marlowe**  
World News



**IN TRUMP'S AMERICA, DAILY LIFE GOES ON AMID A SENSE OF FOREBODING**

**Una Mullally**  
Opinion

## Harris wanted to double defence spending

Tánaiste and Minister for Defence sought €3.4bn between 2026 and 2030

Instead €1.7bn in capital funding was given by Minister for Public Expenditure

MARTIN WALL

Tánaiste Simon Harris proposed more than doubling defence spending, with the Department of An Taoiseach also pressing for significant increases in funding for national security as a matter of urgency in recent months, official documents indicate.

Greater investment was needed to meet European partners' "expectation for Ireland to act as a trusted security partner", the documents reveal.

The move came earlier in the summer at a time when Tánaiste Simon Harris's Department of Defence was at odds with the Department of Public Expenditure over proposals for higher military spending as part of the Government's revised National Development Plan (NDP).

Official documents seen by

**“There is an increased focus for Ireland to act as a trusted security partner**

The Irish Times show Mr Harris wanted capital funding of €3.4 billion for capital defence projects between 2026 and 2030. The money was sought for military radar, armoured vehicles, helicopters and a fleet of trainer aircraft, as well as surveillance equipment to protect vital infrastructure such as undersea cables.

The money was also earmarked for redevelopment of existing military facilities in Dublin, the Curragh and Cork which the Department of Defence estimated could cost several hundred million euro. The bill for upgrading Casement Aerodrome in Dublin was estimated at €218 million.

Mr Harris proposed more than doubling the defence capital budget next year to €450 million and suggested this should rise to €850 million for 2029 and 2030.

However, the documents indicate the Department of Public Expenditure did not want capital expenditure on defence to go beyond about

€230 million each year. Speaking notes prepared for Mr Harris in advance of talks on military spending with Minister for Public Expenditure Jack Chambers in June state: "The Government's perspective on defence and security matters was most recently reflected in the correspondence issued from the secretary general, Department of An Taoiseach to secretary general Department of Public Expenditure on May 29th last, highlighting that a step change in national security funding was now urgently required."

Eventually Mr Harris secured €1.7 billion in capital funding for defence between 2026 and 2030 under the revised NDP – about €600 million more than had been originally proposed by the Department of Public Expenditure. The Department of Defence submission seeking the additional military funding stated: "There is an increased focus and expectation for Ireland to act as a trusted security partner, and a responsible and good neighbour by our European partners. This can only be credibly demonstrated by significant investment in defence and the development of key capabilities."

The submission says a detailed implementation plan is being carried out to move to the midpoint of the recommendations for the development of the Defence Forces proposed by the Commission on Defence three years ago – known as Level of Ambition 2 by 2028.

"Beyond this period and out to 2040, a joint capability development unit, established on foot of a Commission on Defence recommendation, is currently preparing a capability development programme that will identify and cost, capability requirements for the Defence Forces out to 2040," it says.

The speaking notes show three meetings at official level over the previous month or so about the spending proposals.

**➔ Harris wanted more funding for defence: page 2**



### World Cup lift-off Ireland rise to the challenge

■ Ireland's Ruth Campbell wins a line-out as Ireland take a bonus point win in their Women's Rugby World Cup opener against Japan at Franklin's Gardens, Northampton, scoring six tries in an emphatic 42-14 victory. Their next group game pits them against Spain on Sunday. PHOTOGRAPH: INPHO/BEN BRADY

## Plan to turn vacant Dublin buildings into housing halted

OLIVIA KELLY  
Dublin Editor

Almost €3 million was spent by Dublin City Council buying two Victorian commercial buildings that have been left vacant due to a lack of resources to convert them into social housing.

The two 19th-century buildings, a former bank and an antiques shop, were bought as part of the council's "adaptive reuse" programme, a city regeneration scheme designed to combat dereliction and transform vacant properties into homes.

The conversion of vacant and derelict buildings into housing was one of the 10 recommendations in the Dublin City Taskforce report published last October.

The adaptive reuse unit was set up by the council in October 2022 and had already assessed the suitability of more than

500 buildings for conversion into homes, ahead of the publication of the taskforce report.

Feasibility studies were prepared for 15 projects and the first three were bought at a total cost of €6.35 million.

However, the scheme has been radically curtailed and just one project is proceeding, the adaptation of a modern office block in Ringsend. The conversion of the other two is "not currently being progressed", the council said.

#### Protected structure

The Ringsend building, a 1990s office block at 14-15 Fitzwilliam Quay on the Dodder river, is attached to a larger apartment scheme. The council paid €3.55 million for the offices and plans to convert it into 15 apartments.

The council bought Kerr House, a protected structure at 114-116 Capel Street for €1.7 mil-

lion last year. Built in the 1870s as a merchant's house, it became a theatre, then traded as Oman Antique Galleries, closing before the pandemic. The top two floors were to be converted into four apartments with the ground floor retained for commercial use.

The Bank of Ireland at 371-373 North Circular Road in Phibsborough closed in 2021. Dating from about 1890, it was built as part of a terrace of commercial buildings, running east from Doyle's Corner. The council bought it for €1.1 million early this year, with the intention of converting it into four apartments.

"The projects to convert the Capel Street building and the North Circular Road building are not currently being progressed," the council said. "However, plans to progress these projects will be advanced in due course."

## Councils to let Áras hopefuls make their pitch

Many local authorities confirm they will host special meetings for candidates

HARRY McGEE  
Political Correspondent

A substantial number of the 31 local authorities in the State will facilitate special meetings to allow oral submissions from potential candidates seeking to run in the presidential election.

It raises the prospect of at least one non-party candidate, and possibly more, using this route to secure a nomination. A person wishing to stand in the election must be nominated by a minimum of 20 TDs and Senators, or by four local authorities.

The chairs or mayors of 12 councils have confirmed to The Irish Times that they will hold, or are planning to hold, special meetings in September to allow prospective independent candidates make oral submissions.

Clr David Collins, chair of Galway County Council, said that as many as 13 people have written to it seeking to make a presentation. Some councils have already designated a date. Carmel Kelly, chair of Kildare County Council, said it has picked two dates in September from which to choose a meeting.

Fingal County Council in Dublin has provisionally set a date of September 8th to hear from individuals if they can secure the support of four of its elected members.

A formal date will be set by Fingal only after the Government issues the presidential election order – effectively the starting gun for the campaign.

The mayor of Fingal, Fine Gael councillor Tom O'Leary, said preparations for a special meeting were being made.

The chairs of other councils confirmed they too would be guided by the presidential election order, in terms of setting the dates of the meetings.

Dublin City Council is also expected to hold a special meeting to hear from potential candidates.

The chairs or mayors from Galway, Roscommon, Sligo, Kerry, Offaly, Tipperary, Waterford, Kildare, and Meath said they would hold meetings, or will probably begin to put arrangements in place for such meetings, during September.

A decision by a local authority to hear from prospective candidates does not necessarily mean it will agree to a nomination. In 2018, a total of 16 prospective candidates made pitches to local authorities throughout the State, with four securing nominations through councils.

Similarly, in 2011, four came through the route, with Mary Davis receiving the backing of 13 councils.

**➔ Councils ready to listen to Áras hopefuls: page 2**

## Weather

Dry at first but rain will spread in the afternoon. Highs of 19-23 degrees.

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## Home News

**Child safety:** There were delays assessing reports of possible abuse of children in Co Donegal because of staffing problems in Tusla. **Page 4**

**Childcare:** Developers are seeking permission to drop commitments to provide creches in large estates. **Page 5**

## World News



**Ukraine:** Norway said yesterday that it will contribute almost €600 million of air defence systems to Ukraine. **Page 7**

## Business Today

**Rising rents:** Average asking rents are now twice what they were at the peak of the Celtic Tiger period and 50 per cent higher than before the pandemic. **Page 12**

**More working:** Employment in the Irish economy has increased by 50 per cent since the financial crisis. **Page 12**

## Sports Monday

**Golf:** Shane Lowry must hope for a Ryder Cup wild card after Rasmus Hojgaard secured the last automatic ticket for Bethpage

**Gaelic Games:** Departing Cork hurling manager Pat Ryan has denied rumours of a half-time bust-up in the All-Ireland final



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