

“ **SECURING
REAL CHANGE
FOR WALES** ”

**WELSH CONSERVATIVE PARTY
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES
ELECTION MANIFESTO 2016**



**Ceidwadwyr
Cymreig**

**Welsh
Conservatives**



A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✔ **PROTECT THE NHS** by guaranteeing more investment in our health service each and every year.
- ✔ **CREATE MORE JOBS** by backing small business and improving infrastructure.
- ✔ **DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION** by transforming teacher training and directing more funds to the classroom.
- ✔ **PROVIDE SECURITY AND DIGNITY FOR OLDER PEOPLE** by setting a cap on costs and protecting £100,000 of assets for those in residential care.
- ✔ **TREBLE FREE CHILDCARE TO 30 HOURS PER WEEK** ensuring affordable and accessible support for families.

#SecuringRealChange

FOREWORD

There are many things that make Wales a great nation - a unique culture, thriving local communities, dynamic small businesses and individuals who work hard every day just to provide for their families. But after 17 long years of continuous Labour rule, our nation has been prevented from achieving its true potential, falling behind under a party that has run out of ideas, run out of steam and run out of time.

As the UK economy surges forward and continues to create more jobs, Wales risks being left behind. As the Conservative UK Government continues to raise standards in our schools, the Welsh education system is being outperformed. And as the Conservatives have taken the decision to invest more each year in the English NHS, in Wales our health service is being starved of the resources it needs to care for all our people.

But it does not have to be this way. We don't have to be a country in which some areas roar ahead while others fall behind. With Labour just one seat away from losing control of the Welsh Assembly, on Thursday 5th May we can have the real change that Wales needs, break down the barriers to opportunity, and make sure this country truly becomes One Nation.

That means voting for the party with fresh ideas; the party of working people; the party with focus and discipline to deliver for the people of Wales: the Welsh Conservatives.

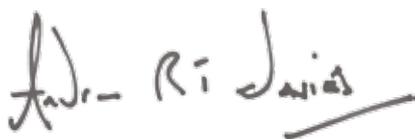
With a plan for real change we can unleash the talent and creativity of our young people, the burning passions of our entrepreneurs and the undeniable ambition of our nation.

Ours is a plan that understands the importance of a strong economy to protect key local public services.

It is a plan that will back small business to create more jobs, improve our infrastructure and invest in Wales. It is a plan that will support working people by using the Assembly's new powers to lower taxes and invest in more free childcare for working parents.

It is a plan that offers every child the best possible start in life by investing in our classrooms and our teachers. And it is a plan that protects our precious health service – investing in it every year, cutting hospital waiting times, and delivering a dedicated Cancer Patients' Fund.

In other words, it is a plan, the Welsh Conservative plan, to deliver security for you and your family, at every stage of your life.



Andrew RT Davies

Leader of the Welsh Conservative Party in the National Assembly



Rt Hon. David Cameron MP

Prime Minister and Leader of the Conservative Party



Rt Hon. Alun Cairns MP

Secretary of State for Wales



ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WALES

The Welsh economy can do so much better. Across the UK, the economy has surged forward in recent years with the Conservative UK Government's long-term economic plan paying dividends. However, after 17 years of unambitious Labour leadership, Wales is falling behind with devolved powers not used effectively to deliver economic prosperity.

Since the 2010 change in UK Government, over 100,000 new jobs have been created in the private sector in Wales, while a record number of people are in work. However, Wales' economic output has declined compared with other parts of the UK and in the Gwent Valleys stands at just 54.8% of the UK average, emphasising a need to secure real change.

Welsh Conservatives will develop opportunities to create a more entrepreneurial society and not place barriers in the way of people's small business dreams.

A strong economy is pivotal to the delivery of better public services, and to securing opportunities for people to get on in life. We will create more jobs by backing small businesses and improving infrastructure. We will get Wales building again with a new emphasis on manufacturing. And we will secure real change by giving people more opportunities than ever before, removing Labour's unfair restrictions on support, whilst delivering a more integrated transport system, to connect people with areas of jobs growth.

“ **We will create 50,000 jobs, back small business and deliver an integrated transport system.** ”
Andrew RT Davies

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Stimulate the Welsh economy

- ✓ Abolish business rates for all small businesses, and taper relief on rateable values between £12,000 to £15,000, increasing employment opportunities and backing entrepreneurs.
- ✓ Establish an industry-led body to encourage business development and investment in Wales.
- ✓ Remove Wales' unfair age cap - and the geographical barriers to employment support - making opportunities open to all.
- ✓ Introduce employee incentive grants to deliver 12 month work opportunities for jobseekers of all ages, creating more jobs.
- ✓ Ensure Welsh Government employment support schemes are also available to those benefiting from UK Government support.
- ✓ Support the implementation of the UK Government's living wage, which will benefit 150,000 working people in Wales by 2020, approximately 12% of our workforce.
- ✓ Establish a clear and ambitious manufacturing strategy appropriate to our small and medium-sized enterprise economy.
- ✓ Introduce a new regional development bank, reforming financial support delivered by the Welsh Government, with localised access to finance for small businesses.

- ✓ Reform business rates, splitting the Welsh multiplier to increase the competitiveness of smaller businesses.
- ✓ Aim to deliver universal super-fast broadband and mobile coverage across Wales by 2019, improving connectivity.
- ✓ Seek to devolve key economic levers to North Wales, establishing a North Wales Powerhouse to inspire locally-led economic growth.
- ✓ Back the City Deal bid for the Swansea Bay City Region, realising the area's economic potential.
- ✓ Introduce aftercare for those investing in Wales, to assist new companies, retain skilled jobs and develop local supply chains.
- ✓ Introduce thousands of flexible apprenticeships, with access to a mix of smaller and larger businesses, boosting take-up and promoting gender balance.
- ✓ Strengthen ties between the education, employment and local business sectors, introducing a business and entrepreneurship element to many vocational courses.
- ✓ Guarantee better access to the public procurement process for small companies, charities and voluntary organisations, prioritising access for Welsh organisations.
- ✓ Work with the UK Government in building a new innovation centre, helping to secure Wales' position as a world leader in science.
- ✓ Establish a Welsh Government 'Small Business Hub' which scrutinises all Welsh Government policy for its impact on small firms.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

We will prioritise transport developments which better link people to economic and social opportunities, reduce rural isolation and deliver infrastructure that saves people time and money, as part of a long-term vision.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

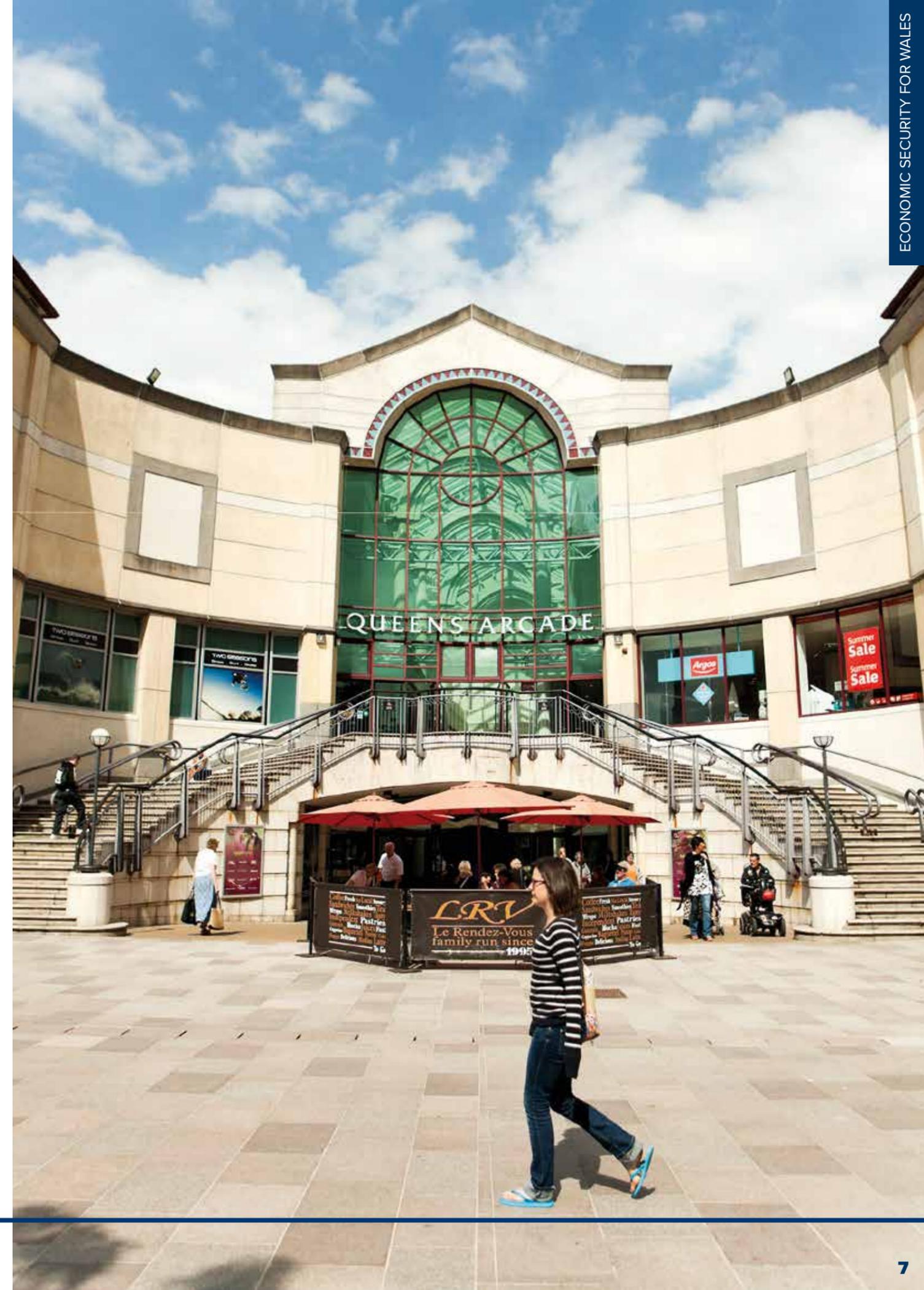
Deliver integrated transport

- ✓ Create a new arm's-length body to deliver an integrated transport system and ensure a consistent, Wales-wide approach to improving infrastructure.
- ✓ Assess and re-prioritise Wales' National Transport Plan, implementing a new, long-term strategy for our road, rail and public transport networks.

- ✓ Back a new smart card travel scheme, for use on different modes of public transport throughout Wales.

ROAD

- ✓ Consult on increasing the speed limit to 80mph on the M4 and A55, to get Wales moving.
- ✓ Support the UK Government's commitment to halve tolls on the Severn bridge crossings, and work with them on their longer-term future.



- ✔ Support the removal of the toll plazas on the Severn bridge crossings allowing drivers to come into Wales without delays.
- ✔ Work with the UK Government to improve cross-border connectivity and associated transport infrastructure.
- ✔ Progress the Cardiff Bay link road as part of the Cardiff City Deal, in conjunction with plans for the South Wales Metro.
- ✔ Start work on an M4 Relief Road within 12 months of forming a government.
- ✔ Develop plans to secure funding for dualling the A40 to Fishguard.
- ✔ Improve traffic flow on the A55, ensuring better connectivity across North Wales.
- ✔ Add a Dinas Powys bypass into the National Transport Plan.
- ✔ Conduct an updated safety review on the A44.
- ✔ Commission a study into the impact of removing tolls on the Cleddau Bridge.
- ✔ Bring forward plans to construct a third Menai crossing, which would alleviate traffic congestion to and from Ynys Môn.

RAIL

- ✔ Work with the UK Government to deliver electrification of the South Wales Main Line and Valley Lines as soon as possible and back electrification of the North Wales Line.
- ✔ Ensure a competitive, fair tender for the post-2018 Wales & Borders rail franchise that delivers modern rolling stock, better integrated connectivity and year-on-year capacity growth.

- ✔ Offer open access bids from non-franchise holders on the main North and South Wales rail lines.
- ✔ Commission a feasibility study on extending the South Wales Metro further west.
- ✔ Work with the UK Government to deliver new rail links to the North West of England, including improved access to Manchester and Liverpool Airports.

AIR

- ✔ Upgrade the terminal and secure private investment in Cardiff Airport.
- ✔ Work with Cardiff Airport to attract more routes.
- ✔ Work with the UK Government to deliver the rail spur to Heathrow Airport, improving journey times to the UK's busiest airport.
- ✔ Review the effectiveness to the Welsh economy of subsidising the Cardiff to Anglesey air link.

BUSES

- ✔ Restore funding denied to the Bus Services Support Grant, expanding public transport routes, increasing connectivity and tackling rural isolation.
- ✔ Protect free bus passes and explore the viability of extending this provision to community transport.

CYCLING

- ✔ Include consideration of cycle paths in plans for road infrastructure and large residential developments.
- ✔ Introduce a public campaign to promote safer cycling and encourage cycling to work.



TOURISM

Tourism contributes £5.1 billion a year to the Welsh economy and our nation provides one of the world's most distinct offerings to visitors. Yet, for too long, Labour's tourism strategy has failed to provide sufficient support for small operators, and has not delivered an identifiably clear brand for Wales. Welsh Conservatives will realise tourism's potential by increasing its economic and social impact, and better promoting Wales to UK and international markets.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✔ Introduce a capped fund for small and medium-sized tourism businesses, helping them to manage VAT bills and sustain quality jobs.
- ✔ Remove Visit Wales from Welsh Government control to operate at arm's-length, attracting expertise and introducing an industry-led approach to the visitor economy.
- ✔ Work with industry to market Wales to both UK and global tourism markets, realising our nation's full potential as a tourist destination.
- ✔ Support the development of visitor strategies for seaside towns, religious heritage, film and TV locations and genealogy.
- ✔ Work with employers and educators to improve the image of the tourism sector as a place for challenging and rewarding careers.

A VISION FOR THE WELSH HIGH STREET

Under Labour, Wales has the greatest high street vacancy rate in the UK. Too many Welsh high streets are blighted by boarded-up and vacant shops. Shoppers are turning away from the high street to out-of-town shopping centres and online retailers, damaging local communities and hurting shopkeepers.

Welsh Conservatives will work with communities to revitalise the Welsh high street making it a more attractive place to live, shop and socialise, by bringing empty premises back into use, slashing business taxes and improving access.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Ensure businesses with a rateable value up to £12,000 pay no business rates, and provide tapered relief up to £15,000.
- ✓ Split the Welsh business rate multiplier, giving high street shops a fairer deal.
- ✓ Promote free town centre parking and the benefits of a responsible night time economy.
- ✓ Highlight the role of town centre managers in improving the high street experience.
- ✓ Stimulate inclusive, community-led regeneration ideas.
- ✓ Create a Welsh High Street Charter, helping local authorities to share best practice.

SUPPORTING OUR STEEL INDUSTRY

The steel industry is pivotal to the future of Wales' economy and industrial sector. Welsh Conservatives are committed to working closely with the UK Government and Unions to support the steel industry and secure its long-term future in Port Talbot, Llanwern, Shotton and Trostre.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Support UK Government efforts to secure a long-term future for steel making in Wales.
- ✓ Explore how business rate relief can be used to support the long-term future of the sector.
- ✓ Work with the UK Government in tackling the impact of steel dumping in Europe.
- ✓ Implement procurement rules to support steel production in Wales.
- ✓ Support continued UK Government efforts to tackle Labour's legacy of high energy prices, and their impact on the steel industry.
- ✓ Consider establishing an Urban Development Corporation to support the wider regeneration of Port Talbot.

The steel industry is vital to Wales. We must secure its long-term future, supporting our steel communities in Port Talbot, Llanwern, Shotton and Trostre, and delivering economic security.

Suzy Davies

SECURING A LOW TAX ECONOMY

With taxation powers being devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, this election carries a new level of importance. Wales needs a low tax economy where people keep more of the money they earn; delivering financial security and helping people in all parts of Wales support their family and community. A low tax economy helps businesses grow and creates quality jobs.

Under Labour, households across Wales have been punished by unnecessary rises in tax bills. Labour's refusal to implement a Council Tax freeze, despite being given money to do so, has left the average household £794 out of pocket since 2011.

The next Welsh Government must use new and existing powers, and work with the UK Government to help Wales become a low tax, high wage, low welfare nation. By cutting Income Tax for 1.3 million people, freezing Council Tax, and creating new jobs, we can protect public services, whilst allowing people to keep more of the money they earn, delivering financial security for hard-working families and boosting local economies.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Cut your taxes

- ✓ Cut Income Tax for Welsh taxpayers – to increase Wales' competitiveness as a low tax nation, allowing hard-working people to keep more of the money they earn.
- ✓ Enable a Wales-wide Council Tax freeze for the duration of the Assembly term, protecting local services whilst asking residents to contribute less.
- ✓ Abolish Stamp Duty for first-time buyers on all properties valued up to £250,000, to encourage and support home ownership.
- ✓ Develop the case for devolution of Air Passenger Duty to improve the prospects for Wales' aviation industry.
- ✓ Work with the UK Government to ensure tax evasion and avoidance are tackled in Wales.
- ✓ Abolish business rates for smaller businesses, helping them to increase employment opportunities and encourage entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Work with the UK Treasury to deliver effective transitional arrangements for the devolution of Income Tax.



SECURING A LOW TAX ECONOMY



REAL CHANGE FOR A HEALTHIER WALES

People across Wales rely on the NHS at every stage of their life. Our nation deserves an NHS which is better resourced, more accountable and used responsibly, whilst delivering the best treatment and care for patients. Alongside this, Wales urgently needs a social care sector which promotes independence, offers affordable support and works hand-in-hand with the NHS.

The state of the NHS in Wales shows that Labour are not up to the job. Patients and front-line staff are paying the price for Labour's legacy of NHS cuts, centralisation of hospital services and missed key performance targets. Since 2010, Labour has cut a billion pounds from the Welsh NHS, leading to growing waiting lists, beds axed, hospital services withdrawn and life-extending cancer medicines denied.

Welsh Conservatives will deliver a fully-funded NHS for Wales, which provides effective care as close to home as possible, and is accountable to patients. We will make new cancer treatments available and invest in specialist plans to wage war on Wales' biggest killers. We will break down barriers between the NHS and social care providers, and deliver security and dignity in old age with action on prohibitive residential care costs.

As our core priority, Welsh Conservatives will also publish a dedicated health manifesto – 'A Healthier Nation' – detailing a clear plan to secure the real change needed in health and social services across Wales.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Increase health spending & protect local services

- ✔ Increase NHS expenditure in real terms, each and every year over the next five years, tackling the effects of Labour's funding cuts, ensuring our health service gets the investment it needs.
- ✔ Tackle waste and inefficiency with a Wales-wide NHS Efficiency Task Force, so that more money can be invested into front-line services.
- ✔ Prevent hospital closures and any reorganisation during the Assembly term, ending uncertainty about future service configuration.
- ✔ Increase the number of doctor and nurse training places in Wales, to improve the capacity of the NHS where it is needed.
- ✔ Increase the number of specialist nurses, nurse prescribers and nurse consultants in the Welsh NHS.
- ✔ Increase spending on mental health services in Wales with a better balance between services for children and adults.
- ✔ Support innovation in healthcare by providing £50 million in match funding for research into new treatments and cures.
- ✔ Establish a Community Hospital Development Fund to encourage the innovative use of community hospitals across Wales.
- ✔ Re-establish minor injuries units at Colwyn Bay and Tenby Hospitals, and in the Rhyll/Prestatyn area.
- ✔ Extend the operating hours of minor injuries services in Newtown.
- ✔ Restore full-time paediatric and special care baby services at Withybush Hospital.

- ✔ Develop a rural health specialism, ensuring the NHS recognises the needs of rural communities and improves the right of access for patients across Wales.

Improve Emergency Services

- ✔ Protect all existing emergency departments across Wales.
- ✔ Ensure that at least 75% of ambulances respond to immediately life-threatening calls within eight minutes.
- ✔ Invest an additional £10 million annually in the Welsh Ambulance Service and recruit an additional 100 service personnel.
- ✔ Support the Wales Air Ambulance Service with £3 million in match funding each year.
- ✔ End the emergency department bottleneck by improving access to hospital beds for patients who need to be admitted to wards.
- ✔ Train a new generation of first responders by introducing emergency life-saving skills as a mandatory part of the school curriculum.

Increase patient choice and promote responsibility

- ✔ Establish a Patients' Choice Charter, giving people the right to choose their GP and hospital, and exercise choice in transfers of care and access to treatment.
- ✔ Introduce a 'scores on the doors' hospital rating system to give patients confidence in NHS performance.
- ✔ Respect the individual wishes of patients about receiving palliative care.
- ✔ Provide every patient with a named and accountable consultant on discharge from hospital.
- ✔ Guarantee GP access in evenings and weekends by urging practices to work together in local areas.

- ✔ Review critical care capacity in Wales to meet patient demand.
- ✔ Introduce a prescription charge for those who can afford it, subject to exemptions.
- ✔ Print the unit cost of prescriptions on NHS dispensed drugs to promote patient responsibility.
- ✔ Pilot the introduction of a charge for those who consistently miss hospital appointments without good reason.
- ✔ Increase penalties for those who abuse NHS staff or smoke in hospital grounds.

Improve NHS accountability

- ✔ Establish directly elected Health Commissioners for each health board, giving patients a greater voice in the Welsh NHS.
- ✔ Limit pay-offs for senior NHS staff and conduct a review of senior managerial pay.
- ✔ Establish an independent NHS Performance Unit, responsible for setting sensible targets backed by patients and clinicians.

Prioritise public health

- ✔ Appoint a Deputy Minister for Public Health.
- ✔ Improve access to screening for cancer, diabetes and eye conditions.
- ✔ Support vaping in public and pilot the use of e-cigarettes in NHS smoking cessation services.
- ✔ Appoint a dedicated nurse in every Welsh secondary school, college and university.
- ✔ Recognise loneliness and isolation as a public health risk.
- ✔ Work with Welsh food and drink manufacturers to reduce the sugar and salt content of their products.

- ✔ Make greater use of telemedicine to reduce the need for long and inconvenient patient journeys.

Improve performance, efficiency and standards

- ✔ Establish a £100 million Health Transformation Fund to support the modernisation of the Welsh NHS and make it fit for the 21st Century.
- ✔ Commission a fully independent inquiry into the NHS in Wales to identify poor standards.
- ✔ Introduce a system of registration for health care support workers.
- ✔ Fully protect those who identify bad, unlawful or immoral practices in the NHS.

Improve social care

- ✔ Implement a £400 weekly cap on residential care costs, offering security to those entering such settings.
- ✔ Protect £100,000 of assets for those in residential care, providing dignity and ensuring people do not lose their life savings to care costs.
- ✔ Establish a Cross Party Commission on the long-term, sustainable provision of care in Wales.
- ✔ Legislate to require health and social care providers to work collaboratively, delivering a truly integrated health system for the first time.
- ✔ Establish a £10 million Care Innovation Fund to promote joint-working between health boards and social services departments.
- ✔ Subject joint-working between health and social care to inspection and require the inspectorate to publish indicators of performance.

- ✔ Promote independent living, and plan for future needs by offering voluntary Stay at Home Assessments for those reaching pension age.
- ✔ Support and promote the use of personal budgets and direct payments in social care.
- ✔ Permit the re-establishment of step-down care beds in the community.
- ✔ Consult on the introduction of a right to respite for carers.

WAGE WAR ON WALES' BIGGEST KILLERS

We will implement specialist plans to guarantee improved outcomes in the fight against Wales' four biggest killers - cancer, heart disease, dementia and stroke.

CANCER

1. Introduce a £100 million Cancer Patients' Fund for Wales.
2. Improve access to modern cancer drugs.
3. Establish a national Mobile Cancer Treatment Service.
4. Improve access to modern radiotherapy treatments.
5. Reduce the referral to diagnosis target for patients to 28 days by 2020.
6. Provide a follow-up cancer appointment guarantee.
7. Appoint a Cancer Patients' Champion.

HEART DISEASE

1. Make Wales a nation of First Responders.
2. Introduce training in the delivery of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillators into secondary schools.
3. Improve rapid access to Automated External Defibrillators for those who suffer a heart attack by making them available in all major public buildings, schools and shopping centres.
4. Establish an annual public education campaign, in partnership with the third sector, to raise awareness of heart disease and cardiac arrest.
5. Reduce the referral to treatment target for cardiac patients to 18 weeks.
6. Ensure consistent access to cardiac rehabilitation and specialist nurses across Wales.
7. Increase funding for research into new treatments for heart disease patients.

DEMENTIA

1. Work with dementia charities and other stakeholders to produce a National Dementia Plan for Wales.
2. Make Wales the first dementia-friendly nation in the UK.
3. Ensure that more people living with dementia receive a formal, early diagnosis.
4. Improve support for carers of people living with dementia by extending free bus travel to the principal carer.
5. Establish an annual public education campaign, in partnership with the third sector, to raise awareness of dementia.
6. Protect dementia training time for all health and care workers, and introduce dementia awareness training into the national curriculum.
7. Increase funding for research into new treatments and searching for a cure for dementia.

STROKE

1. Establish a dedicated stroke unit in every district general hospital in Wales.
2. Require health boards to provide stroke patients with access to multi-disciplinary clinical and therapist teams.
3. Provide 24/7 access to clotbusting thrombolysis in all parts of Wales.
4. Invest in early supported discharge services, to give stroke victims the best chance of recovery.
5. Improve access to home adaptations.
6. Establish an annual public education campaign, in partnership with the third sector, to raise awareness of the causes and symptoms of stroke and transient ischemic attacks (TIA).
7. Increase funding for research into new treatments for stroke patients.

Our NHS impacts upon each and every one of us, and our loved ones, and touches us at every stage of our lives. Wales needs an NHS which is fully funded, more accountable, and delivers better outcomes for patients. It cannot be right that our NHS gives free paracetamol to millionaires, but denies access to life-saving cancer drugs. We need to secure real change.

Darren Millar

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- ✓ Increase spending on mental health services in real terms, each and every year for the next Assembly term.
- ✓ Establish a new 28 day target for access to talking therapies for children and adults by 2021.
- ✓ Ensure that crisis teams are available 24/7 at all major emergency departments.
- ✓ Increase the capacity of mental health services for children and young people.
- ✓ Improve access to mental health support for women, before, during and after pregnancy.
- ✓ Promote mindfulness as a means of preventing poor mental health and supporting recovery.
- ✓ Take action to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination.

SECURITY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Old age is something to be celebrated. We believe that older people deserve dignity and respect, as well as independence and the freedom to make decisions about their own lives.

We will support older people across Wales to remain active members of the family, community and society, whilst providing security for the future with clear action on residential care costs. Welsh Conservatives will also put an end to age discrimination and promote and protect older people's rights.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Designate a minister to assume responsibility for representing older people across all government departments.
- ✓ Introduce a Older People's Rights Bill, to extend and promote the rights of older people and introduce a duty on public sector bodies to consult older people when making decisions which affect their lives.
- ✓ Review and extend the powers of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and make the role accountable to the National Assembly rather than the Welsh Government.
- ✓ Work with partners to tackle disruptive cold-calling to protect older people.
- ✓ Recognise the contribution of older people to Wales with free bus travel, subsidised rail fares and free prescriptions.
- ✓ Run annual national awareness campaigns against elder abuse, age discrimination and fall prevention.
- ✓ End age discrimination in work programmes funded by the Welsh Government.
- ✓ Invest in health screening programmes and introduce hearing tests at pension age.
- ✓ Promote independent living and planning for future need by offering voluntary Stay at Home Assessments for those reaching pension age.
- ✓ Empower older people to make choices about their own care by extending and promoting the use of personal budgets and direct payments.
- ✓ Extend the role of sheltered housing wardens to cover eligible older people who have chosen to stay in their own homes.
- ✓ Consult on how to recognise the contribution of grandparents in the provision of childcare for family members.
- ✓ Work with the third sector to establish a National Advocacy Service for Older People.
- ✓ Introduce audio and text announcements on public transport.
- ✓ Increase funding for befriending services to tackle loneliness and isolation amongst older people.
- ✓ Implement a £400 weekly cap on residential care costs, offering security to those entering such settings.
- ✓ Protect £100,000 of assets for those in residential care, providing dignity and ensuring people do not lose their life savings to care costs.





SECURING HIGH STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

SECURING HIGH STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

Our nation is home to some of the world's most inspiring teachers and ambitious pupils. There is no reason why Wales shouldn't be performing alongside the best educational systems in the world. Under Labour, however, Wales has been falling down the rankings of international school league tables, and continues to be outperformed by other UK nations.

A successful education system is critical to ensuring young people become well-rounded, responsible citizens, who are ambitious, take pride in their community and who are equipped to provide for their family and contribute to society.

Already facing the prospect of major curriculum change, the education profession has grown weary of excessive political interference.

Welsh Conservatives recognise that successful learning relies on people far more than structures, which is why we trust teachers, parents and young people themselves to be the key to moving on from the one-size-fits-all approach which has dominated education in Wales since 1999.

By trusting professionals, directing more funds straight to the classroom, and transforming teacher training, Welsh Conservatives will drive up standards to ensure a pupil's journey through schooling meets their individual needs. By making Higher Education more accessible for all, and supporting Further Education, we will break down barriers to learning, allowing people to gain the skills and qualifications they need to succeed.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Raise School Standards

- ✓ Fund schools directly, giving greater spending control to teachers, parents and governors, directing more money to the classroom.
- ✓ Ensure that Estyn inspections incorporate unannounced spot-checks.
- ✓ Ensure Welsh qualifications are sufficiently robust to be recognised internationally.
- ✓ Establish an HE institution focused solely on initial teacher training and educational research.
- ✓ Establish a college of teaching focused on continuous professional development and setting teacher standards.
- ✓ Scrap the unelected and unaccountable regional education consortia to reduce red tape and empower teachers.
- ✓ Recognise the school years from age eight to 14 as a distinct middle phase and consult with teachers on targeting improvement in the transition from primary to secondary school.

- ✓ Introduce modern foreign language learning in primary schools as part of a languages strategy, nurturing a trilingual nation.
- ✓ Establish a new teacher exchange programme, enabling teachers to develop their language skills.
- ✓ Overhaul the Welsh language in education strategy to include clear targets and to help all children in Wales become confident communicating in Welsh.
- ✓ Work with schools to highlight the importance of financial education and the study of home economics.
- ✓ Introduce mandatory emergency life-saving skills and public health education into the curriculum.
- ✓ Embrace international research to narrow the attainment gap between children from different social backgrounds.

Improving the School Experience

- ✓ Deliver a sustainable and effective school building programme, by embracing elements of a public-private partnership model.
- ✓ Prevent the closure of any school which delivers the national curriculum, without the agreement of parents and governors.
- ✓ Give parents greater choice about where to educate their children.
- ✓ Encourage greater use of the school estate, out of school hours, for childcare and other community causes.
- ✓ Oppose the loss of school playing fields, maintaining vital community space for children and young people.
- ✓ Take action to recruit more Additional Learning Needs Coordinators.
- ✓ Provide free school transport to more pupils attending their nearest faith or Welsh language secondary school.
- ✓ Provide school breakfasts on the same charging basis as school lunches.
- ✓ Support the right of headteachers to choose whether pupils may take holidays during term time.

Post-14

- ✓ Explore the establishment of university technical colleges, to bring learners, colleges, universities and businesses together - prioritising skills and improving the status of vocational qualifications.
- ✓ Ensure teachers have more say in the development of the curriculum allowing them to tailor subject learning around pupils' strengths, aptitudes and passions.
- ✓ Consult on ways to encourage the study of foreign languages in Key Stage 4, especially in conjunction with STEM and business subjects.
- ✓ Provide a nurse in every secondary school and further education college.

Further and Higher Education

- ✓ Reform tuition fee support, introducing a 'Student Rent Rebate', offering undergraduates timely and sustainable help with university living costs.
- ✓ Reduce student debt by exploring the viability of compressed degrees studied over two academic years.
- ✓ Encourage the growth of part-time, distance and flexible course options.
- ✓ Reform Educational Maintenance Allowance, reinvesting the money into childcare and school/college transport.
- ✓ Develop links between local employers and the Further and Higher Education sectors.
- ✓ Continue to back Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, and explore a revised remit.
- ✓ Help young carers, and those in or leaving the care system, to access post-16 education, including through the introduction of a concessionary fares scheme.

In admitting they took their eye off the ball on education, Labour has shamefully let down a generation of young people. Wales needs an education system which empowers teachers and helps pupils realise their full potential.

Angela Burns



SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

As well as raising standards and expectations in Wales' education system, a Welsh Conservative Government will offer children a more secure future by acting on internet safety, supporting families with the rising costs of childcare and expanding the opportunities of young people to become fully active participants within their local community.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✔ Treble the free childcare allowance for parents of three to four year olds from 10 hours to 30 hours a week.
- ✔ Empower parents to decide where and when their child goes to nursery, using their free childcare entitlement with greater flexibility.
- ✔ Reform Flying Start so that funding is targeted at families who need it, rather than postcodes.
- ✔ Ensure that children in all Flying Start childcare settings have growing contact with the Welsh language.
- ✔ Establish the role of an area key worker to support children with additional learning needs.
- ✔ Meet the needs of children who are acting as carers, improving identification, supporting the identification of young carers to break down barriers in education, and introducing concessionary fares.
- ✔ Ensure appropriate support plans are in place for looked-after children and adopted children in schools and colleges.
- ✔ Work with internet providers to help keep children safe from online threats and support the Child Rescue Alert scheme.
- ✔ Energise youth engagement in politics, funded by a cut in ministerial pay.

SECURING A HOME

Housing is crucial to health, well-being and regeneration. Successful, empowered communities depend fundamentally on good housing.

Sadly, under Labour, Wales is the only UK nation where house building is going backwards. There is a crisis in housing supply, first-time buyers face too many barriers to getting on the housing ladder and many families are struggling to access a safe, secure home.

By working with the whole housing sector, and recognising the vital role of the social and private rented sectors in housing provision, we will deliver

a mix of high quality housing to give families the choice of a property best-suited to their needs. In setting ambitious targets for house building over the next five years, we will provide tens of thousands of new affordable homes for people across Wales.

As well as tackling the challenges still facing tenants and landlords, Welsh Conservatives are determined to remove the barriers to home-ownership. By cutting Stamp Duty for first-time buyers, increasing the supply of affordable housing stock and extending the Right to Buy, we want to see more people than ever before benefiting from owning their own home.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Launch an ambitious programme of home-building, recognising the need to deliver 70,000 new homes over the next Assembly term, stimulating a whole-market approach and providing new properties for rent, low-cost home ownership and open market purchase.
- ✓ Scrap Stamp Duty for first-time buyers of all properties up to the value of £250,000, breaking down a major barrier to home-ownership.
- ✓ Protect the right to buy for tenants wanting to buy their council home, restoring the full discount.
- ✓ Reinvest the proceeds from Right to Buy into new social housing, increasing the number of people who are able to find a home to meet their needs.
- ✓ Offer housing associations the choice of providing Right to Buy to tenants where this would help delivery of individual housing schemes.
- ✓ Extend Help to Buy to properties in need of renovation, helping to rejuvenate communities and stimulate local construction firms.
- ✓ Develop a 'Starter Home Cymru' scheme to deliver properties below market value for first-time buyers.
- ✓ Encourage participation in the UK Government's 'Help to Buy: ISA'.
- ✓ Implement a rent to buy scheme, to make home ownership more accessible.



- ✓ Work with the privately-rented sector to develop social letting agencies – linked to proper accreditation standards – as social enterprises to meet the needs of the hardest to house.
- ✓ Deliver an empty homes strategy, bringing properties back into use.
- ✓ Support Rural Housing Enablers to deliver affordable rural housing that meets local need.
- ✓ Amend planning rules to help housing associations meet local needs by building starter homes for purchase and homes for rent on rural exception sites.
- ✓ Reform planning guidance to encourage building on brownfield and publicly-owned land, supporting a land-for-housing scheme, and developing a national register of contaminated land sites to avoid inappropriate development.
- ✓ Devolve more planning responsibilities to local communities, giving them a greater say and redressing the balance between local need and central targets.
- ✓ Commit to achieving the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2020, recognising its potential for economic and social regeneration.
- ✓ Link new and renovated housing supply to sustainable community regeneration, by working with social landlords to meet public health needs.
- ✓ Work with the construction industry to embrace safety and energy efficiency, whilst cutting unnecessary red tape to encourage house building.



A SECURE FUTURE FOR RURAL WALES

One third of people in Wales live in a rural area. Our countryside communities face a series of unique challenges which Labour ministers have ignored for too long. The relegation of rural affairs to a junior cabinet post speaks volumes for Labour's neglect of agriculture and the countryside.

Wales needs a government which recognises the specific needs of our rural communities, offering local people a far bigger say over the decisions

that affect them, whilst cutting red tape for agriculture, valuing high quality local production, protecting rurally-based public services and giving greater priority to animal health and welfare.

Now – more than ever – Welsh rural communities need boosted support and empowerment. With the challenges they face at an all-time high, real change is needed with decision-makers who stand up for rural Wales.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Provide stability in agriculture

- ✔ Re-establish the Rural Affairs portfolio as a senior cabinet post.
- ✔ Undertake a wide-ranging land remapping exercise to design a fairer payment model, and reform the Basic Payment Scheme for farmers.
- ✔ Use a mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy to generate a better deal for farmers and commit to earlier preparation on the CAP for 2020.
- ✔ Implement a 'Red Meat Charter' to help Welsh farmers, processors and shoppers.
- ✔ Resolve unfair commercial practices and contractual issues in the dairy supply chain.
- ✔ Abolish the outdated six-day standstill rule for livestock and introduce a practical system of quarantine units.
- ✔ Align farm inspection schemes with a view to combining visits, in order to reduce red tape and unnecessary regulation.
- ✔ Introduce a comprehensive, scientifically-led programme of bovine TB eradication to deal with the disease in cattle and wildlife.

Promote our quality produce

- ✔ Deliver an industry-led rejuvenation of Wales' Food & Drink Strategy.
- ✔ Support dedicated 'Taste Towns' to promote produce and support food tourism.
- ✔ Promote locally produced food through a voluntary code of practice, so that supermarkets dedicate more shelf space to Welsh food and drink.
- ✔ Increase public sector procurement of made-in-Wales produce.
- ✔ Support more informative country of origin labelling, giving the public more information about their produce.

Public services for rural communities

- ✔ Reform the local government funding formula to ensure the challenges of delivering public services in rural Wales are accurately reflected.
- ✔ Designate specific ministerial responsibility for North, Mid and West Wales to represent the needs of rural communities around the Cabinet table.

- ✓ Introduce an independent panel to scrutinise the impact of Welsh Government policies on rural areas prior to implementation, to ensure that all communities of Wales are considered fairly.
- ✓ Aim to deliver universal super-fast broadband and mobile coverage across Wales by 2019, tackling rural isolation and improving connectivity.
- ✓ Reform the planning system for communications infrastructure to make it easier to upgrade existing sites and build on new sites, subject to local approval.
- ✓ Implement plans to support the future of market towns, protecting their historic status in Wales and strategic role in local economies.
- ✓ Review the Rural Development Programme to make support more accessible to farmers and micro-businesses.
- ✓ Guarantee local communities the right to bid to take over important rural services – including post offices, pubs and village halls.
- ✓ Safeguard funding for Young Farmers' Clubs and the Urdd.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Almost half of households in Wales own a pet, whilst Wales has a rich agricultural heritage and an abundance of free-living wildlife. Animal welfare is hugely important to the people of Wales – and Welsh Conservatives will lead the way in ensuring better protection for the nation's animals, whether they be companion, farm or wild.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ End the use of wild animals in circuses. | ✓ Introduce mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses to help enforce welfare standards - funded through the Rural Development Plan for smaller abattoirs. |
| ✓ Consolidate wildlife law into a single, accessible Assembly Bill to aid enforcement. | ✓ Increase the percentage of public procurement of higher welfare Welsh produce. |
| ✓ Review pet breeding standards and registration requirements to ensure adequate protection for animals. | ✓ Work with manufacturers to encourage clearer labelling of household products dangerous to pets. |
| ✓ Update legislation on selling animals, to include online trade. | |
| ✓ Support method of production labelling to enhance consumer choice, including distinguishing between stunned and non-stunned slaughter methods. | |

Rural communities make our nation tick and should be given more power to control their own futures. A vibrant rural economy is vital for economic prosperity, and our countryside must be a priority for the next Welsh Government. Now – more than ever – Welsh rural communities need boosted support and empowerment.

Russell George



SECURING WALES' ENVIRONMENT

Balancing the requirements of our natural environment with society's economic and well-being needs is one of the most difficult challenges facing any government.

The space in which we live affects us all each and every day, and we believe that Wales' contribution to protecting the environment - both urban and rural - is one shared by government and citizens alike. The accord achieved at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris challenges

Wales to work with other countries to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and outdated polluting technologies.

Wales' environment, admired throughout the world, is a valuable resource and central to our economic well-being. Sadly, Labour is on course to miss its carbon reduction targets – whilst recycling rates across Wales have proved sporadic. Wales needs real change to ensure the longevity of environmental protection.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Natural Resources

- ✔ Designate areas of high flood risk as Blue Belt land to prevent irresponsible development, holding planning authorities to account when granting planning permission within these zones.
- ✔ Commission an independent assessment of the robustness of Wales' coastal and inland defences and their maintenance, to inform a national flood prevention strategy.
- ✔ Develop annually-reviewed local flood response plans.
- ✔ Develop a marine energy strategy to promote Wales as a location for pioneering viable tidal lagoon development and supply chain technologies.
- ✔ Support the roles of Dŵr Cymru and Severn Trent as statutory planning consultees.
- ✔ Ensure Natural Resources Wales' planting plans take into account flood mitigation measures.
- ✔ Introduce a statutory deadline for Natural Resources Wales to make decisions on the granting of marine licences.

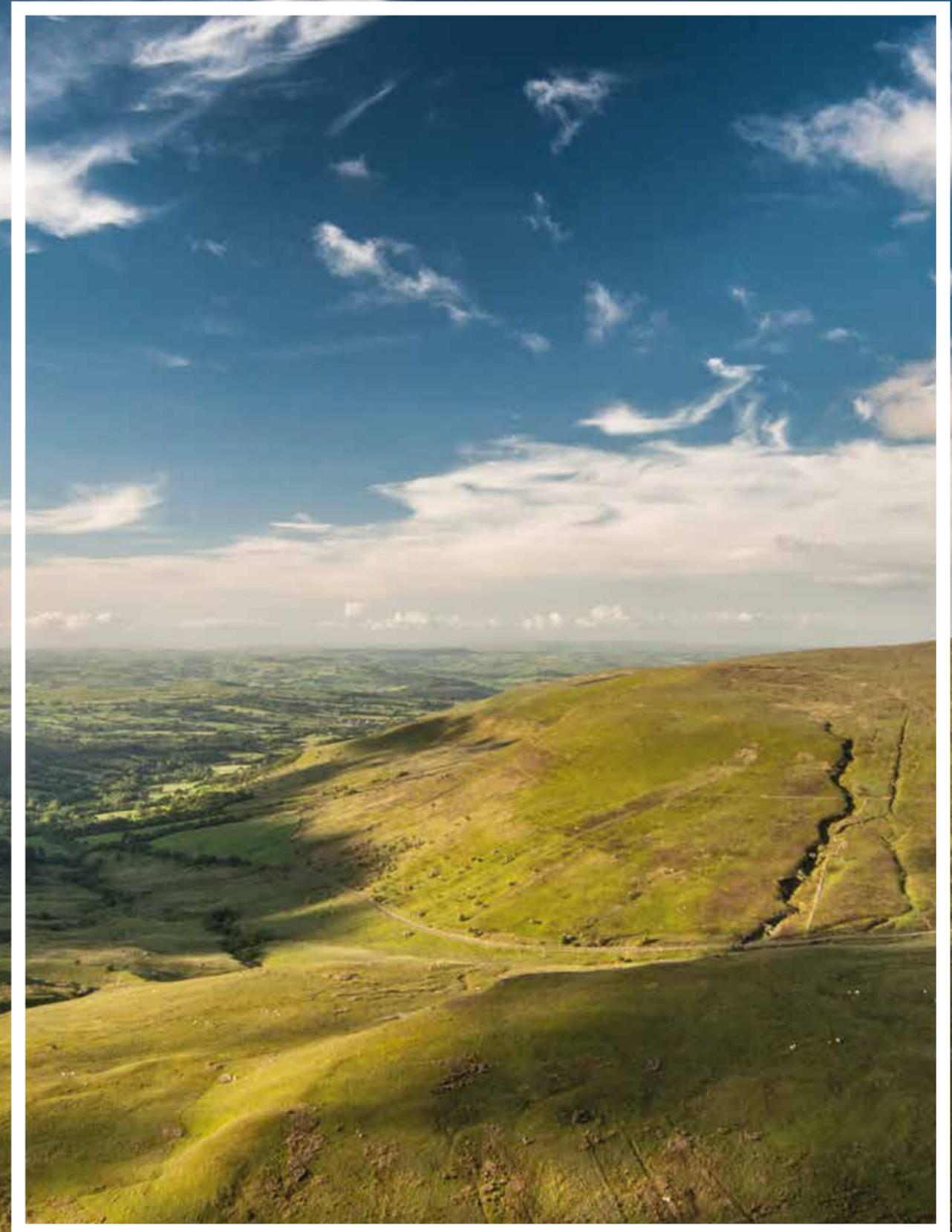
- ✔ Allow farmers and landowners to take responsible local action - such as dredging to prevent flooding.
- ✔ Simplify - and introduce directly elected members to - national park authorities.

Carbon Management

- ✔ Scrap planning guidance which promotes cumulative impact and over-dependence on wind farms, and encourage a variety of renewable energy production.
- ✔ Publish a strategy on carbon economic planning to provide green jobs for the future.
- ✔ Implement annual reviews of carbon emissions in Wales to enable better monitoring of internationally agreed targets.
- ✔ Continue the Welsh Government's existing policy related to ministerial determination of planning applications for hydraulic fracking.
- ✔ Work with the UK Government to secure the devolution of responsibilities concerning the licensing of fracking.
- ✔ Work with the construction industry to upgrade skills and prioritise appropriate retrofitting and insulating of older properties to cut carbon emissions.

Waste and Natural Environment

- ✔ Use income from Landfill Tax for projects which support the natural environment – including through biodiversity and recycling projects.
- ✔ Work with retailers to pilot a deposit return scheme for bottles and cans to incentivise recycling.
- ✔ Legislate to reinstate higher statutory protection for internationally agreed definitions of landscape, biodiversity and ecosystems.
- ✔ Ensure that local authorities pay fines imposed for failing to meet recycling targets.
- ✔ Allow retailers to choose which charity benefits from the carrier bag levy.
- ✔ Increase penalties for fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering and prioritise local enforcement.
- ✔ Work with retailers and manufacturers to reduce packaging on products.
- ✔ Consult on the role of anaerobic digesters in waste reduction.
- ✔ Legislate to ensure councils collect residual waste no less frequently than fortnightly, to protect public health and deter fly-tipping.
- ✔ Consult on requiring the repair of potholes within time limits where they present public danger, or prevent confident use of walkways by people with mobility or sight problems.



EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Real devolution is about bringing decision-making and responsibility as close as possible to people, and their communities – not hoarding powers at Cardiff Bay.

They need greater flexibility in delivering services, while receiving encouragement to adopt more open and transparent practices, making them fully accountable for their decisions.

Too often, decisions have been centralised in Cardiff Bay, denying local communities the chance to have a say in how services are delivered or greater involvement in securing the future of local amenities.

Welsh Conservatives will deliver real change in community engagement by allowing people to make key decisions about the future of their community; ensuring local groups are empowered and the supportive functions of local associations harnessed, to develop more sustainable, resilient communities.

Local authorities and town and community councils are integral parts of their communities.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Empower local communities

- ✔ Work with the UK Government, local authorities, business groups and voluntary organisations to devolve power and unlock the economic potential of North Wales through the development of a North Wales Powerhouse.
- ✔ Introduce the 'Right to Bid', enabling community organisations to adopt locally important assets.
- ✔ Allow local authority mergers only with the expressed consent of the public through a referendum.
- ✔ Enable people to hold referenda on key issues, including the introduction of directly-elected mayors, by lowering the trigger threshold required to 5% of the electorate.
- ✔ Ensure communities have a veto on excessive Council Tax rises.
- ✔ Introduce a Welsh Localism and Citizenship Bill to inspire a nation of active, involved citizens, embracing the skills and power of local residents, associations and institutions in building confident, resilient communities and better services.
- ✔ Encourage the development of public service mutuals, where it will assist the delivery of sustainable, local services.
- ✔ Revitalise the procurement practices of councils by encouraging them to source locally.
- ✔ Publish an annual 'State of the Seaside' report, to inform on regeneration plans and support seaside communities in reaching their full potential.

Driving effective local government

- ✔ Introduce live streaming of local authority meetings of full council, cabinet and scrutiny committees.
- ✔ Publish audit, inspection and regulatory bodies' reports online.
- ✔ Introduce legislation to define the role of council leaders and chief executives.
- ✔ Limit co-options to community councils, so that people have more say on their representation.
- ✔ Reduce the number of decisions made in meetings from which the public is excluded.
- ✔ Encourage councillors to improve public engagement by publishing annual reports, and allowing public questions at full council meetings.
- ✔ Implement a system of public recall for poorly performing councillors.
- ✔ Review town and community council structures, giving them greater participation in the planning process, devolving more planning responsibilities to local communities and redressing the balance between community need and central targets.
- ✔ Increase the diversity of candidates in local government elections, by running an awareness campaign on the role of councillors.

Deliver value for money

- ✔ Enable a Wales-wide Council Tax freeze for the duration of the Assembly term.
- ✔ Publish details of senior officer pay in Welsh councils.
- ✔ Establish a framework, backed by an independent advisory body, to review and guide salary scales for senior council officials.
- ✔ Review senior officers' salaries, council redundancy payments and 'revolving door' appointments, improving transparency in public appointments.
- ✔ Ensure that local authorities publish all expenditure over £500.
- ✔ Wage a war on waste in local government, working with councils to free up resources for front-line services.



SECURING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

For too long, Labour ministers have failed to use devolved powers to protect all members of society. From helping disabled people to live full, independent lives, to breaking down barriers to community involvement, Welsh Conservatives want to give everyone the chance to reach their full potential.

Wales can develop stronger, fairer and more socially-just communities by building on the skills of all residents, the power of local associations and the supportive functions of institutions. Across Wales, we will foster a greater sense of social justice and equality, bringing the real change and opportunities which all sections of society deserve, and placing a focus on local voice, choice and independence.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Help deliver social justice

- ✔ Work with communities to design a regeneration programme centred on strong locally-based organisations to tackle poverty, build a stronger society and deliver community ownership.
- ✔ Embrace the social model of disability, recognising that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than individual impairment.
- ✔ Introduce a 'Healthy Homes, Healthy People' energy efficiency Wales programme for fuel-poor households.
- ✔ Place fuel poverty at the heart of action to tackle social deprivation – working with Fuel Poverty Coalition Cymru members.
- ✔ Work with local authorities, third sector organisations and existing energy efficiency schemes to develop local Affordable Warmth Schemes.
- ✔ Support independent advice services for people in fuel poverty.
- ✔ Implement the NICE guidelines on avoidable winter deaths.
- ✔ Work with energy retailers to develop crisis funds for emergency heating when health is at risk.
- ✔ Support credit unions to ensure their sustainability, working with them to improve financial inclusion and access to affordable finance.
- ✔ Prioritise and simplify funding to enable community responses to social issues such as peer mentoring for substance abusers, combating bullying, tackling loneliness, financial education and community safety.
- ✔ Prohibit public bodies from charging for providing bills or information by post rather than online.
- ✔ Introduce a National Citizen Service pilot for 18-25 year olds on social placements.
- ✔ Use devolved levers to support, and aid the integration of, asylum seekers and refugees seeking sanctuary.
- ✔ Support the Wales for Africa programme, developing partnership arrangements and promoting international sustainable development.

Labour has failed to tackle the root causes of poverty. By utilising the skills of individuals and organisations in our communities, and supporting people to live full, independent lives, we can deliver true social justice, ensuring a fairer, more equal society.

Mark Isherwood

SUPPORT THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

- ✔ Introduce an Armed Forces and Veterans Commissioner, accountable to the National Assembly, championing the needs of the armed forces community and ensuring devolved powers are used to offer necessary support.
 - ✔ Establish a Veteran's Card including free bus travel, priority access to NHS treatment and relevant home adaptation needed as result of in-service injury or illness, plus free access to leisure centres and Cadw sites.
 - ✔ Introduce a veteran's needs assessment as the basis for delivering services.
 - ✔ Ensure no veteran has their War Disablement Pension taken from them when they access social care.
 - ✔ Ensure that the health needs of veterans are met via an Armed Forces NHS Covenant.
 - ✔ Increase funding for the Veterans' NHS Wales service, enhancing its capacity to help those with mental health issues, such as PTSD.
 - ✔ Work with partners to improve rehabilitation for veterans in the criminal justice system.
 - ✔ Work with the third sector to increase the availability of supported accommodation for vulnerable veterans.
 - ✔ Place a duty on local authorities to ensure the maintenance of war memorials.
- Create a more equal society and protect the vulnerable**
- ✔ Support a 40:40:20 appointments policy to public and sponsored boards, increasing inclusive representation and seeking greater involvement of disabled people, and those who are LGBT, or from different ethnic or religious backgrounds.
 - ✔ Ensure apprenticeships and government funded training programmes take account of gender balance and the needs of carers.
 - ✔ Expand free bus travel to principal carers.
 - ✔ Maintain funding for the Supporting People programme.
 - ✔ Review the Welsh Independent Living Grant, ensuring nobody is disadvantaged by any future changes in support.
 - ✔ Raise awareness of sensory loss when considering accessibility to services.
 - ✔ Support the retention of 'Hear to Help' centres across Wales.
 - ✔ Address the lack of awareness about acoustic regulation in Wales' classrooms, helping schoolchildren with hearing problems to achieve academic excellence.
 - ✔ Invest in better public changing facilities for disabled people.
 - ✔ Work with broadcasters to increase the screening of disability sport.
 - ✔ Introduce awareness training for staff working in education, social housing, care, and youth work about the specific needs of vulnerable groups.
 - ✔ Adopt a zero tolerance policy to hate crimes and bullying.
 - ✔ Support Pride Cymru.
 - ✔ Work with community-based organisations to help members of minority language households improve their skills in English and/or Welsh, giving priority to refugees and asylum seekers.

ENGAGE WITH FAITH COMMUNITIES

- ✔ Work with faith communities to support community cohesion and tackle extremism.
- ✔ Increase the frequency of meetings of the Faith Communities Forum.
- ✔ Respect people's right to wear religious symbols in the workplace.
- ✔ Raise the profile of ethics, philosophy and religion in the school curriculum.
- ✔ Maintain funding for chaplaincy services in the Welsh NHS.
- ✔ Review spiritual care guidance for the Welsh NHS and develop guidance for other care settings.
- ✔ Develop a strategy for Welsh religious heritage.

SUPPORT CRIME PREVENTION

- ✔ Fund a Wales-wide initiative to assist the recruitment of Special Constables.
- ✔ Support the role of Police Community Support Officers, and work to realise their potential in tackling crime.
- ✔ Oppose the devolution of policing in Wales, to protect the integrity of cross-border crime prevention strategies.
- ✔ Continue to support the oversight of local policing priorities by Police and Crime Commissioners, as a means to empowering communities to have a direct say on those priorities.

SECURING WALES' IDENTITY

Wales' individual communities have rich, proud traditions as well as a shared culture and history.

The Welsh Government has a responsibility to help preserve Wales' heritage and to help individuals to embrace it, celebrate it and look after it. Wales' unique heritage helps explain the place of the people of Wales in the world.

The Welsh Government also has its part to play in developing creativity. Arts and culture help nurture individuality, capturing talent and stimulating curiosity and critical thinking. Wales needs new

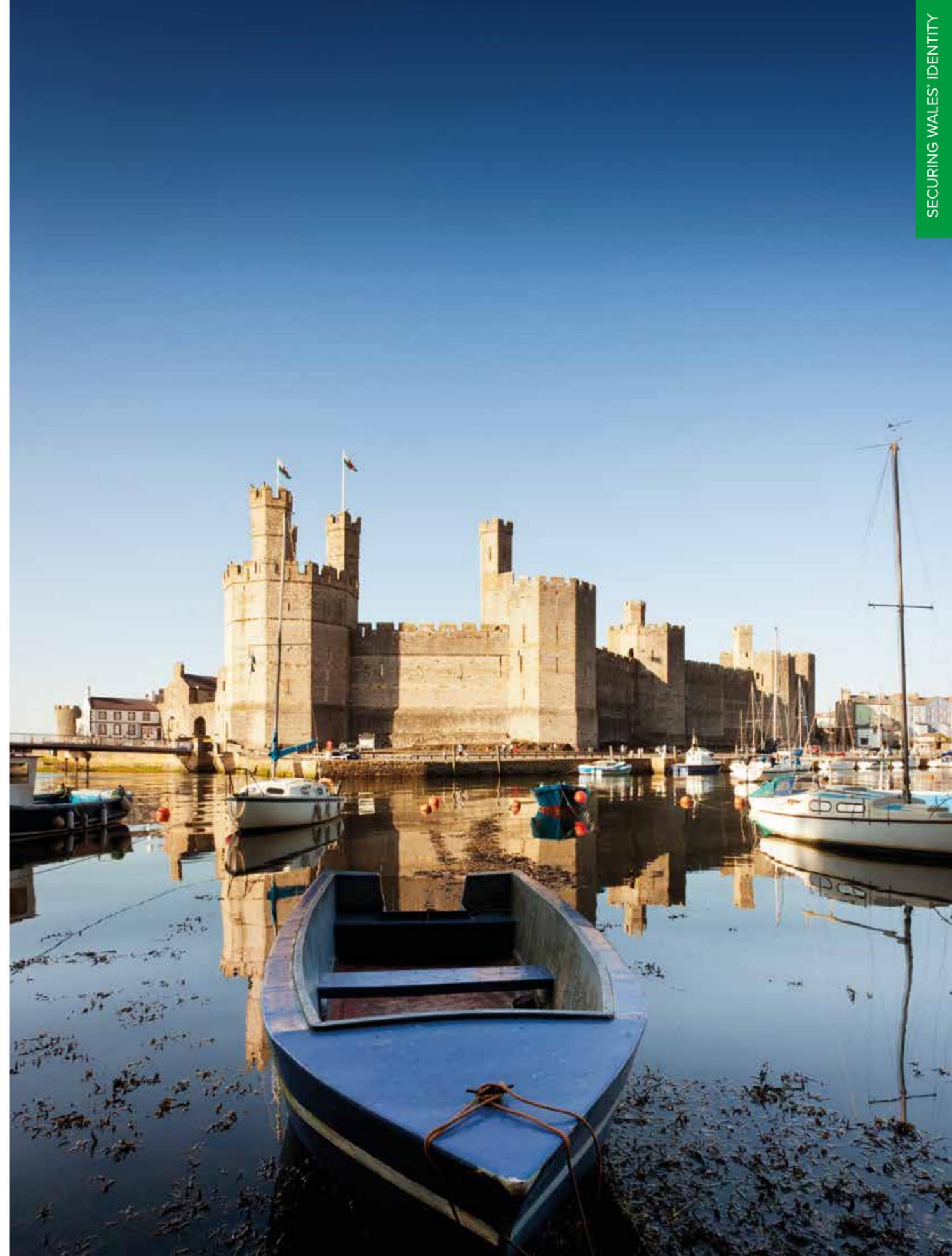
ideas, and we all need to think creatively about how we turn challenges into opportunities.

Welsh Conservatives believe that Wales' culture and heritage offer considerable opportunities to secure our nation's economy, community regeneration and wellbeing. Sport also creates a common sense of purpose and a healthy love of competition, so valuable to an ambitious nation.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Value our culture and heritage

- ✓ Consolidate heritage legislation, introducing local listing to protect buildings and spaces important to local identity, and stronger penalties for desecrating war memorials.
- ✓ Introduce a 'Right to Bid', allowing communities to secure assets important to local identity, and introduce training and voluntary qualifications for taking on heritage assets.
- ✓ Aid the museum sector with the display, on long-term loan, of items important to Wales' heritage.
- ✓ Retain free entry to national museums, allowing further discretion to charge for specific major exhibitions.
- ✓ Establish a multi-site National Military Museum for Wales.
- ✓ Explore the benefits to the historic environment of removing Cadw from Welsh Government control.
- ✓ Champion the introduction of a St David's Day Bank Holiday.
- ✓ Empower community groups to take a greater role in running local library networks.
- ✓ Review the economic and regenerative impact of Welsh culture and heritage to develop a new strategy.
- ✓ Promote film and TV locations in Wales to international markets, increasing the global reputation of our creative industries.
- ✓ Preserve the status of creative subjects within Wales' curriculum.
- ✓ Ensure that providing free entry to performances for school children is a condition of grant funding for certain artistic productions or exhibitions.
- ✓ Strengthen local authorities' statutory duty to deliver on strategic plans for arts and culture, stimulating more opportunities to display council-owned art collections.



- ✔ Support funding of the Urdd, recognising the pivotal role of Wales's largest youth organisation to our nation's heritage.
- ✔ Introduce an instalment plan to enable families or schools to buy musical instruments.
- ✔ Support a feasibility study on an international arts hub for Wales.
- ✔ Introduce arts on prescription, as appropriate, for patients with mental ill health.

Welcome accountability in broadcasting

- ✔ Develop a mechanism to ensure that public service broadcasters report, and give evidence to, the National Assembly for Wales on their work in devolved areas.
- ✔ Campaign to protect funding, operational and editorial independence for S4C, and seek opportunities to modernise its remit through the upcoming review.
- ✔ Work with S4C to identify and exploit new markets and income streams.
- ✔ Work to protect the broadcasting of Six Nations internationals on free-to-air television.
- ✔ Consult with public service broadcasters to increase coverage of women's and disability sports.

Champion sporting opportunity and excellence

- ✔ Prioritise the attraction of major sporting events to Wales.
- ✔ Spearhead a Wales Commonwealth Games bid for 2026.
- ✔ Free up teachers, allowing them to plan and provide innovative, exciting physical education lessons which make sport fun.
- ✔ Protect school playing fields and sports facilities with a view to creating wider community access outside school hours.
- ✔ Introduce a network of Welsh Sports Ambassadors who will inspire people to participate in sporting activities, and close gaps in participation.
- ✔ Push for a pilot of safe standing areas at football stadia in Wales.
- ✔ Ensure a legacy from the 2017 UEFA Champions League final being held in Cardiff.
- ✔ Enable schools to increase physical education hours and encourage competition.

The Welsh language is so important to our heritage and culture. Under Labour, there has been a worrying decline in the language's use. We need to support people to feel confident using the Welsh language in all walks of life, including professionally, domestically and in social settings, inspiring people to reap the benefits of multilingualism.

Paul Davies

WELSH LANGUAGE

Welsh Conservatives recognise that the use of the Welsh language varies across Wales. Ways of achieving the benefits of bilingualism will not be the same for everyone.

The Welsh language is an inseparable part of Wales' identity. As an official language, it has a significant, established presence in our day-to-day lives. It not only opens the door to other parts of our culture, but is also a valuable asset in the world of work.

The introduction of Welsh language rights is a game-changer for the role of the language within public services and other sectors of society. Welsh Conservatives will ensure that rights are enforced equitably, sensitively and sensibly, but we want the next generation equipped to enjoy all the benefits of a multilingual nation.

A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✔ Ensure that children get increasing and meaningful contact with Welsh as a medium of communication throughout formal education.
- ✔ Overhaul the strategy for Welsh language in education, helping all children in Wales to become confident communicating in Welsh from the earliest age and encouraging them to use it outside the education environment.
- ✔ Increase the use of the Welsh language within Flying Start settings.
- ✔ Legislate to strengthen the function of Welsh in Education Statutory Plans.
- ✔ Promote Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and explore the need to extend its remit.
- ✔ Launch a "Tipyn Bach" project, which encourages traders and consumers to use Welsh, and accredits businesses which develop the Welsh language skills of staff.
- ✔ Promote the benefits of a multilingual workforce.
- ✔ Develop a network of Welsh Language Business Champions.
- ✔ Maximise participation in sport and the arts in the community as opportunities to use Welsh.
- ✔ Continue to support the Urdd and Eisteddfodau across Wales, as well as the work of Twf and Mudiad Meithrin.
- ✔ Increase the Welsh Language Commissioner's accountability by making this an appointment of the National Assembly for Wales.



BURSTING THE CARDIFF BAY BUBBLE

Real devolution is about empowering communities to have more control over their localities - not centralising power in Cardiff Bay.

For many people in Wales, devolved government is still too distant from their day-to-day lives, and appears out of touch with reality. Labour's wasteful and incompetent management of the Welsh Government's £15 billion annual budget has emphasised perceptions of a Cardiff Bay

administration operating in a bubble, unaware of the challenges facing hard-working people.

Welsh Conservatives will scrap the excesses of the Welsh Government and secure real change in the way the Assembly and its executive operate, bringing new levels of transparency and restoring confidence and trust in the Welsh Government, to enable hard-working people to get on in life.

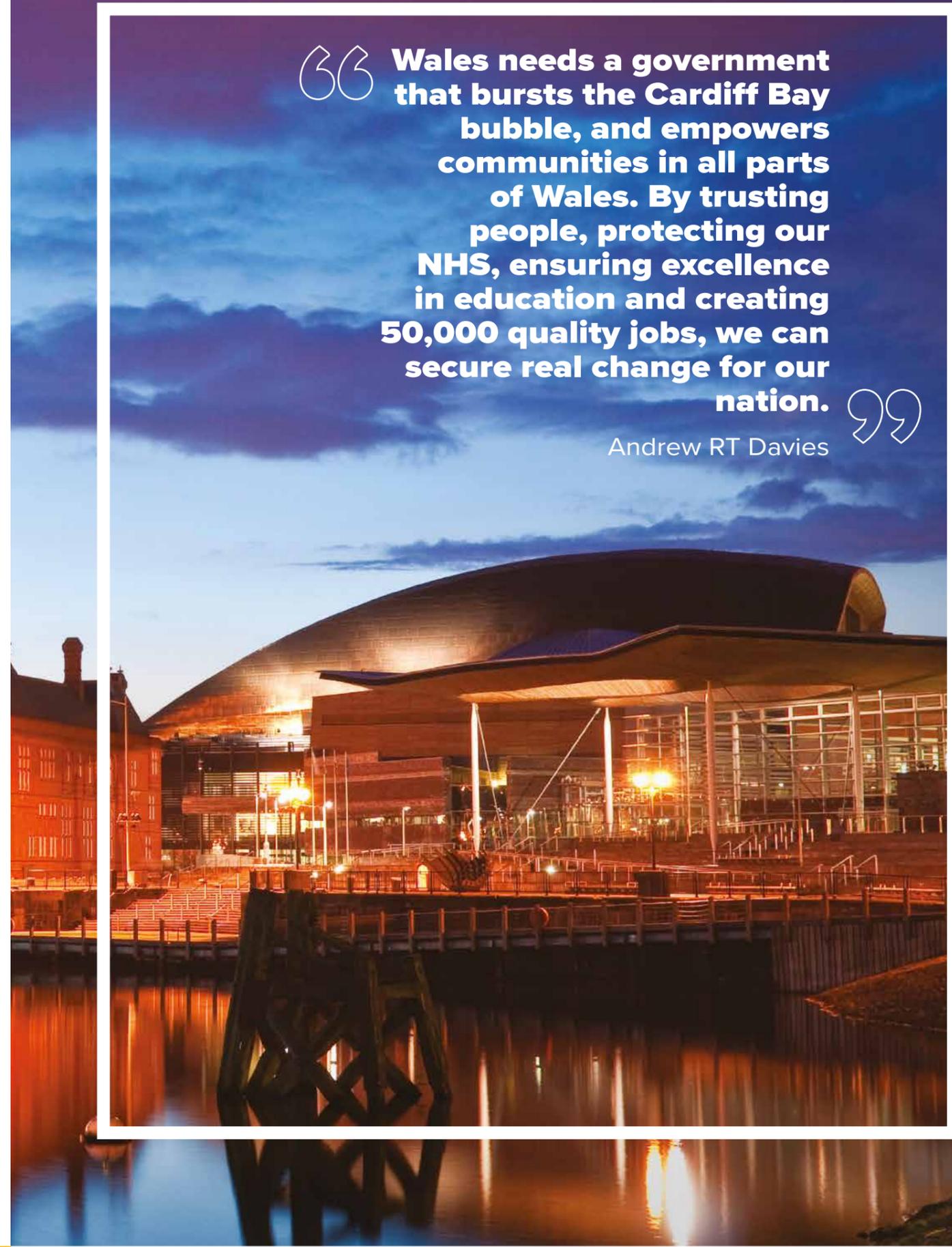
A WELSH CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT WILL:

Reform the way politics works

- ✔ Dispose of the fleet of taxpayer-funded ministerial limousines and encourage public transport use.
- ✔ Cut ministerial pay by 10%, using the proceeds to fund youth engagement in the decision-making process.
- ✔ Cut the Welsh Government's annual running costs by 20%.
- ✔ Ensure fair Cabinet representation for North, Mid and West Wales.
- ✔ Place more documents than ever before in the public domain, reducing reliance on Freedom of Information requests.
- ✔ Move an entire Welsh Government department to North Wales.
- ✔ Publish all Welsh Government expenditure above certain thresholds, and reduce spending on Welsh ministerial credit cards, making public spending more transparent than ever before.
- ✔ Commit to publishing cabinet decision reports online.
- ✔ Make special adviser posts subject to greater openness and scrutiny, enhancing public confidence in the process.
- ✔ Ensure that commissioner and ombudsman appointments are made by the National Assembly rather than the Welsh Government, for fixed, non-renewable terms.
- ✔ Give the National Assembly a greater scrutiny role in policing the ministerial code.
- ✔ Support the lengthening of Assembly plenary sessions and explore the viability of a Thursday sitting.
- ✔ Work with other political parties to give the public more information about the role, voting record and contributions of Assembly Members.
- ✔ Work with broadcasters to ensure that more Assembly proceedings are broadcast.

“Wales needs a government that bursts the Cardiff Bay bubble, and empowers communities in all parts of Wales. By trusting people, protecting our NHS, ensuring excellence in education and creating 50,000 quality jobs, we can secure real change for our nation.”

Andrew RT Davies



LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME

A Welsh Conservative Government will deliver the following core legislative programme for Wales:

ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS BILL:

We will improve conditions and resources for children with additional learning needs, enabling them to achieve their potential. We believe that every child should have their unique talents and skills recognised and nurtured. The Bill will:

- Clarify the dual role of Special Educational Needs Coordinators and Additional Learning Needs Coordinators, in teaching.
- Implement a system of early, effective and appropriate intervention to ensure that children have every opportunity to learn effectively according to their specific needs.

AUTISM BILL:

In 2009, the Autism Act became the first piece of disability-specific law in England. This Bill will end autism's lack of statutory identity in Wales and will:

- Ensure that local authorities and health boards understand and take necessary action so that children and adults with autism get the timely support they need.
- Guarantee that children and adults with autism in Wales get a timely diagnosis.
- Prioritise the need to improve understanding of autism among key professionals.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND ENTERPRISE BILL:

This Bill will help create the conditions in which the Welsh private sector can prosper, leading to new skilled jobs, providing economic security to hard-working families across Wales. The Bill will:

- Establish a regional development bank to enable small businesses to access finance.
- Require the Welsh Government to set a strategy and targets for economic development, including growth measures, employment, procurement and skills.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BILL:

This Bill will require health and social care providers to work collaboratively, delivering a truly integrated health system for the first time. It will:

- Establish a cross-party commission on paying for sustainable long-term provision of care.
- Establish a Care Innovation Fund, with clear objectives to promote joint working between health boards and social service departments.
- Subject joint working between health and social care to inspection, and require the inspectorate to publish indicators of performance.

HOUSING ACCESS BILL:

We will help young people onto the housing ladder, promote mobility in the housing market, and help everyone find the right home for them. We will also boost the construction industry. The Bill will:

- Offer housing associations the choice to provide right to buy to tenants where this would help delivery of individual housing schemes.
- Reform planning to encourage building on brownfield and publicly-owned land, supporting a land for housing scheme.
- Devolve more planning responsibilities to local communities, redressing the balance between local need and central targets.

LOCALISM AND CITIZENSHIP BILL:

For too long, the Welsh Government has failed to empower local communities. This ambitious piece of legislation will deliver true devolution to Wales, shifting power away from central government and to local communities. It will bring transparency and local power to the heart of decision-making and make democracy more accessible to the people it represents. The Bill will:

- Introduce community rights to bid and buy, providing the opportunity for local groups to take over the ownership and running of certain services.
- Include new rules on senior pay, restoring public confidence in the system.
- Clarify the use of referenda, cementing their role in the decision-making process and empowering local communities.
- Extend the remit of local councils – devolving power closer to the people.
- Extend to all public bodies the duty of paying due regard to children's rights.
- Make all commissioners accountable to the National Assembly, not the Welsh Government.

LOW TAX BILL:

Wales is set to get historic powers to set elements of the Income Tax rate in Wales. As the low tax party, a Welsh Conservative Government will introduce a Bill to:

- Place a duty on future Welsh governments to provide a clear rationale for changes to Welsh Income Tax rates, ensuring comprehensive reasons are provided for any change.
- Ensure the Welsh Government may only alter Income Tax rates in a budget, offering security to families and households across Wales.
- Introduce new measures to publicise how tax has been spent on public services, including Welsh Income Tax and Council Tax.

NHS GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE BILL:

Our NHS is a Welsh national treasure, but it needs a radical overhaul in governance to ensure local people have more of a say over decisions which impact upon their health and well-being. This Bill will:

- Establish directly-elected Health Commissioners to give communities a far greater say in local health decisions which impact upon them.
- Scrap the system which currently allows ministers to appoint unelected health board members.
- Require Health Commissioners and NHS chief executives to appear twice a year before local authority committees, and annually before the National Assembly.

NHS SAFETY BILL:

Patients must feel safe and secure when accessing health services across Wales. The Bill will:

- Establish a fully independent and better resourced healthcare inspectorate.
- Introduce a 'scores on the doors' hospital rating system to improve patient choice.
- Improve the NHS complaints process, ensuring speedy resolution of complaints and ensure that organisations learn from their mistakes.

OLDER PEOPLE'S RIGHTS BILL:

There are some 800,000 older people in Wales who deserve every opportunity to be empowered, have their rights strengthened and needs fulfilled. The Bill will:

- Further enshrine the rights of older people within Welsh law, placing a due regard duty on public bodies.
- Place a duty on the Welsh Government to promote knowledge and understanding of the rights of older people across Wales.
- Introduce measures to tackle ageism, promote ageing well, and embed older people's well-being within public service delivery.

TOURISM BILL:

Wales has incredible potential as a global tourism destination. This Bill will help realise that potential, freeing up the industry to deliver and enhance the critical importance of the sector. It will:

- Remove Visit Wales from Welsh Government control.
- Develop an independent, expert-led approach to boosting tourism into Wales.
- Guarantee the role of local communities in promoting the visitor experience.

WILDLIFE BILL:

Currently, a plethora of legislation governs Wales' wildlife. It is often outdated and complex for enforcement bodies. This Bill will:

- Consolidate and update much of the legislation relating to Wales' wildlife, including its protection, management and control.
- Aid enforcement bodies in tackling environmental crime, updating law which is often centuries old, inaccessible and fails to deal adequately with the improvement of animal health and welfare.
- Clarify the public's responsibilities in relation to wildlife.