

Amlwch Holyhead Caergybi Benllech Llandudno Rhyl Rhyl
 Llangefni Colwyn Bay Connaught Quay Connahs Quay
 Aberffraw Conwy Bae Colwyn Flint Mold
 Bangor Denbigh Wyddgrug Caernarfon Dinbych Buckley Bwcle
 Beddgelert Ruthin Rhuthun Wrexham Blaenau Ffestiniog
 Ruabon Rhiwabon Wrexham Nefyn Porthmadog Corwen
 Rhosllannerchrugog Pwllheli Harlech Bala Llangollen
 Aberdaron Bermo Glyn Ceiriog Chirk Barmouth
 Llandrillo Y Waun Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant Dolgellau
 Welshpool Y Trallwng Machynlleth Caersws Newtown
 Aberdyfi Mochdre Y Drenewydd Aberystwyth Llanidloes
 Rhaeadr Cei Newydd Rhayader New Quay Llanbedr
 Pont Steffan Tregaron Lampeter Built Wells
 Aberteifi Cardigan Llanfair-ym-Muallt Aberporth
 Crymych Aberhonddu Fishguard Llangammarch
 Brecon Talgarth Abergwaun Cenarth Llandovery
 Abergavenny Porthgain Pencader Llanbydder Y Fenni
 Monmouth Tyddewi Llandeilo Llandysul Llangynidr
 Llangadog Mynwy St Davids Caerfyrddin
 Tredegar Rhondda Ebbw Vale Glyn Ebwy Haverfordwest
 Carmarthen Merthyr Tudful Blackwood Coed Duon Hwlfordd
 Arberth Pontardawe Aberdare Aberdâr Pontypool Pontypŵl
 Milford Haven Aberdaugleddau Neath Castell Nedd Pontypridd
 Chepstow Tenby Dinbych-y-pysgod Llanelli Gorseinon
 Caerffili Caerphilly Cas-gwent Pembroke Penfro
 Swansea Port Talbot Tonypany Newport Abertawe
 Pen-y-bontar Ogwr Casnewydd Porthcawl
 Cwmbran Penarth Maesteg Caerdydd Barry
 Cardiff Y Barri

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

2022 LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANIFESTO



Plaid Cymru
Party of Wales

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Free School Meals for all primary school children and a commitment to the aim of **extending universal Free School Meals to secondary pupils** within the next council term – with a focus on locally-sourced, nutritious meals
- ✓ **Free Childcare** for all two-year-olds
- ✓ Harness Wales’s potential for **renewable, community-owned energy schemes**, as part of a target to reach Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030
- ✓ Tackle Wales’s housing crisis by building **more energy-efficient and carbon-positive social housing**, more genuinely affordable homes, take radical action on second homes and end homelessness



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Strengthening The Local Economy
- ✓ Healthier, Caring Communities
- ✓ The Best Start in Life
- ✓ Sustainable, Greener Communities

Making a Difference

Adam Price MS – Plaid Cymru Leader

Plaid Cymru is a party that is rooted in community.

We are passionate about Wales and about making a difference to people's lives.

Whether it's helping people who have lost their homes due to flooding, delivering food parcels to those in need, or backing local businesses, Plaid Cymru is out there every day in communities across Wales working hard on behalf of the people they represent.

Plaid Cymru representatives - our community champions - want to build the Wales of tomorrow. One that's more sustainable, fairer, and forward-looking - where everyone has the same opportunity to reach their full potential.

Plaid Cymru is already putting its good ideas into action.

We have secured £200 million in this year's budget to extend Free School Meals, on a universal basis, to all primary school pupils.

We know there are more children and families who need help. That is why Plaid Cymru Local Authorities will commit to the aim of extending universal Free School Meals to include secondary school pupils during the next council term, as part of Plaid Cymru's vision of introducing this policy across Wales.

We are extending free access to childcare for two-year-olds on a universal basis.

We are tackling Wales's housing crisis by building more energy-efficient social housing, and more genuinely affordable homes. We are taking radical action to reduce the number of second homes.

We are creating a National Energy Company, Ynni Cymru to establish renewable, community-owned energy schemes.

Politics is about priorities and for Plaid Cymru, our priority has always been the people of Wales, and doing whatever we can, whenever we can to improve their lives.

Because Plaid Cymru is a party that works for everyone in Wales.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, and whatever language you speak, you can trust Plaid Cymru to make a difference for you, your family, and your community.

Adam Price

STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- ✓ Protect Welsh households from the rising cost of living
- ✓ Develop supply chains for local businesses
- ✓ Promote Buy Welsh and Buy Local
- ✓ Expand business support and create new jobs through the Arfor west Wales and Valleys initiatives
- ✓ Renew our town centres as viable, vibrant places to shop, work and live

THE BEST START IN LIFE

- ✓ Free School Meals for all primary school children and a commitment to the aim of extending universal Free School Meals to secondary pupils within the next council term – with a focus on locally-sourced, nutritious meals
- ✓ Free Childcare for all two-year-olds
- ✓ Value our teachers and school staff

HEALTHIER, CARING COMMUNITIES

- ✓ Work towards a better deal for Social Care workers and improved care services
- ✓ Address inequalities to help people live longer, healthier lives
- ✓ Improve access to mental health support

SUSTAINABLE, GREENER COMMUNITIES

- ✓ Harness Wales's potential for renewable, community-owned energy schemes, as part of a target to reach Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030
- ✓ Tackle Wales's housing crisis by building more energy-efficient and carbon-positive social housing, more genuinely affordable homes, take radical action on second homes and end homelessness
- ✓ Develop greener transport systems based on local area need

Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Almost a quarter of a century ago, people in Wales voted for self-government for Wales, with a promise of a new type of politics. They placed their trust in a new democracy with an instruction to work differently – inclusively and co-operatively.

In the face of the pandemic, a cost of living crisis and a hostile Conservative government in Westminster - determined to do everything it can to undermine our national institutions – it is in our nation's interests for parties to work together for Wales.

Following discussions and agreement with our members, Plaid Cymru entered into a Co-Operation Agreement with Welsh Government in December 2021.

It is thanks to Plaid Cymru that key policies - from feeding our children by extending free school meals, to caring for our elderly and vulnerable citizens through the creation of a National Care Service – now feature in an ambitious, nation-building Programme for Government.

The Co-operation Agreement, negotiated by Plaid Cymru with Welsh Government, is a central element of our vision for local government across Wales.



- ✓ Free School Meals to all primary school children
- ✓ Free childcare for all two year olds
- ✓ A National Care Service to provide a stronger, seamless service and better working conditions for social care professionals
- ✓ Immediate action to address second homes and unaffordable housing, using the planning, property and taxation systems.
- ✓ End homelessness
- ✓ Establish Unnos, a national construction company, to improve the supply of social and affordable housing
- ✓ Reform Council Tax to make it fairer
- ✓ Work with local authorities to develop plans for an integrated transport system
- ✓ Commission independent advice to examine potential pathways to net zero by 2035
- ✓ Commission an independent review into extreme flooding in winter 2020-21 and act on its recommendations.
- ✓ Invest more in flood mitigation
- ✓ Improve mental health and wellbeing services, especially for young people
- ✓ Design new models for local government to work together in the West and the South.
- ✓ Support local authorities to operate through the medium of Welsh.
- ✓ Introduce a Welsh Language Education Bill

STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- ✓ Protect Welsh households from the rising cost of living
- ✓ Develop local supply chains and local businesses
- ✓ Buy Welsh and Buy Local
- ✓ Expand business support, grants and create new jobs through the Arfor and Valleys regional initiatives
- ✓ Renew our town centres as viable, vibrant places to shop, work and live

Protecting Welsh Households from the Rising Cost of Living

Increasing energy costs, stagnating wages, a rise in food and fuel prices and cruel cuts to welfare will result in Welsh households facing hundreds, if not thousands of pounds' worth of extra costs this year. Thousands of households are already struggling to pay for everyday items.

Much of this is the result of policies implemented by the London Tory government.

While we will continue to call for action by Governments in Cardiff and Westminster, Plaid Cymru councillors and local authorities can take steps to protect families, by:

- ✓ Taking ownership of local energy production and investing in green energy schemes.
- ✓ Making people's homes more energy efficient, with better insulation leading to lower energy use.
- ✓ Strengthen local supply chains and support local businesses, to safeguard local jobs and incomes.

At a national level, Plaid Cymru is taking bold steps to protect Welsh household budgets against future crises, by:

- ✓ Introducing free school meals for primary school children, and a commitment to the aim of extending universal free school meals to secondary pupils within the next council term
- ✓ Expanding access to free childcare for children aged two and over on a universal basis
- ✓ Creating a national energy company, Ynni Cymru, to establish community-owned renewable energy schemes, helping us cut ties with multinational, profit-exporting companies
- ✓ Taking steps to ensure that the regressive Council Tax system is updated to be fairer

Supply Chains and Procurement

Every year, Councils across Wales spend billions of pounds on goods, works and services. Plaid Cymru aims to keep as much money as possible within the local economy, supporting local businesses to thrive and sustain local jobs at the same time.

Plaid Cymru's target for increasing the level of public sector procurement to 75 per cent of total spend has the potential to create tens of thousands of additional jobs across Wales.

Plaid Cymru-led local authorities have been working to ensure that more and more of their funding is spent locally by breaking up contracts where possible to ensure that local suppliers and businesses are used more often.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Keeping the Benefit Local

Gwynedd County Council piloted their Keeping the Benefit Local strategy, which considers how best to keep money spent by the Council in the local area. Over the past four years, the amount of council spending staying inside the county increased from £56m to £78m – a rise of 39%.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Wales's First Local Economic Recovery Plan

Plaid Cymru-led Carmarthenshire County Council was the first local authority in Wales to implement a Covid Recovery Plan, safeguarding 10,000 jobs and supporting many more micro-businesses which otherwise would have slipped through the net of government support.

Buy Welsh, Buy Local

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Plaid Cymru launched a national I'm Buying Local campaign to support farmers and local food producers across Wales while reducing food miles. We have also secured a commitment from Welsh Government that free school meals will use locally produced ingredients, benefitting farmers and local businesses across Wales.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Supporting Local Businesses in Testing Times: Ceredigion Covid-19 Food Parcels

Early on in the Covid-19 pandemic, Plaid Cymru-led Ceredigion County Council took control of the delivery of food parcels to vulnerable residents, ensuring the best possible use of local producers.



Arfor and the Valleys

Plaid Cymru will continue work to develop our vision for Arfor (north and west Wales) and the Valleys embracing economic development, higher education and vocational training, renewable energy and Welsh language promotion.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

The Arfor programme

Negotiated by Plaid Cymru, the Co-operation Agreement will create a second phase of the Arfor programme, delivered by four Plaid Cymru-led local authorities as key partners. So far, the programme has created 238 full-time equivalent and 89 part-time jobs, safeguarded 226 full-time jobs, and supported 154 businesses.

Town Centres

Town and village centres are at the heart of our communities. As shopping centres, they have been under threat from the growth of out-of-town superstores and retail parks, and the phenomenal growth of internet shopping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Plaid Cymru-led local authorities will continue to lead new initiatives, to:

- ✓ Provide resources for residents, businesses and community groups
- ✓ Create co-working centres in towns across Wales
- ✓ Promote community spaces, libraries, and parks
- ✓ Improve access for walking and cycling



✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

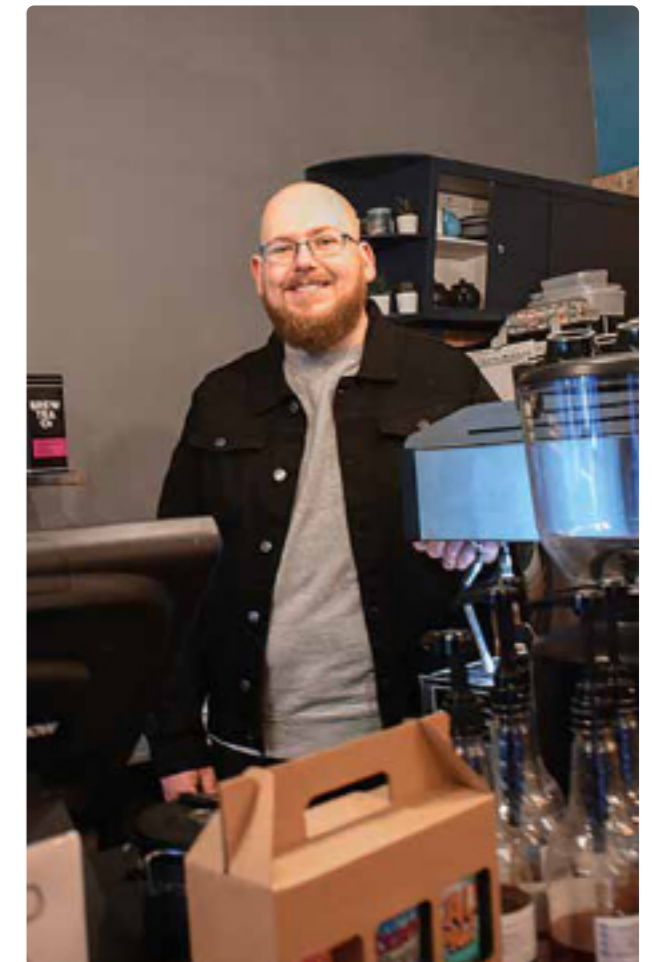
Carmarthenshire's Ten Towns Scheme

Plaid Cymru-led Carmarthenshire Council developed its Ten Towns initiative for the development of Cross Hands, Cwmaman, Kidwelly, Laugharne, Llandeilo, Llandovery, Llanybydder, Newcastle Emlyn, St.Clears and Whitland. Economic growth plans are being developed with local residents and businesses at the heart of the process.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Cardigan Town Centre

Developing a Cardigan Town app, Ceredigion County Council used data collected to measure information such as footfall and popular areas of town, sharing this information with businesses to help them better consider how to attract customers. Whilst other towns saw shops and businesses close during the pandemic, Cardigan has seen ten new shops open.



HEALTHIER, CARING COMMUNITIES

- ✓ A better deal for Social Care workers and better care services
- ✓ Help people live longer, healthier lives
- ✓ Improve access to mental health and wellbeing support

We believe that the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic should be transformative – with the aim of ending poverty and inequalities.

Establishing a National Care Service

One of the greatest achievements of the 20th Century was the creation of the National Health Service so that illness, accidents or disease should not produce the threat of financial debt.

Plaid Cymru believes that we need the same approach as health provision for all personal care, and that care workers should receive parity of pay and conditions with those offered by the NHS. This is why Plaid Cymru believes we need a National Care Service, led by local government and integrating seamlessly with the NHS.

Whether because of age, disability, temporary illness or chronic conditions many of us will require help with daily living through social care. Some of us might need a safe space to live in and be cared for on a permanent basis.

Our ambition is that personal care should be free at the point of need, an ambition which is now reflected in Wales's Programme for Government, secured by Plaid Cymru as part of our Co-operation Agreement.

Helping People Live Longer, Healthier Lives

Covid-19 has hit poorer communities hardest. Plaid Cymru aims to make Health Equality our goal for a healthier fairer nation, with actions to improve access to care for all. Our local authorities and councillors will:

- ✓ Encourage walking and cycling, with accessible paths and networks
- ✓ Improve public accessibility to amenities such as parks, and public transport
- ✓ Invest in Youth Services and Youth Centres – ensuring they include professionals offering mental health advice and sexual health advice

- ✓ Ensure that local government staff have access to occupational health service, leisure and sport facilities – and work with business providers to see how this access can be expanded to employees of SMEs
- ✓ Encourage schools to provide children with the opportunity to exercise and learn outdoors as much as possible, while meeting a minimum of two hours' physical exercise each week
- ✓ Promote and facilitate social prescribing - to encourage participation in community activity and exercise

Mental Health and Wellbeing

As part of the Co-Operation Agreement with Welsh Government, we will take further steps towards Plaid Cymru's aim of securing more investment for mental health services especially for young people.

We will test how The Sanctuary Model - where community facilities with extended opening hours, run by trained third sector staff and clear referral pathways into NHS - can help support young people in crisis or with an urgent mental health or emotional wellbeing issue. These centres would be open evenings and weekends.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Ceredigion's Here For You Project

In response to long waiting times to access mental health support, Plaid Cymru-led Ceredigion County Council supported a local youth charity to provide easily accessible mental health services to young people in the county.

The Council-led Cynnal y Cardi scheme provided funding for the Here for You project, which gives young people, particularly those in rural areas, fast access to free, online, talking therapy services.

✓ **Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference**

Wales's First Track and Trace System

In April 2020, while Governments in Westminster and Cardiff struggled to establish a tracing system costing billions of pounds, Plaid Cymru-led Ceredigion County Council took control and set up its own cost-effective, bespoke test-and-trace system.

Drawing on the Council's Public Protection team's expertise in tracing contacts of other illnesses before the pandemic, Ceredigion's system was established within days, saving lives and reducing hospitalisations by doing so.

The scheme attracted UK-wide attention for its role in keeping the infection rate in Ceredigion at the lowest level in Wales during the early stages of the pandemic, with 57 cases per 100,000 people at a time when the Welsh national Welsh average was 461 cases per 100,000.¹

✓ **Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference**

Wales's First Field Hospital

Plaid Cymru-led Carmarthenshire County Council leapt into action during the first weeks of the pandemic, working in partnership with Hywel Dda Health Board and local contractors to build four emergency hospitals in three weeks in readiness to reduce pressure on the NHS.

The Council converted Parc y Scarlets from a rugby stadium into a collection of field hospitals in just 21 days, becoming the first Local Authority in Wales to do so.

✓ **Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference**

Saving Local A&E Services

When Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board announced that they intended to close the 24-hour A&E services at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Plaid Cymru Councillors in Rhondda Cynon Taf threw their weight behind local residents, signing petitions, sending letters to key decision makers, and joining local campaign groups. The decision to close the services was overturned, ensuring that local residents can access emergency care in their community.

Equalities

Plaid Cymru believes that tackling all forms of injustice is an essential part of restructuring and rebuilding a fairer society.

As part of our Co-Operation Agreement with Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru has ensured that a Race Equality Action Plan will be developed. We will also support the publication of an LGBTQ+ Action Plan, and call for additional powers to offer support and protection to trans people in Wales. Plaid Cymru believes that neurodiversity is an equalities issue, and would introduce an Autism Act, adopting a rights based approach for autistic people.

Plaid Cymru believes that the Equality Act 2010 should be devolved to the Senedd. Working under this Act, and as key actors and employers in communities, councils have a vital role to play in ensuring that all groups feel represented and supported.



Disabilities

The Covid-19 pandemic and response has infringed disabled people's human rights.

As part of Plaid Cymru's commitment to carrying out a Wales only Covid Enquiry, this will be further investigated.

Wales has taken backward steps due to the pandemic, creating new difficulties and gaps in public services for disabled people.

We agree with Welsh Disabled People's Organisations and believe that implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People into domestic Law, as a matter of urgency, will help in counteracting this.

Local authorities have a large part to play in realising this vision. Plaid Cymru led local authorities and councillors will closely look at ways the provisions of the convention can be applied at a local level. We will ensure that equality impact assessments are held in a timely and effective manner in developing service provisions and when changes to the built environment are proposed.

As part of our Co-operation Agreement with the Welsh Government, we will ensure that the rights of disabled people are strengthened, and inequalities tackled.

Representation in Elected Members and the Workforce

Plaid Cymru believes that everyone should have equal rights and opportunities. The lack of representation of certain groups in elected roles and workforces is evidence that there is a lot of work to be done, and that certain groups are facing barriers in society.

Plaid Cymru will set challenging targets for public sector recruitment, ensuring that people with diverse characteristics are represented.

Refugees

Plaid Cymru reaffirms its commitment for Wales to become a Nation of Sanctuary and is determined to ease the experience of refugees and people seeking asylum wherever possible. As has been seen, local authorities have a key role in helping refugees settle initially; all Plaid Cymru-led local authorities have stated their intention to welcome families and individuals from Ukraine and have helped in settling Afghan and Syrian refugee families and individuals within their communities.

¹ PHW data from 11 June 2020

THE BEST START IN LIFE

✓ Free School Meals for all primary school children and a commitment to the aim of extending universal Free School Meals to secondary pupils within the next council term – with a focus on locally-sourced, nutritious meals

✓ Free Childcare for all two-year-olds

✓ Valuing our teachers and school staff

Free School Meals

Thanks to Plaid Cymru's influence, all primary school pupils in Wales are now set to receive a free school meal, with the expansion taking place from September this year. We see this as a first step towards free school meals for all ages.

We know there are more children and families who need help. That is why Plaid Cymru Local Authorities will commit to the aim of extending universal Free School Meals to include secondary school pupils during next council term, beginning the necessary planning and preparatory work immediately, as part of Plaid Cymru's vision of introducing this policy across Wales.

Provision will use locally-sourced produce where possible, supporting local businesses and supply chains and reducing food miles.

Plaid Cymru has consistently called on the Welsh Government to take action on the scandalous levels of child poverty in Wales – the highest level of all the UK nations. Over half of children in Wales living below the poverty line – 70,000 children - are not entitled to free school meals.²

We therefore see the universal provision of free school meals as one of the most important steps we can take to address child poverty, making sure that children have a free, nutritious meal as part of the school day.

Cutting the Cost of the School Day

When children and young people cannot take part in opportunities because of cost it is harder for them to achieve and be happy at school.

We will work with schools to ensure policies on uniform, extra-curricular activities and events do not create barriers for pupils from lower income families, making sure all pupils can fully participate in their education.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Carmarthenshire County Council's Food Hubs

Carmarthenshire County Council worked with local suppliers to set up food hubs during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as providing food for children usually in receipt of free school meals, the Plaid Cymru-led Council also provided food for the children's families. This support was extended to cover the Easter and Summer breaks.

Free Childcare for All Two-Year-Olds

Thanks to Plaid Cymru's influence, free childcare for all two-year-olds will be introduced across Wales as part of our Co-Operation Agreement with Welsh Government.

Plaid Cymru Councillors and Local Authorities have a key role to play in the development and delivery of new childcare services. We will work to ensure that childcare provision is effectively planned and delivered to help some of Wales's poorest families first.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Emergency Childcare for Key Workers

All four Plaid Cymru-led local authorities established childcare hubs during the early stages of the pandemic to support those children and their families who needed care. This meant that doctors, nurses, teachers and other key workers could continue to deliver essential services

Ynys Môn County Council ensured that local schools stayed open as support hubs, helping vulnerable children including those eligible for free school meals and the children of key workers. This support continued during the Easter holidays with 25 care centres kept open.

Supporting Our Teachers

From the early stages of home-based learning to the return to the classroom, our teachers have supported thousands of young people in Wales through one of the most difficult periods in living memory. Yet currently one in three teachers are quitting the classroom within their first five years due to workload and working conditions.

While teachers' pay and conditions are decided by Welsh Government, local authorities can influence and improve the school and classroom environment, by:

- ✓ Appointing more non-teaching staff, including teaching assistants, to support pupils' needs alongside their education
- ✓ Ensuring that teachers are given sufficient time and are supported to access continual professional development

School Safety

Our 'Keeping Schools Safe' measures would operate at a Welsh Government level, but Local Authorities would be the key delivery partner. The measures include:

- ✓ Continuing the provision of free lateral flow tests for education settings
- ✓ Supporting clinically extremely vulnerable staff, including those who are pregnant, to work from home, and protect vulnerable staff by offering roles with minimum contact and FFP2/3 masks
- ✓ Extra financial support to address the digital divide, to prepare for any future scenarios where pupils are required to learn from home
- ✓ Measures to improve ventilation and air quality monitoring, including carbon dioxide monitors for each classroom and educational space and widespread use of air purifiers
- ✓ Measures to make well-ventilated classrooms comfortable for students – this could include relaxing dress codes to ensure students can dress more warmly and that classrooms are well-heated

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Monitoring Air Quality To Keep Children Safe

In Summer 2021, much debate was had about whether schools in Wales should be using carbon dioxide monitors, to ensure pupils were breathing in fresher air thereby reducing the risk of Covid transmission. Whilst the Welsh Government hesitated, eventually agreeing to provide the equipment after pressure from Plaid Cymru, Ynys Môn County Council had been using monitors for months. Working in partnership with local organisations, the Plaid Cymru-led Council provided monitors to schools, care homes, and office spaces, helping to keep rooms ventilated and Covid rates down.

Supply Teaching

Plaid Cymru believes that we can simplify the supply teacher structure by reverting to a system run by Local Education Authorities.

We will also take steps to ensure that supply teaching in Wales is run on a not-for-profit basis in future. As part of our Co-operation Agreement with Welsh Government we will develop options for a more sustainable model of supply teaching with fair work at its heart. Supply teachers should have access to training and professional development throughout their careers.

Further Education, Apprenticeships and Lifelong learning

As we deal with the economic impact of the pandemic, it is more important than ever that people can access quality post-16 provision. Plaid Cymru believes that vocational education must be put on the same foundations as academic education, and that skills and qualifications in key areas such as care, construction and agriculture should be prioritised.

We will increase the number and quality of apprenticeships available, actively working to remove financial barriers to training and increase the diversity of apprentices, and expand lifelong learning opportunities available. Through working in partnership with further education colleges and local businesses, our councillors will develop more coherent local labour markets.

Through our Cooperation Agreement with Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru has secured commitments to expand lifelong learning provision. Plaid Cymru has also secured investment for Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh, to help expand opportunities for Welsh-medium apprenticeships and further education.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Investing in Apprenticeships

Gwynedd County Council has continued to invest in two schemes designed to help local residents find work in the county. The Council has recently committed a further £900,000 to its Council Apprenticeship Scheme, which has appointed 35 apprentices over the past three years, with many of these apprentices later joining the council on a permanent basis.

The Council aims to appoint 60 new apprentices by 2025.

It has also committed funding to its Cynllun Yfory graduate scheme, which helps to develop Gwynedd's managers and experts whilst encouraging partners to provide training and work provision through the Welsh language.

Y Gymraeg

From Ynys y Barri to Ynys Môn, Cymraeg belongs to us all, and Plaid Cymru wants Wales to be a genuinely bilingual nation. Whilst increasing the number of Welsh speakers is vital, citizens should be able to use their preferred language in their daily lives with ease.

Plaid Cymru is determined to give every child the gift of fluency, providing additional funding to strengthen the million speakers by 2050 project, and developing new Welsh language spaces. Councils will have a key role to play in ensuring that Welsh is a prominent language in our communities, through actions such as ensuring that the necessary public spaces exist for it to thrive, and supporting schools to offer the best provision possible.

Through our Co-operation Agreement with Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru has secured a range of measures designed to strengthen our language, including a Welsh Language Education Bill, commitments to protect Welsh language place names, and support for organisations to operate through the medium of Welsh. Plaid Cymru-led local authorities will help to ensure that these commitments are delivered in their communities.



SUSTAINABLE, GREENER COMMUNITIES

- ✓ Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030
- ✓ Build more energy-efficient and carbon-positive social housing
- ✓ Tackle the second homes crisis and bring empty properties back into use
- ✓ Develop greener transport systems



Net Zero

Through our Co-operation Agreement, we have ensured that Welsh Government will commission independent advice to examine pathways to a Net Zero Wales by 2035.

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

Plaid Cymru-led Local Authorities leading the way on Net Zero

Each Plaid Cymru-led Local Authority has declared a climate emergency, with Carmarthenshire County Council being the first in Wales to do so. All have committed to reach Net Zero emissions by 2030. Published in February 2020, Carmarthenshire's Net Zero Action Plan was the first document of its kind produced by any county council in Wales.

Action by Plaid Cymru councils to reach Net Zero includes:

- ✓ Ensuring that new council buildings, including homes, are energy efficient and incorporate renewable energy generation so that more buildings become carbon positive.
- ✓ Retrofitting and improving insulation and efficiency of older buildings.
- ✓ Upgrading council vehicles to include cleaner vehicles and electric vehicles.

- ✓ Planting more trees and protecting green spaces.
- ✓ Raising awareness through schools and with the community to encourage changes in everyday behaviour that benefits the environment and reduces our individual carbon footprint.

Ynni Cymru and Community Energy

In Wales, we produce 90% more electricity than we use, yet our household bills are amongst the highest in the UK. At a time when the cost of living is rising – and with spiralling energy bills at the heart of this crisis - Plaid Cymru believes that Wales can meet all its energy demand entirely from renewables by 2035.

Thanks to Plaid Cymru, through our Co-operation Agreement with Welsh Government, we will create Ynni Cymru, a publicly-owned energy company for Wales. Ynni Cymru will help Wales realise its potential as an energy rich nation whose resources benefit the people of Wales, not multinational exporters.

Our vision for Ynni Cymru is based on green, renewable energy generation with a specific focus on community-owned projects. We believe that all new renewable energy projects in Wales above 5MW should have at least between 5 per cent and 33 per cent community and local ownership, to support rural and coastal economies.

Housing

With 67,000 households on housing waiting lists, only a fraction of the social and affordable housing Wales needs is currently being built.

In an 18-month period, from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and the end of November 2021, over 17,300 people in Wales presented as homeless.³

In some parts of Wales, up to 40 per cent of the houses that go on the market every year are now bought as second homes, with prices rising and local families priced out due to a surge in demand for housing.

Through our Co-operation Agreement with Welsh Government, we are taking action to address the housing crisis by:

- ✓ Establishing a national construction company – Unnos – to support councils and social landlords to improve the supply of social and affordable housing
- ✓ Tackling the second homes crisis, including introducing a cap on the number of second and holiday homes, measures to bring more homes into common ownership and allowing local authorities to charge council tax premiums of up to 300% on second homes
- ✓ Ending homelessness
- ✓ Reforming housing law to give renters greater security and a fair rents (rent control) system

Plaid Cymru-led local authorities and councillors will support:

- ✓ Building more high quality and energy efficient social housing, including a greater proportion of social housing with renewable energy generation
- ✓ Higher council tax premiums for second homes and steps to close the loophole that allows second homeowners to register their property as businesses in order to avoid paying the council tax premium
- ✓ Changing planning legislation to impose a cap on the number of second homes and to refuse permission for changing a dwelling from being a primary to a secondary residence
- ✓ Bringing empty properties back into use by demanding that owners make improvements and provide grants to first time buyers to renovate empty and neglected properties

✓ Plaid Cymru: Making a Difference

More Social Housing, Jobs and Apprentices

Carmarthenshire County Council has committed to deliver more than 900 new builds by 2029 which will be the biggest increase in council housing stock in Carmarthenshire since the 1970s. As well as providing much needed homes in the county, the investment will also boost the local economy creating jobs, training opportunities and apprenticeships in the construction industry.

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Ceredigion's Award-Winning Cozy Caron Project

Ceredigion County Council's Cozy Caron project will ensure that local residents' homes are energy efficient and warm. This award-winning programme provided significant benefits to 137 vulnerable residents in 2020, helping to combat fuel poverty. The programme targets those living in energy inefficient homes, particularly in rural areas where the gas network does not reach, with central heating and insulation.

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Reducing Food Waste

From the Rhondda to Gwynedd, Plaid Cymru councillors and volunteers have been working with their communities to run food share schemes that redistribute surplus food to families, community groups and charities.

Recycling

All four Plaid Cymru-led Local Authorities have recycling rates that are higher than the Wales average, collectively saving £15m and avoiding 47,000 tonnes of Co2 emissions.

Plaid Cymru-led authorities and councillors will press for measures to make recycling easier and more efficient. This includes ensuring reliable collections, and giving clear guidance on what can be recycled through household waste.

Flooding

In recent years, we have seen the real and often devastating impact floods can have on people's lives. As part of the Co-operation Agreement with Welsh Government, Plaid Cymru has secured a package of funding totalling £214 million over the next three years, to be invested in flood mitigation and management.

Plaid Cymru will also work with Welsh Government to commission an independent review of the local government section 19 and Natural Resources Wales reports into extreme flooding in winter 2020-21 and act on its recommendations.

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Action on Flooding

When floods devastated communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf in February 2020, Plaid Cymru Councillors were central to coordinating the support required by residents. This included contacting insurance companies, organising emergency housing and clearing of homes, coordinating donations and volunteers as well as securing long-term support for those affected.

Plaid Cymru Councillors also led the calls for an independent inquiry into the floods - a campaign that is on-going. Many are also now involved in supporting local Flood Action Groups.

Coal Tips

The tips which stain our mountainsides the length of the Welsh coalfield are a stark reminder of the legacy of our industrial past. More than 300 tips are known to be classed as high risk, and the increased rainfall associated with climate change could further destabilise tips across the valleys.

Not all local authorities in Wales have released information about where high-risk tips are located, which is intensifying the concerns of local residents. Plaid Cymru will push for this information to be made publicly available, and for a shared strategy to be put in place for local authorities to work with the Welsh Government and local landowners to ensure that all high risk tips are made safe. Evidently, the bill should be picked up by Westminster, but making these tips safe must be of paramount concern – and waiting for Westminster to do the right thing should not hamper these efforts.

Beyond the immediate concerns of safety, Plaid Cymru is calling for a national plan of action to be put in place to help regenerate the areas surrounding the tips. With the right green investment, these landscapes could be transformed from being an eyesore to being a source of civic pride and jobs for the local economy.



Transport

Plaid Cymru's vision is of Wales as an interconnected community of communities, resilient, prosperous, healthy, and environmentally sound. Greener, joined-up and effective public transport systems have an essential role to play in achieving this goal.

Increased use of public transport will reduce traffic pollution and congestion. It will also contribute to the sustainability of local bus routes and the viability of many rural communities.

We want to move Wales away from a system dominated by petrol and diesel-driven cars towards more sustainable transportation, aiming to halve the proportion of journeys made by car by 2030. We will invest in recharging infrastructure to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles.

Active travel and 20-minute neighbourhoods

Walking and cycling are not only more sustainable than motorised transport in environmental terms but can also be an important part of healthy living.

Plaid Cymru supports the principle of creating 20-minute neighbourhoods in all our towns and cities providing convenient, safe, pedestrian access to the places people need to go and the services people use nearly every day: public transport, shopping, school, parks, and social activities.

Local authorities have a key role to move our communities towards this ambition, by:

- ✓ Setting ambitious targets to increase the provision of cycle routes and safe routes to schools and town centres
- ✓ Creating incentives to encourage the take-up of e-bikes and encourage the use of bike hire schemes, and explore the potential for e-cargo bikes to replace vans and cut HGV traffic
- ✓ Designating safer speed limits in all built up areas
- ✓ Supporting the location of council offices to town and city centres away from out-of-town developments

We will also encourage walking and cycling with a specific focus on access for disabled groups. There will be investment in better pavements, dropped curbs, public toilets and benches and improving public accessibility to amenities such as parks and public transport.

Sustainable Tourism

Plaid Cymru supports the vision of moving Wales's tourism industry to one that is sustainable and of benefit to communities across Wales, all year round.

We support the introduction of local tourism levies, giving local authorities the power and resources to invest and deliver in their areas.

Such levies – often known as tourism taxes or city taxes – are commonplace in countries across Europe and beyond and operate on a regional level in many places.

As part of Plaid Cymru's Co-operation Agreement with Welsh Government, we will consult on proposals to introduce tourism levies within Wales to support and respect our communities and the visitors they welcome.

Divestment

Plaid Cymru believes that local government pension schemes should divest from fossil fuels, and collaborate with the Welsh Pension Partnership to identify suitable reinvestment opportunities.

