

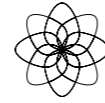


Plaid

Ambition is Critical
A Manifesto for a
Better Wales



Other Formats



We will be pleased to provide a copy of this manifesto on CD, in large print and in easyread. To obtain a copy in another format contact:

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© Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
ISBN 0-905077-84-9

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Eclipse Printing

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For a Better Wales Plaid Manifesto 2011

BetterWales// Our Vision – A Decade of Delivery

As we prepare in the next Assembly term to celebrate 100 years since the birth of Dylan Thomas, Plaid believes his mantra that “ambition is critical” should be the guiding principle of the next Welsh Government. Our ambition should manifest itself over the next decade in delivering a stronger, more resilient Wales – not just in thinking anew but in acting anew. We must rise to the challenge of raising and meeting the expectations of the people of Wales who want world-class health and education services as well as economic and social prosperity.

We face tough challenges ahead. Wales continues to reel in the wake of Labour’s financial and economic crises and the most savage cuts in public services since the 1930s inflicted on us by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The coalition in Westminster continues to target our most vulnerable people with welfare reform proposals which threaten punitive action for those unable to meet unrealistic Government demands. Drastic cuts to benefits will unfairly target the poorest in society, and will push them into a cycle of in-work and out-of-work poverty.

Plaid is the only party which believes that another Wales is possible. Our vision for a new Wales is based on ambition, respect and collective responsibility. There will be no place for the culture of excuses which Labour has nurtured for most of the first twelve years of Welsh Government.

Plaid’s vision of Wales is one of a vibrant, modern country – enriched by its proud past as well as the new influences and opportunities of the present. We want a nation which is a hive of activity and creativity, of pioneers and innovators – trail blazers in the arts, science, education, sport and business. Our vision of a bilingual and multicultural Wales is also based on seeing Wales become an equal partner in the community of European nations – a Wales that through becoming an actor on the international stage will create new opportunities – politically, socially and economically. This is a Wales that has its contributions to tackling the major global issues of the day – poverty, climate change and conflict – heard and valued.

We want a Wales that is renowned not only for its breathtaking beauty but for the quality of life, great public services and good standard of living enjoyed by its people - a country which is a great place to work and live. As well as the opportunity for all to earn a decent wage, our vision of Wales is of a country where our children are educated to a high standard and



where they, as well as our older and most vulnerable citizens, are lifted from poverty and are well protected and cared for.

The people of Wales are not afraid to roll up their sleeves. Wales can be a more prosperous and more equal society. We have already put a plan in place to create a country which excels in advanced manufacturing, biosciences, energy, financial services and the creative industries. Through this, and in delivering a world-class transport and digital infrastructure, we want to see an economy which will allow businesses – large and small – to become more efficient, productive and sustainable.

We in Plaid will never be prepared to rest on our laurels – we will ensure that our economy is flexible and dynamic and is able to adapt to making the most of new opportunities on the national and international stage. We want to transform our business and social environment as well as expand the skills base of our citizens so that our employment levels compare favourably with other typical North European countries.

Our vision is of a Wales which is more economically and democratically self-sufficient, a country able to exploit its natural resources – water, wind and tide – for the benefit of its citizens and the environment. Our development as a country should seek to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their needs.

We want our education system to be the success story of this decade, to have empowered this generation of children to fulfil their potential and to have virtually eradicated illiteracy and innumeracy among school leavers. We want our children to become rounded, independent thinking individuals with a hunger for innovation and learning and a respect for others as well as themselves.

Plaid's vision for Wales, where its two official languages now enjoy equal status, is a place where its citizens have greater opportunity to use the Welsh language at home, at work or in a social environment.

Wales is a proud nation. It is and will continue to be shaped by the ambition and compassion of its people for their families, their communities and their country. We want Wales to be a confident nation too, cooperating and collaborating with its neighbours in England, Scotland, Ireland and the wider international community. In the coming years, as we take more responsibility in shaping our future, we also want to see greater fairness for our nation. Wales should receive its fair share of funding from the UK Government and more flexibility to strengthen its economy, as well as being given greater control over vital services in areas such as transport, energy, criminal justice and broadcasting.

To realise this vision what our country needs above all is strong leadership – leadership which not only accepts the responsibility of delivering a better Wales, but has the determination to deliver it. Plaid will ensure that delivery will be the main focus of the next Assembly term.

This election marks the beginning of a new chapter in our history following our success in securing law-making powers for our Assembly. But change cannot stop there. Now is the time to transform Wales into the country we want it to be. Plaid is not only offering that vision but is pledging to deliver the change we need. We know that the people of Wales expect nothing less of us.



Policies 4 a Better Wales:

Plaid Cymru's 4 key 2011 election pledges

Every Child Counts

Plaid will make sure that children leaving primary school are able to read, write and count to the expected standard.

At the moment too many of our children are leaving school without having the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in life. This cannot continue.

A Plaid Government will get the basics right for future generations. Plaid will raise standards to ensure that when our children leave education they have the basic skill needed to succeed – the ability to read, write and count to an expected standard. You can count on Plaid to improve our children's education.

Plaid. For a better education.

01_



Policies 4 a Better Wales:

Plaid Cymru's 4 key 2011 election pledges

Build4Wales and Small Business Bonus

Plaid will help our small businesses to grow, create thousands of new jobs and help people get the training and skills for long-term employment.

In government, Plaid's decisive actions have protected thousands of jobs during the toughest of recessions. We will now help Wales' economy recover and grow so that our nation becomes wealthier.

□ Plaid's Build4Wales company will invest in hospitals, schools, housing and transport and create up to 50,000 new jobs across Wales.

□ Plaid's Small Business Bonus will not only provide a new £90million small business loans scheme but will ensure continued tax relief to help develop our town centres and small businesses.

□ Plaid will support 30,000 apprenticeships and will boost the skills and employability of young people across Wales.

Plaid. For a better economy.

Policies 4 a Better Wales:

Plaid Cymru's 4 key 2011 election pledges

Doctor and Dentist – when you need one

Ensuring quick and effective healthcare in your community.

When Plaid entered government we put a stop to Labour's disastrous hospital downgrading plan and protected your vital local health services. But we know that our national health service can be even better.

A Plaid Government will help you see a doctor or dentist when you need to – for example increasing the availability and out-of-hours provision of GP services where needed.

We'll also help create more NHS dentists in areas of high demand.

Plaid. For a better health service.

03_



Policies 4 a Better Wales:

Plaid Cymru's 4 key 2011 election pledges

Connecting Wales

Plaid will connect Wales for the 21st century with better mobile signal, wifi and broadband coverage, and a modern transport system to move our nation forward.

We rely on good transport and technology for work, business and everyday life, but in many parts of Wales these links need to be much better.

Plaid will pioneer major improvements in mobile phone, broadband and wifi across Wales, including on public transport. We'll link every business and home to fast broadband and create wifi hotspots across the country to make Wales a truly Wireless Nation.

A Plaid Government will create a better transport system to get Wales moving - speeding up journeys and giving you fast, reliable and affordable ways to travel. We'll move to electrify more railways across Wales and improve our bus services. A more connected Wales will help create a successful Wales.

Plaid. For a more connected Wales.



Our Government BetterWales// A more effective and efficient Government

Following the Yes vote in the Welsh powers referendum, we are now able to forge ahead to deliver better policy, Government and services.

Plaid Cymru will ensure that delivering effective, clear and tangible outcomes for the people of Wales will be the hallmark of the next Welsh Government, ridding our democracy once and for all of its culture of complacency and excuses.

Labour's legacy of economic failure, combined with the worst global recession in decades, has had a huge impact on Wales. Their light-touch banking regulation in London allowed the bankers who are, once again, enjoying massive bonuses while everyone else pays the price through spending cuts and increased taxes. We must not forget that their planned cuts of £1.5 billion to the Welsh budget were almost the same as those now taking place under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition.

With cuts of £1.52 billion to public spending over four years, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Government in London is pursuing ideological policies designed to roll

back the state from providing vital services. They are taking a major gamble, not only with the economy, but with the lives and the future of everyone in Wales.

Yet, despite these Westminster-imposed cuts, the Plaid-driven Government in Wales has done everything it can to prioritise schools and hospitals, free prescriptions and bus passes, council services and help for jobs and the economy.

Plaid Ministers will continue to show leadership in ensuring Government is more focused, efficient and streamlined in its determination to deliver results. Plaid will expect the best outcomes for the people of Wales. Our role will be one of strategic leadership. Our politics will be practised for the purpose of making a real difference to people's lives.

Plaid Cymru has consistently opposed the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition's approach to dealing with the deficit. We believe that fiscal consolidation should only be implemented once we have seen three consecutive quarters of strong economic growth. However, while we will continue to make the case for prioritising a healthy economy before a rigid and inflexible drive to cut public spending, we also recognise that that we have to make tough choices in Wales.

Reforming Welsh Government

In the next Government, Plaid will challenge the Welsh Government's civil service with nothing less than a cultural revolution. We will create a leaner Government and will garner the necessary talent and skill that the people of Wales expect from their public servants in order to improve services.

We will ensure clarity between the legislature and the executive, by renaming the Welsh Assembly Government. The name will officially change to the 'Welsh Government' on the formation of the new Government. We will seek the powers to appoint the Permanent Secretary as the Head of the National Public Service, accountable to the Welsh Government.

We will cut the number of Cabinet Ministers and ensure that the overall budget for Government Ministers and Deputy Ministers does not rise in real terms over the next Assembly term. In line with a commitment to an AM salary freeze, Welsh Ministers will be subject to a one-off 10% pay cut and a subsequent pay freeze until the end of the Government's term. We will ensure that the Welsh Government's offices in Llandudno Junction, Aberystwyth and Merthyr Tydfil become regular bases for the work of Welsh Ministers.

We will seek the powers to establish a National Public Service that is designed to deliver on behalf of the people of Wales. A Plaid Government will devolve more jobs to the regions so that more posts in the National Public Service will be moved to the Welsh Government offices outside Cardiff. Opportunities will also be sought to bring greater expertise to the National Public Service from other organisations.

We will make it easier to hold Government to account, by increasing the transparency of Government decisions through the publishing of detailed expenditure decisions, staffing structures and pay bands. We will ensure that all Welsh Government policy decisions are first announced in the Assembly chamber. We will include environmental and social clauses in more Government contracts.

We will carry out full equality-impact assessments and gender-impact assessments on budgetary changes and new economic policies, to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected, and that we capitalise fully on the strengths of our female labour force, to actively encourage women to enter priority sectors.

Plaid Cymru commits to promoting and safeguarding the highest standards of conduct in public office, including by Assembly Members. We will set out new governance arrangements for the Wales Audit Office.

Strengthening Welsh Democracy

Plaid has always believed that if the people of Wales have more power to shape their future then Wales will become a stronger, more confident and more prosperous country. We want to bring decision-making closer to the people of Wales.

That is why we remain committed to an independent Wales as a full member of the European Union. We understand that this longer-term constitutional step is a decision that will rest ultimately in the hands of the people of Wales.

In this Assembly term we believe that the priorities of our citizens will be better served by devolving a number of services to the National Assembly and reforming the way Wales is funded by the UK Treasury.

In the next Government, Plaid will seek a new funding settlement for Wales as outlined by the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Funding and Finance for Wales. This settlement would include the reform of the Barnett formula; the devolution of taxation powers to Wales; the power to lower corporation tax; and borrowing powers. Plaid agrees with the Commission's view that this would improve the Welsh Government's ability to manage its affairs and make it more accountable to the public.

We will seek to strengthen Welsh democracy through the devolution of responsibilities, with an appropriate funding settlement, for the following areas:

Plaid will press for the transfer of responsibility and funding for the police and criminal justice system more generally to the National Assembly. As Wales develops its own distinctive body of law, Plaid will create a Welsh legal jurisdiction so that the administration of justice is tailored to the social and economic needs of Wales.

We will seek the devolution of broadcasting to protect and develop S4C as well as English and Welsh-language output from Wales on TV, radio and online.

Plaid believes that Wales should have control over its own natural resources – wind, water, sun and tidal – and we will press for the devolution of responsibility for these areas as well as all energy generation projects.

We also want to modernise our rail network and we will press for the devolution of the functions and funding of Network Rail in order to meet Welsh transport priorities.

We will seek to devolve powers over coastguard services to the National Assembly.

We believe that the National Assembly for Wales is better placed to advance equality and we will seek

greater powers in this field to ensure that real change is delivered to traditionally excluded groups.

Strengthening local decision-making and delivery of services

Plaid has always been a party rooted in Welsh communities, and has always believed in local decision-making. We believe strongly that devolution does not stop at Cardiff. We also believe that people want to see value for money both from their Assembly and local authorities.

Here in Wales, Plaid has always protected, and will continue to protect, funding for our councils in order to safeguard key services such as education and social care. We recognise, however, the need for reform to the administration and delivery of public services by local government. In light of this, we will seek a new memorandum of understanding between the Welsh Government and local government.

Plaid believes that greater efficiencies and better services can be achieved through local authorities working together. We will facilitate this through changing funding streams, and we will support best practice in-house delivery. In specified services, Plaid will direct local authorities to work together on a regional basis.

Plaid believes that a wholesale reorganisation of local government at this stage would be costly and

would be a distraction from the effort to improve service delivery. We will, however, review the effectiveness and value for money of the regional arrangements between councils and we will, in consultation with local authorities, council taxpayers and members of the National Assembly, examine the need for boundary changes on a case by case basis - if that is deemed necessary. We will establish an independent commission to review the funding of local government.

In order to make local government more accountable and responsive to communities' needs, and irrespective of the result of the UK referendum on the Alternative Vote, we will begin the process of introducing Single Transferable Vote for elections in Wales by using the system for local government elections. We will continue to support the campaign for votes at 16 and we will establish a Youth Parliament.

Building relations with the devolved nations, the UK and the EU

Plaid will always look to capture new ideas, develop policy capacity and learn from outside our borders and outside Government. Maintaining a professional working relationship with other Governments and nations is essential in order to represent the best interests of Welsh citizens.

The voice of Wales on matters that are not devolved must be heard in Whitehall and Brussels. Our relationship with other nations must be based on meaningful rather than superficial respect. Plaid will always resist tribal politics and will put the interests of Wales first, each and every time.

In the next Government, Plaid will create a formal relationship with the UK Government and its individual departments, with established protocols for ensuring cooperation and resolving disputes. We will press for an early discussion between the UK Government and the devolved Governments on a more appropriate constitutional structure to enshrine the relationship between the Welsh Government and the UK Government.

Plaid believes that with a law-making Assembly there is a diminishing case for a Wales Office in London, which provides little tangible benefit to Wales. We believe that the role of a Secretary of State for Wales should be replaced with a Secretary of State for the devolved countries.

We will seek agreement for a bi-annual meeting between the First Minister of Wales and the UK Prime Minister as well as between Welsh Government Departmental Ministers with their UK counterparts. Plaid will work to ensure that the Joint Ministerial Council will continue to play a role in facilitating discussions between the Governments of the

devolved nations and in settling any disputes between Welsh Government and UK Government.

We will work with UK Ministers on policy positions for EU negotiations, but where there are differing views, a Welsh Minister will not be bound by any UK negotiation position. It is expected that in such circumstances, the Welsh Minister will communicate the Welsh Government's view directly to the EU Commission and other Member States and regions.

We will continue to support further democratic reform of the European Union and seek increased representation for Wales in the EU including a fairer number of MEPs for Wales, a European Parliament office in Wales, a rotating office of the European Commissioner and, most importantly, a vote for Wales in the Council of Ministers. We will continue to work for full official status for Welsh within the EU.

Wales in the world

In the next Government, Plaid will reform the Welsh Government's presence overseas in order to maximise the benefits to the Welsh economy, promote Wales's interests and build strategic relationships.

We will implement and support a new approach to improving the international profile of Wales, as well as marketing what Wales has to offer, especially to the business community.

We will develop a more coherent approach to international engagement, forging new partnerships and dialogue between businesses, national institutions and educational establishments, developing our expertise in Wales. We will continue to press for an ethical foreign policy which emphasises conflict prevention and respects the role of the United Nations, and we will seek to find a strong voice for Wales and other devolved nations on international affairs.

We will press the UK Government to honour the commitment to deliver 0.7% of GDP as international aid. We will work with the UK Department for International Development to transfer appropriate functions and a budget for overseas work to the National Assembly. We will support the Wales for Africa programme. We reaffirm our support for the international Fair Trade movement and will encourage the use of Fair Trade products across the public sector. We will continue to press for further Europe-wide action to stop human trafficking.

Helping those who come to Wales for a better life

Plaid's civic nationalism celebrates tolerance, mutual understanding and difference. We condemn the point-scoring used by other parties and the pandering to unfounded xenophobic prejudices in the debate on immigration.

A Plaid Government will uphold the Refugee Convention, and we will press the UK Home Office to ensure that asylum-seeker cases are properly assessed. We will press for the adequate availability of free, good quality legal advice for asylum seekers in Wales. We will press the UK Home Office to publish regular and detailed asylum statistics for Wales on a national basis. We will invest in more high-quality, intensive Welsh and English language classes for refugees, so that they can feel at home in Wales, and part of the community.

We support the right of asylum seekers to work in the UK while they wait for status decisions to be made. We condemn the practice of housing recently-arrived asylum seekers, especially children, in "detention" or "removal" centres, as punitive and cruel, and we will continue to lobby the Westminster Government to ensure that they keep their promise to shut these centres.

Our Economy BetterWales// A strong and sustainable economy

Plaid Cymru is the only party of Government in Wales which has accepted that our economy is underperforming and that it can and must do better. Plaid wants to see wealth grow in Wales, not as an end in itself, but in order to transform the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of families and communities and lift people out of poverty.

In 2010 Plaid in Government also unveiled a radical plan for economic recovery: “Economic Renewal: A New Direction” brought with it a shake-up of how Government supports business in order for it to grow and thrive. Having shown that devolved Government can protect jobs and can recognise a failing business-support system and change it – we now need to deliver tangible improvement.

Building a strong economy

Our pledge for the next Assembly term is to transform the conditions for business in Wales to allow the private sector to flourish sustainably. We will work to increase Welsh exports and continue to improve our international trade profile. Our guiding aim will be to create an economy that works for

the people of Wales, helping us to live in sustainable communities with increased prosperity and well-being for all.

In the next Government, Plaid will deliver “Economic Renewal: A New Direction” with the real determination to make it succeed. Plaid will make Government more responsive to the needs of our economy by appointing a Minister for Economic Renewal with overall responsibility for business, infrastructure, skills, higher education and innovation. This department will also be responsible for business rates. We will publish an annual report on the performance of the Welsh Government in delivering a better infrastructure, more effective business support, a broader and deeper skills-base and the encouragement of innovation.

We will create a *Build for Wales* company for Wales to create up to 50,000 jobs, including 20,000 in the green sector. During the term of the next Assembly, the company will aim to invest as much as £500 million in modernising our public services. This will be underpinned by a Wales-wide Infrastructure Plan which will bring about investment in transport, our schools, our hospitals, our technology infrastructure and our energy.

We will also invest in a Regeneration Investment Fund in Wales over the next Assembly term as well as encouraging increased private sector investment and we will use

this money to promote sustainable investment, and growth and jobs in our towns and cities.

We will also pioneer major improvements in mobile phone, 3G, 4G and Wi-Fi coverage across Wales by using publicly-owned land and assets. We will ensure that Wales becomes the first Next Generation Broadband nation in the UK with high-speed links to all businesses in Wales by 2015 and every home by 2020. We will pioneer ‘Wi-Fi Wales’, a plan to enable free wireless connectivity in publicly-owned buildings in Wales.

Plaid will strive to ensure that the figure for public expenditure on research and development in Wales is increased from 2% of the total UK spend to 5% over the next Assembly term with a greater focus on the priority areas as identified by Plaid in Government: the digital economy, low carbon technologies, health and biosciences and advanced engineering and manufacturing.

We will work with the Welsh Manufacturing Forum to implement their new strategy aimed at establishing and developing more high-value-added manufacturing companies of all sizes, capable of identifying and capturing new opportunities – particularly in the field of low-carbon technology. We will support innovative leadership and we will commit to increasing the skill levels of employees.

Plaid will support the development of micro-finance, credit unions and other social-finance models and we will develop sustainable funding models to support social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals. We will form a Cooperative and Mutual Task Force to drive forward the social enterprise sector.

Helping our small businesses succeed

We will continue to value our small businesses and their vital contribution to our economy in all parts of Wales.

There is clear evidence that our small businesses face a struggle in accessing growth capital with the vast majority of businesses in Wales unable to tap into the UK Business Growth Fund because the turnover threshold is too high. We will therefore establish, in partnership with the private sector, a Welsh Growth Fund so that small and medium enterprises can have greater access to finance.

Businesses also need smaller, more easily-accessible loans. Plaid will investigate the use of community finance models in providing a more flexible, local solution to this problem. We will examine the possibility of using the credit union structure as a mechanism for paying public sector workers, providing money for the credit unions in order to lend to small and medium enterprises.

We will maintain the existing level of business-rate relief for businesses in Wales. We will review the current system to develop a business rates model which exempts crime-prevention measures and environmentally beneficial changes taken by small businesses from rateable value calculation, and we will introduce seasonality for businesses which rely on tourism.

We will create a Welsh Valuation Office Agency. Rateable value assessments must be undertaken fairly to provide a level playing field for small businesses, rather than favouring the larger out-of-town developments as they do at present.

We will undertake a detailed Retail Strategy for Wales. The retail sector is crucial to vibrant local economies and town centres, and contributes to the health of other businesses as well as providing services to local communities. We will design a national plan to improve town centres for local people and visitors, using empty shops as commercial offices, promoting local produce and creating more living space in town centres. We will ring-fence the Post Office Diversification Fund and we will continue to ensure the protection of local Post Offices and shops. We will oppose the privatisation of the Royal Mail.

We will ensure that Wales becomes a pioneer of 'green' technologies. We want to encourage and support the innovation and development

of the products and services that a low-carbon economy demands. We will support Welsh business so it can exploit the opportunities offered by our natural resources and take a leading role in developing low-carbon and sustainable energy technologies.

Plaid will seek to radically reform public sector procurement in Wales so that it addresses the challenges facing small businesses and provides greater opportunities for Welsh businesses. Currently, around 50% of goods and services purchased by the Welsh public sector are procured from Welsh-based suppliers. We want to increase that figure to 75% over the next Assembly term. We will introduce procurement models that are accessible to smaller businesses, and provide social and environmental clauses to promote the sustainable development of our economy.

We will apply social clauses where appropriate to ensure smaller businesses are paid promptly, which helps to support local employment and training opportunities. Through mapping the supply chain we will address the impact on small businesses of 'clumping' procurement contracts. We will measure the impact on small businesses of procurement within the Welsh public sector.

Access to European funding

European cohesion policy is designed to reduce the economic gap between the poorer and wealthier regions of the EU. In having an average GDP per person of less than 75% of the EU average, West Wales and the Valleys currently qualify for the maximum level of EU funding.

Within the next decade Plaid wants to see a Wales which is no longer reliant on receiving such financial support from the EU. In the meantime we will fight for the continuation of this vital funding. Both the previous Labour and present Tory-led UK Governments wanted to take away Wales's access to European funding without any guarantee that this would be replaced by Treasury funding.

Plaid in Government will lead the negotiations to secure this EU aid in the next round of funding. A further priority for Plaid will be to simplify and streamline the bureaucratic requirements imposed on applicants and ensure that the funds are put to the best possible use in delivering economic renewal and supporting infrastructure developments.

Skills for a sustainable and flexible 21st century workforce

At the heart of every successful economy is a highly-valued flexible workforce with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet a country's present and future economic and

social needs. In partnership with employers and education providers, Plaid has begun the work of investing in major skills initiatives to meet the requirements of a renewed economy and to recognise the importance of lifelong learning.

With the predicted loss of 52,000 public sector jobs in Wales over the next four years, a Plaid Government will ensure that funding is in place for the *Adapt* programme, to provide training, advice and guidance to the public sector, following the success of the Welsh Government *ProAct* and *ReAct* private sector schemes.

We will increase attainment in the skills that will develop Wales's potential for economic growth – in subjects such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics – and we will use European funding to support scholarships and apprenticeships through the new National Science Academy.

We will tackle the low levels of literacy and numeracy in the current workforce by rolling out the new Basic Skills in the Workplace projects to support at least 1000 employers and 30,000 employees.

We will streamline and refocus support for unemployed young people by developing a modern, high value in-work training programme. Our aim will be to increase the employability of young people to prepare them for the world of work.

Powers over job-search provision, including JobCentre Plus, should be devolved to the National Assembly, so that we can develop a Welsh solution to employment issues in response to UK Government plans to privatise these services.

Plaid will seek to establish National Terms of Employment for staff at Further Education colleges and we will end incorporation. We will work in partnership with the education sector and industry to develop new and innovative apprenticeships and Learning Pathways courses to ensure a seamless route for learners from further education to higher education.

Plaid will support 30,000 apprenticeships and we will extend the Young Recruits programme, which provides a wage subsidy to employers taking on additional young apprentices. Plaid knows that employers value apprenticeships and that they provide vital opportunities to people of all ages who are seeking access to employment.

We will build on the work of *GwirVol* by creating a nationwide volunteering scheme in which young people may complete up to a year of volunteering before leaving school. We will also look at a model pioneered by *City Year* which helps young people develop their skills by becoming tutors, mentors and role models.

Our universities and our economy

Higher education has a key role to play in promoting economic, social, cultural and political development. If Wales and her people are to reach their full potential, our universities need to be further strengthened and improved. For Plaid, this means widening access, and ensuring that we have a world-class higher education research and teaching system. We will aim to see our universities competing with the best in the world.

Plaid, in principle, supports moves to reorganise the Welsh university sector so that scarce funding may be concentrated on front-line teaching and research rather than bureaucratic duplication. Mergers should be directed by strategic considerations about the shape of the Welsh higher education sector. We will continue the reform of the higher education sector by seeking voluntary amalgamations and closer working.

A Plaid Government will meet the extra cost of top-up fees for Welsh-domiciled students, whether they study in Wales or elsewhere within the UK. We will not support any further increases in tuition fees for our higher education students and we will seek the abolition of tuition fees as and when public finances allow.

We will develop options for part-time study by increasing flexibility in higher education and we will provide tuition-fee loans to part-time students. We will encourage universities in Wales to offer two-year undergraduate courses. We will ensure equal access to higher education and reduced tuition fees for Welsh-domiciled asylum-seeking children.

Plaid in Government will actively support Welsh universities' case for a visa regime that maintains their overseas-student base. This will be vital not only to the financial health of our universities, but also to their diversity and intellectual vitality. It will cultivate longer-term relations between Wales and the international community.

Research Councils will be called to account over persistent complaints that proposals for Wales-focused research are not being funded. If there is no improvement, we will seek the devolution of research funding on a per capita basis. We will ensure that the Research Excellence Framework also takes Wales-focused research seriously.

Our Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

Plaid is proud of our success in delivering the Welsh higher education institution, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

We will monitor closely the implementation plans for the Coleg

Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and we will ensure it has an independent stream of funding and student register. We will strengthen the capacity of Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to plan strategically for future development rather than simply reacting to proposals for particular departments or schools. Plaid will establish a similar system to the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol for further education in Wales.

An All-Wales modern, integrated transport infrastructure

Plaid Cymru in the Welsh Government has significantly changed the way transport is planned, costed and delivered. For the first time, more resources are now dedicated to integrated transport – rail, bus, walking, cycling, interchanges, and real time information – than to roads alone.

With Westminster announcing swingeing cuts over the next four years to the Welsh Government's capital expenditure, delivering the Plaid Government National Transport Plan will be a challenge. Yet a better transport infrastructure for Wales will continue to be a priority for Plaid.

A Plaid Government will increase spending on integrated public transport to 65% of the transport budget by the end of the next Assembly term.

The rail franchise agreement for Wales needs a complete overhaul. We will seek to ensure that the responsibility for the service is transferred entirely to the Welsh Government and we will create a not-for-distributable-profit company to run the service.

Plaid will also complete the devolution of responsibility and funding for Network Rail in order to complete the work of electrifying the Great Western Main Line to Swansea, electrify the Valley Lines Network and put in place a plan for the electrification of the North Wales Main Line and the Marches Line.

Plaid Cymru introduced the first bespoke north to south rail express. We will ensure that journey times are reduced and that line improvements are made to ensure it serves Wrexham and the north-east more effectively. We will establish a complementary south to north morning service.

We will also increase the frequency of rail services between Cardiff and the west of Wales, and from Fishguard to the east, and examine opportunities to introduce light-rail links in parts of the country, as well as enabling direct services between Ebbw Vale and Newport. We will support more services across mid Wales. Following the success of the Ebbw Vale service, we will reopen services on disused lines where there is a good case to do so.

We will seek further powers to regulate bus services and ensure that bus travel is available to all passengers in all parts of Wales. We will also negotiate with bus operators to ensure that better passenger information and more modern vehicles are provided. We will continue to extend the Bwcabus rural public transport model and we will place a greater requirement for local authorities to support community transport initiatives. Plaid is committed to keeping concessionary fares for elderly and disabled people in Wales. We will use the best technology, such as smartcards, to ensure that finances are used wisely.

We will implement a new, express 'TrawsCymru' service, a brand new replacement for the Trawscambria buses with better integrated transport links to rail and park-and-ride, as well as new coaches and fare options.

We will review the value of the north-south air link at the end of the current contract.

We will initiate discussions about the transfer of ownership, or joint ownership, of the Severn Bridge, with the aim of significantly reducing the tolls and using the money raised for the maintenance of the bridges and the upgrading of Welsh infrastructure.

Addressing congestion issues on the north-east border and the M4 will continue to be a priority for Plaid, as will continuing to improve transport

links between north and south. We will maintain the programme of improvements to the A465 Heads of the Valleys road by 2020, as well as improving the A477 and A40 in the west and the A470 and A487 in the north.

We will roll out our Sustainable Travel Town initiative to larger towns by providing high-quality public transport services and enhanced provision for cyclists and pedestrians, including an extended network of paths, railway tunnels and towpaths. We will also seek to ensure and extend integration of the National Cycle Network. We will introduce a 20mph speed limit near schools and in some residential areas.

We will support investment in an infrastructure for electric powered vehicles. We will aim to ensure that all Welsh Government cars are electric powered vehicles by 2020.

Tourism: showing the world what Wales has to offer

The tourism industry contributes billions of pounds a year to the Welsh economy and Plaid's ambition is to grow the visitor economy to take advantage of Wales's outstanding natural, historical and cultural heritage. The industry is a major employer and plays an important role in sustaining many rural and coastal communities.

In the next Government, Plaid will invest an additional £3m a year

in the new Tourism Investment Support Scheme which will allow tourist businesses to realise new capital investment, drive quality improvements and support up to 1,000 new local jobs in construction and other activity.

We will seek to maximise the impact of our built heritage on the experience of tourists visiting Wales. We believe that preserving and developing Wales's built heritage should be closely allied to our regeneration aims. We will continue to support the development of Tourism Centres of Excellence in coastal and inland area in Wales through maximising the use of European funding. We will also invest in the outdoor- activities sector, for the benefit of local people as well as tourists.

We will support the further development of tourism marketing and the strengthening of the "Welsh brand" through the "Celebrating Wales" programme, which will be implemented during the next Assembly term. We will further promote tourism within Wales.

We will also improve awareness of the Welsh food and drink on offer to tourists through better marketing and branding at home and overseas. We will support the pub industry and micro-breweries in Wales by seeking to protect the unique identity of our wine, beer and cider industries. We will incorporate the needs of our smaller independently owned pubs into our Retail Strategy.

We will invest in the Plaid Government Major Events Strategy to ensure that it is a success. We will work with partners and stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors in building Wales's position as a world-class destination for major sporting, cultural and arts events.

Our People BetterWales// Caring for a healthier nation

Plaid wants to see a Wales where all of its citizens are able to live healthy and fulfilled lives – a country renowned for the quality of life enjoyed by the people who live here. Plaid believes that with a greater focus on lifelong wellbeing – on prevention as well as on cure - Wales can be a healthier country, but the scale of the health challenge we face as a nation is clear.

Epidemics of chronic disease have become a feature of Welsh communities: obesity, heart disease, cancer and diabetes are all too common. Our excellent NHS has a crucial role to play and we will continue, as we have during our last four years in Government, to protect access to local health services in rural and urban communities. But with the mounting costs of chronic illnesses and with an ageing

population we cannot afford to divert attention from the root causes of ill-health and must continue to address the pressures facing the care system.

In the next Government, Plaid will refocus resources and invest a record amount of money in creating a world-class care system for people living with cancer and chronic conditions, including stroke survivors and those with heart disease. Our patient-centred approach will include one-to-one personal care from a key worker and advice from the moment of diagnosis. Patients will be supported in making decisions about social needs such as income and housing, and their medical experience and outcomes will be improved.

We will renegotiate contracts with GPs, dentists, optometrists, orthodontists and community pharmacists, and Plaid will direct all local health boards to undertake a detailed review of primary and community care. This will result in improving accessibility of doctors and other health professionals and will better meet the needs of patients and communities.

We will also give priority to improving urgent Out of Hours services across Wales, using the cooperative model as an example of best practice. Greater accessibility to these services would lessen the pressure on A&E departments and the ambulance

service.

We remain committed to district general hospitals providing services as close as possible to people's homes. Where people need to travel for specialist treatment, we will promote collaborative ways of working, with as much treatment as possible taking place close to home.

We will monitor the delivery of the Rural Health Plan and ensure that people living in our rural communities are not disadvantaged because of geographical difficulties in accessing services.

We will ensure that NHS Direct continues to play a valuable role in supporting and providing initial triage for out of hours care.

We will continue to develop intelligent targets that not only measure process but, more importantly, patient experience and outcome. We will work to reduce waiting times, with an immediate priority of ensuring that no patient has to wait more than 26 weeks from referral to treatment.

We will implement a National Deaf Strategy which will ensure equality of opportunity, better hearing-support, and enhancement of the quality of life of the 480,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing people in Wales.

We will promote good eye care and eliminate avoidable sight loss with investment in Eye Clinic Liaison Officers across Wales and enhanced

rehabilitation provision.

We will ensure that people living with muscle disease in Wales have access to a multi-disciplinary care, support and advice service. We will establish a specialised neuromuscular care service to support families, and co-ordinate services whilst significantly reducing the cost of unplanned emergency admissions.

We will press local authorities to work in partnership with the voluntary sector to provide welfare and benefits rights services targeted at people with disabilities and ill-health across Wales.

We will deliver on Welsh Government promises to improve health services for people with neurological conditions and injuries.

We will work with the voluntary sector towards a consistent approach to funding for hospices and palliative care in the community. We will ensure that the necessary medical skills exist in every community so that people can die in their own home if that is what they wish.

Healthcare in your community, when you need it

Better community-health provision will speed up hospital discharges, provide rehabilitation in people's own homes, and reduce hospital re-admissions.

We believe that excellent community-

based services, such as occupational therapists and physiotherapists, are essential to continued support for patients and families. We will implement the Community Nursing Strategy.

Plaid will encourage pharmacists to become more involved in their communities as local public health practitioners and advisors. We will also integrate the work of community pharmacists into our care plans for those with cancer and chronic conditions.

Focusing on better wellbeing

We will continue to roll out our new Community Health service which includes more school nurses, continued investment in community nursing, check-ups at work and the on-going development of 'Community Wellbeing Centres'. These centres will deliver more outpatient treatment outside of hospitals and will improve continuing care through better integration of health and social care.

We will also introduce an entitlement to Personal Health Plans and an annual check up which will include exercise, diet and specialist care. We will establish an integrated patient-health record system to make patient information available in all relevant care settings. We will ensure that patients in Wales have access to their health records free of charge.

We will protect free prescriptions. We know that they benefit everyone in Wales, especially those who have chronic illnesses.

We will complete the process of legislating to introduce a system of soft presumed consent for organ donation.

We will continue to roll out the Eating Disorders Framework for Wales. GPs and their teams will have a clearly defined role in diagnosing, assessing and supporting patients with eating disorders, and local Mental Health Services will provide advice, assessment and direct intervention. Plaid will ring-fence the funding for these services and will work with the sector to examine the possibility of creating an in-patient unit. We will require all dentists who receive training through the NHS to provide a minimum proportion of their time working under NHS terms.

We will enable ward sisters and charge nurses in hospitals to take responsibility for everything on their ward including cleanliness and hygiene; protecting patients' mealtimes and quality of food; raising the standard of care; and maintaining the dignity and the respect of patients.

Plaid will also ensure that in order to maintain the highest standard of cleanliness the Cleaning Operatives Proficiency Certificate Award is adopted across the NHS; this will ensure that all ward cleaners receive a minimum standard of training.

Improving mental health services for everyone

Plaid will implement the Mental Health Measure which provides new rights in relation to the assessment, treatment and advocacy for people with mental health conditions.

We will maintain the ring-fencing of funding for mental health services and ensure that care and treatment plans are provided for mental health treatment in hospitals.

We will equip A&E workers to screen people for mental health problems and ensure appropriate referrals.

We will introduce link workers to provide information and support to mental health patients and those who care for them as well as help with access to specialist services.

We will enhance Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Wales, and work towards implementing the recommendations of the Welsh Audit Office / Health Inspectorate Review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

We will prioritise the ending of mixed-sex accommodation for residential mental health patients.

We will legislate to provide the same rights to access to treatment for people living with chronic, severe substance misuse problems as are now provided for people with mental

health problems. We will strengthen the focus on substance misuse prevention and treatment.

More efficient health and care services – for you

We will work with local authorities to ensure new, integrated cross-boundary arrangements for the commissioning, procurement and delivery of social services. Plaid wants to see big improvements in collaboration between social services, local health boards and other key partners. We will reinforce corporate accountability for the standard of service provided based on outcomes. The proposals for the new structure will be completed by the end of 2011.

We will pass the responsibility for the provision of ambulance services to Local Health Boards and we will abolish the Ambulance Trust. We will support the Air Ambulance Service and we will work to effectively integrate the Air Ambulance with other emergency services.

In the next Assembly term we will cut the number of NHS middle managers by 10% and we will make the Chief Executives of every Local Health Board, Trust and Local Authority more publicly accountable for delivery.

We will task the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Nursing Officer in Wales to work with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) to direct

a quality audit so that standards of care are monitored, and to ensure that the numbers of frontline staff are not being reduced at the expense of clinical care. We will review the powers of the Healthcare Inspectorate for Wales to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

We will work with the Welsh Language Commissioner to introduce new standards in relation to the provision of Welsh language health and care services, and develop opportunities for healthcare professionals to be trained through the medium of Welsh. We will ensure that bilingual health and social care workers are trained to provide care in Welsh and English.

We will create a National Pharmacy for Wales as a central point of procurement to reduce payment and optimise the supply chain. We will reduce wastage in the supply chain of clinical and non-clinical supplies.

Preventing illness

A Plaid Government will set out a long term vision for ill-health prevention.

We will legislate to ban tobacco displays and cigarette vending machines in order to further discourage children in particular from smoking. We will also legislate against smoking in cars when children are present and to ban smoking in playgrounds.

We will also support the introduction of legislation on the availability, labelling and cost of alcohol in Wales. Displays of alcohol should be confined to a single area in shops, accompanied by clear health warnings. A minimum price of 50p a unit for alcohol should be introduced.

We will complete the process of outlawing the use of sun beds by persons under 18 years of age and the operation of unstaffed sun bed salons. We will ban sun beds from local-Government leisure centres.

We know that obesity is a growing problem in Wales. Plaid wants our young people to become fitter, healthier and happier – and to have fun while doing so. Through the “MEND” programme, we will help children and their parents to learn about healthy eating and to enjoy physical activity. We will devolve the functions of the Food Standards Agency to Wales.

We will strengthen sexual-health services, particularly for young people, and ensure that there is a sexual-health specialist within every county’s school nursing team. We will ensure schools deliver preventative education about domestic violence, gender equality, healthy relationships and self-esteem.

Caring for others

We will maintain our commitment to Carers’ Rights and we will rigorously implement and monitor the development of the Carers Strategies Measure.

We will work to support unpaid carers across Wales by improving their local services and helping carers to make a real choice in combining work and care. We will continue to set a national cap on the weekly cost of non-residential social care services for older and disabled people. We will also prevent councils from charging for transport to day centres.

We will work to eliminate delayed transfers of care, improve services and raise the esteem of social workers and care assistants. We will review the guidance on continuing care and ensure that it is applied consistently across local authorities.

Plaid will examine the case for creating a comprehensive advocacy service for older people and simplify access to support and information.

We will ensure that all decisions about paying for services and about staff pay and conditions are made in Wales. We will legislate to establish a mandatory national register for all care workers in order to ensure high standards of care.

We will introduce a set of National Terms and Conditions for social workers. We will develop consultant social worker grades to enable social workers to progress in their careers without having to leave frontline practice. We will provide a Social Care Record to complement the Individual Health Record.

Through NISCHR we will establish a Centre of Excellence for Social Services Research to strengthen the quality and quantity of social care research and to develop capacity.

We will abolish means-testing for the people who require a Disabled Facilities Grant.

In the long term, Plaid remains committed to providing free care provision and will make this a priority when Wales is fairly funded by the UK Treasury.

BetterWales// Giving our children the best start in life

Our children, regardless of their background or family income, should have the same opportunities to reach their full potential and grow in skill and capacity. Too often our children’s talents are stifled, their interests dampened, and their ambition suppressed. Too many talented teachers have been de-motivated, robbing Wales and the world of our most precious asset: our creativity.

In Wales, we know the value of education, but we have not created an education system which truly reflects that and which is truly worthy of our young people. It is nothing short of a scandal that 1 in 4 adults in Wales have a reading and writing age of 11 or below. Yet we will not succeed in lifting our communities out of poverty or in creating a strong, sustainable economy if our young people are ill-prepared for life and the workplace. The fact that around 10% of our young people are not in education, work or training is a complete waste of the youth of our nation.

Education – reaching our full potential

It is time to equip and free up students to learn and teachers to teach with the tools, the encouragement and the respect which allow them to excite, motivate and deliver higher standards. We aspire to see Wales, within this decade, appearing alongside the best nations in Europe for educational attainment.

In the next Government, Plaid will focus on ensuring that our young people leave school motivated and ready for the world of work. We will make improving the basic skills of our children in reading, writing, counting and computer skills our number one priority.

Our aim is to halve illiteracy and innumeracy rates for children leaving

primary school in Wales by 2016 and virtually eliminate the problem by 2020, by ensuring that at least 95% of all children leave primary school functionally literate and numerate to the standards expected of an 11 year old.

Plaid will continue to oppose the marketisation of education. We reject the models of ‘free’ schools, ‘foundation’ schools and academies. Instead we will bear down on poor education standards and address the underfunding of schools by redirecting resources from management and bureaucracy to the classroom and producing guidelines for local authority support services.

Good teaching and improved teaching standards will be vital to the success of Wales’s literacy and numeracy drive. Tracking children’s progress throughout their education is simply not good enough: we must intervene at an early stage to give every child the best possible opportunities. In addition to providing extra investment in classroom-based training and mentoring, we will also give teachers more freedom to innovate and inspire. The Welsh Government will not micro-manage the programme. Instead, schools will devise clear plans for reaching targets, head teachers will be expected to play a direct role in ensuring the success of the scheme, and Estyn will play a role in measuring the outcomes.

We know that the vast majority of our teachers are enthusiastic and

talented professionals who deserve to be respected. But Plaid will not accept poor teaching at any level, we will not tolerate weak leadership from head teachers, and we will not accept inadequate practice from local authorities and the Welsh Government. Education is delivered by a system, not just by individual schools. Our best teachers and leaders must be freed from the need to waste creative energy battling to secure support and resources for their schools.

We will introduce a more rigorous and flexible inspection system for teachers and schools, aimed at improving performance and outcomes for children, as well as catching any problems early on.

Plaid will examine whether the period of training for new teachers should be extended and if there is a need to provide greater mentoring, monitoring and evaluation during the first years of a teacher’s professional career. We will prioritise more continuing professional development for those teachers who wish to up-skill.

Plaid will reconfigure support services and administration across local authorities to ensure more money reaches classrooms. We will examine a funding model which has a greater focus on catchment areas rather than per-pupil spend. We will remove the cost of school buildings from the education budget and treat them as community

assets in local authority budgets. We will support the development of community-focused schools.

We will work with local authorities to ensure new, integrated cross-boundary arrangements for education. We will insist on more regional collaboration across local education authorities and other key partners.

Plaid will not shy away from its responsibility to transform failing schools. We will direct Estyn to play a greater role in monitoring and improving the standards of failing schools. Closing them, in line with Labour’s plans, amounts to punishing families, teachers and communities for the weak leadership of others.

As a priority, we will review school hours and school term times to examine whether the current arrangements are best placed to meet the needs of a 21st century education system.

We firmly reject league tables for Wales including Labour’s plans to introduce a national system for the grading of schools. We will, however, ensure that annual reports are prepared for parents outlining the performance of each school.

We will review the work of the General Teaching Council for Wales, and look into establishing a General Education Council for Wales instead.

We will also review the functions of governing bodies and assess whether they are best placed to provide adequate support and scrutiny for schools.

We will seek the devolution of pay and conditions for teachers and negotiate with trade unions to agree Welsh national terms. We believe that the fragmentation of the school structure in England now presents us with an opportunity to establish a national set of terms and conditions here in Wales. We will ensure fair pay and conditions for support staff, supply and agency teachers.

Plaid will review the National Curriculum to ensure that it meets our aims of raising attainment in basic skills, improving Wales's performance in STEM subjects and broadening each child's understanding of Wales and the world in relation to history, culture and citizenship. We will support the teaching of modern foreign languages in primary schools. We will continue to reform and develop the Welsh Baccalaureate.

We will establish a single body to coordinate and streamline the work carried out to help our young people who are not in education, work or training.

Teaching Welsh to the next generation

We will respond to the demand for the provision of Welsh-medium education by increasing the number of children who are taught through the medium of Welsh and exceeding the targets in the Welsh-Medium Education Strategy.

Plaid will ensure that local authorities fulfil their duty to measure the demand for Welsh medium education and respond positively to the demand. We will carefully monitor the outcome of these surveys and, if necessary, we will legislate so that the needs of pupils and parents are met. We will ring fence the funding stream for Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin. We will conduct an urgent review into the linguistic categorisation of schools.

We will increase the number of students studying GCSEs and 16-19 qualifications through the medium of Welsh and improve Welsh-medium education provision for children with Special Educational Needs.

Plaid will improve the system for the teaching of Welsh as a second language. Schools must be given support and advice to ensure that all education policies are compatible with bilingual provision and we will improve the training for teachers who teach Welsh as a second language. We will look at introducing Welsh as a core subject at GCSE level and developing bilingual post-16 vocational courses.

Supporting our children and young people

Plaid believes that greater redistribution is the key to tackling child poverty – not simply creating wealth but sharing it more equitably. Until this is recognised by the UK Government in its taxation and welfare policies, then reaching the widely agreed aim of eradicating the problem by 2020 in Wales will remain a challenge. That will not deter us in Government from doing all we can to meet this commitment.

Plaid will put addressing child poverty at the heart of all decisions it makes in Government. We will develop 'severe poverty' milestones in the Child Poverty Strategy and we will do everything we can to eradicate child poverty by 2020. We will press for a move away from complex and expensive means-testing for benefits. We condemn the decision to end universal child benefit.

We will protect the Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative and the School Milk Scheme in the next Government. We believe that children's health and concentration is improved by these schemes, and that this will contribute to better learning and improved educational achievement. We will also continue to support young people from lower-income families with the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Plaid will reform Communities First, slashing bureaucracy and focusing support on community-led initiatives that can show clear outcomes. We will integrate all the Government initiatives that support active communities, ensuring the maximum spend is available to civil society. We will refocus Communities First resources on skills development, educational achievement and improving the life chances of vulnerable children and young people.

We will support Integrated Family Support Teams and expand the network of Integrated Children Centres, targeting vulnerable children and families with complex needs, with a focus on joint working between children's and adults' social services.

Plaid recognises that adequate and affordable childcare is essential in tackling child poverty. We will ensure that accessible training for child minders and nannies is available and that local authorities interpret consistently across Wales planning guidance for home-based childcare. We will expand the Flying Start programme, offering free childcare to thousands of children in Wales, and increasing its provision through the medium of Welsh.

Plaid will commission advocacy services for children and young people from third sector providers nationally through the National Advocacy Unit. We will review the National Service Framework for

Children and Young People and develop targets that measure service-user experience and outcomes, not just process.

We will give priority to child protection and we will work to transform the life chances of looked after children, especially their educational achievement. We will review the work of Local Safeguarding Children Boards and take the necessary steps to maximize their effectiveness. Plaid will introduce a national bursary, requiring local authorities to support young people in care who go on to university.

We will develop a National Set of Terms and Conditions for Foster Carers and we will review the balance of provision for looked after children between foster care and residential care. We will minimize out-of-county placements and end out-of-country placements. We will create a national adoption service for Wales ensuring the best possible choice of potential adoptive parents for children in need of adoption.

We will promote financial education among children and young people and encourage young savers to use their local credit unions.

Plaid will seek the full devolution of the Family Courts, and following its devolution, will ensure the Family Courts operate from a Children's Rights perspective. In the meantime we will ensure that the Children and

Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) works from a Children's Rights perspective, and that Cafcass has sufficient resources to enable workers to make a full and thorough investigation of each child's individual circumstances.

We will ensure that services are available in Welsh and that Family Court cases can be heard in Welsh. Following the devolution of the service, we will ensure that staff across public services fully understand the implications of rulings regarding parental responsibility, so that, for example, non-resident parents are routinely sent copies of school reports and are consulted about decisions regarding their children's health.

We will retain the post of Children's Commissioner in Wales and ensure that it is properly resourced. We will legislate to enhance the Commissioner's statutory powers and its independence by moving its funding to non-departmental expenditure immediately and bringing it within the responsibility of the National Assembly for Wales. Plaid will support the retention of the Children and Young People's Committee in the Assembly.

BetterWales// Better Homes, Vibrant Communities

Plaid wants a Wales where the health and well-being of its citizens is improved because they can live in affordable, safe and good quality homes. Four years ago, Plaid in Government promised to create 6,500 affordable homes in Wales. We exceeded that target – but we need to do more.

Being able to buy or rent a warm, affordable home is one of the most important components of a decent standard of living. Where we live can have a huge impact on the opportunities we face and our quality of life. Raising the standard of housing can improve the health of our citizens, reduce energy bills, boost the local economy, and make a significant contribution to cutting carbon emissions.

Your home, your community

Plaid is committed to tackling the housing challenges facing 21st century Wales. We will seek new ways of financing more affordable housing. We'll introduce a greater range of affordable housing options, including for first-time buyers.

Despite budget cuts, Plaid will aim to create at least 6,500 new affordable homes in Wales over the next Assembly term, tapping into new sources of finance.

Plaid will introduce more intermediate housing including a *Rent Now - Buy Later* scheme, helping more people on low incomes who are unlikely to be able to access social housing. This will allow people to pay rent below market value on properties outside the social rented sector and in some cases will contribute towards a deposit for those who want to buy the property.

We will support low cost home ownership, including through the *Homebuy* scheme, by which people can share the cost of buying a house with a social landlord. As buyers only have to borrow a proportion of the house price from a mortgage lender, monthly payments are more affordable.

We'll bring new sources of finance to invest in affordable housing, working with financial institutions and housing providers. We will challenge the UK Government to end the unfair housing finance system which sees some £80 million of rent by social tenants transferred to the Treasury instead of being used to improve their homes.

We will encourage lenders to invest in the affordable housing stock in Wales through implementing a new Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations, taking a risk based and outcome focused approach to regulation.

We will introduce a revised-rent benchmarking regime which protects standards, is transparent and robust, and ensures fairer rents.

We will bring empty properties back into use through a balance of incentives and disincentives, including allowing local authorities to charge up to 200% council tax on second homes and empty properties and introducing repayable grants to finance their redevelopment.

In rural areas, we will maintain the network of rural housing enablers who play a key role in expanding affordable housing choices. We will issue updated guidance on TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language and we will examine the introduction of an objective process for assessing the impact of development on the Welsh language.

We will ensure housing providers maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standards and identify where further improvements can be made, including low-carbon housing.

We will increase the capacity of the private rented sector by working to tackle poor landlords and encourage best practice. We will legislate to introduce compulsory written tenancy terms.

We will regulate the management of Park Homes so that we can provide basic protection for vulnerable residents against rogue owners and

allow Park Homes to play their role in increasing the supply of affordable homes.

There for you when you need us

Managing your home can be hard. All sorts of things can make it difficult, from struggling with the bills to health problems. Plaid believes that the most effective way to tackle homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. A little help early on can save a lot of hardship for individuals and families as well as prevent greater public costs.

We will support civil-society organisations to run services in their communities by making it easier for public assets to be transferred to civil-society groups where they will be used for community benefit.

We will support socially responsible finance initiatives to help prevent people getting into unmanageable debt and to manage debt better.

Plaid in Government will protect the Supporting People budget and we will implement the conclusions of the independent Aylward review, including revising current funding streams, adopting a collaborative approach to administering the Programme Grant and ring-fencing the Grant so that it can be only be used to fund support services, projects and programmes that meet the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

Plaid will support older people to stay independent in their homes through the Extra Care schemes, Care and Repair programmes and the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme which prevents hospital admissions and enables quicker hospital discharges. We will maximise the use of telecare in our housing policies to improve safety in the home for our disabled and elderly people so that they can retain as much independence as possible.

Free, truly independent advice and advocacy services are essential in enabling people to make informed choices, express their views and exercise their rights. We will ensure that national independent consumer and advocacy services are answerable to the National Assembly for Wales.

Tackling fuel poverty

Nobody in Wales should have to choose between putting a meal on the table and keeping warm. Living in poorly insulated and energy inefficient houses is not only expensive but it's bad for our health and it's putting damaging pressure on our natural environment. We urgently need to reduce carbon emissions from the housing sector.

Plaid will ensure that the next Government facilitates the investment of £350 million in a national area-based home insulation and retrofitting programme targeting low income families first, building on the first stage of ARBED.

We will enable households in Wales to retrofit their homes by supporting the establishment of a loan scheme to finance domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy measures across Wales.

Safer communities

Everyone in Wales has the right to live in a community that feels safe. As a priority, Plaid will seek the devolution of the criminal justice system in order to develop an integrated approach based on restorative justice.

In the next Government, Plaid will call for the devolution of the criminal justice system so that Wales can introduce a progressive and more responsive approach to ensuring safer communities.

Following the devolution of criminal justice, Plaid will launch a National Commission on Policing. This comprehensive project will look at the future role and functions of Welsh police forces, including what people in Wales want from their police authorities and the changing demands of a 21st century Wales. With that in mind, we will continue to oppose the introduction of elected police commissioners, as we believe that politics should not be a part of our criminal justice system.

As part of our National Commission on Policing, we will seek clear agreement on the funding mechanisms between

the UK Treasury, the UK Home Office, and the Welsh Government, as well as assurance about fair Home Office funding settlements in the future.

We will work towards a Welsh system of restorative justice and community policing. We will introduce more support for victims and witnesses to help people feel safer in their communities and we will introduce community sentencing where appropriate.

A key aspect of our action to make communities safer will be more drug rehabilitation places and programmes, education about drugs and alcohol in every school in Wales and better amenities for young people in their communities.

Plaid Cymru has noted the disproportionate number of ex-service personnel in prison and has called for a strategic review of the ways in which welfare support is administered to veterans. We will press for immediate action to promote and ensure the physical and mental health and wellbeing of military personnel, in the form of a Military Wellbeing Act to safeguard the rights of armed forces personnel and their families to ongoing after-care, legal advice and counselling support, as well as improved compensation, housing, healthcare and treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.

We will implement “The Right to be Safe”, the Welsh Government’s six year integrated strategy for tackling all forms of violence against women. We need to ensure more joint working between

help and assistance for survivors and seeking justice through our criminal justice system. Social services, local government, housing, CPS, police and the courts system need to work in an integrated manner in order to fully support victims and survivors who have experience domestic abuse.

Plaid will continue to press for bilingual juries in Wales and a separate legal jurisdiction for Wales. We will press for the building of juvenile and women’s prisons and we fully support a prison in the north of Wales.

BetterWales// Celebrating our Language, Heritage and Sport

Our passion in Wales for our diverse culture, our unique language, our sport and heritage is renowned, as is the breathtaking beauty of our landscape and our fascinating and remarkable history. Plaid understands that these are all vital components in the social and economic wellbeing of our communities and nation - they heighten our sense of awareness of who we are and how we got here. They also present us with a tremendous opportunity to help Wales, and the people of our country, grow in confidence.

Since devolution, people across the world have begun to read about and to understand a Wales they

never knew, but Plaid believes that so much more can be done to raise the profile of our nation on the international stage and to share the benefits of a country which is growing in its self-assurance.

Plaid Cymru will lead a major initiative to “Celebrate Wales” during the next Assembly term, culminating in a “Festival of Wales” year, which will include Homecoming Wales, as well as strategic trade missions across the world.

“Celebrating Wales” will feature across Government and will seek to increase our confidence in our nation and its ability to achieve and shine in areas such as education, business, tourism, sport, literature, and the arts. It will involve community and educational schemes such as the programme introduced in Brittany where schools are linked with areas of our natural environment in order to raise awareness and understanding of our heritage. There will be a drive to attract major events to all parts of Wales and we will invest in the gateways to our nation.

The arts and our heritage

Plaid believes that maintaining investment in the arts and culture in both Welsh and English, as well as in minority languages, is vital – not least in terms of reaching our long term social and economic aims. Plaid’s action in Government in funding cultural activities in Wales recognises the important

contribution arts bodies can make to the quality of people’s lives, particularly in education, health and social inclusion.

Our continued aim will be to ensure that the best of the arts in Wales thrives in the future; that we promote our international reputation for creativity and excellence; and, most importantly, that we extend the reach of the arts to more people and more communities.

In the next Government Plaid will maintain the planned arts and heritage funding, for both its intrinsic value and its contribution to the growth of our nation.

We will further develop the People’s Collection as a gateway into Wales’s entire historic heritage and include it in the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom.

We will develop and expand our programme of community events and festivals, working with local people, and targeting key areas of deprivation close to CADW sites. We will build on the success of community-engagement projects and we will introduce and actively promote free weekend CADW “Open Days” for all, supported by special events.

We will maintain free entry to our National Museum sites and seek to ensure that every child has the opportunity to visit at least one of these sites during his or her school career.

We are committed to developing and modernising the National History Museum in St Fagan's. We will ensure that all national institutions within the Heritage portfolio maximise their efficiencies and enrich the experience of visitors and tourists.

We will maintain our support for our national arts companies and, through increased funding to community arts organisations, we will encourage more people across all walks of life to participate in the arts. We will work with local authorities and arts organisations to ensure a minimum level of provision of arts activity for young people in every local authority area.

We will develop, in partnership with the education department and the Arts Council of Wales, a new approach to how children and young people access the arts. This will include providing more opportunities for children to access the arts and theatre as part of their school experience; reforming the way music education is taught and resourced in our schools; creating a National Bursary for Young Musicians and Performers; ensuring that every one of the revenue-funded arts organisations in Wales has a scheme to increase access to cultural activity for low income families; and working with the WJEC to introduce more Welsh texts and literature into the curriculum.

We will support apprenticeship schemes in the arts to open up new training and work opportunities in the creative industries, as well as links overseas.

We will provide more opportunities for visual arts and crafts to thrive and reinvigorate public art particular in new arts spaces across Wales.

We will support the creation of an additional national holiday to mark St David's Day, and we will actively promote events in Wales and across the world in order to boost Welsh tourism and increased awareness of our nation.

We believe that libraries must inspire people to enjoy reading, improve their knowledge, develop their skills and participate in their respective communities. We will support the implementation of the strategic development framework for Welsh libraries and we will continue to fund the modernisation of local libraries.

Broadcasting and our creative industries

In order to achieve its social and economic aims, Wales needs not only a thriving arts and culture sector, but excellent broadcasting services and innovative creative industries. At this time, the future of these sectors is being threatened not only by the Westminster Government, which is seeking to undermine the future of S4C, but also by the major broadcasting companies who are cutting services in Wales.

We will seek the transfer of responsibility and funding for broadcasting and broadcasting regulation in Wales to the National Assembly, along with control over radio licences in order to protect and develop services in both the Welsh and English languages. We will give Welsh audiences a greater say over the distribution of FM frequencies in Wales and we will ensure that DAB digital radio is available across the country.

Plaid Cymru is committed to protecting high-quality public service broadcasting and media. We will support the development of multi-platform services for audiences in Wales. We will safeguard the editorial, financial and operational independence of S4C as well as securing long-term, sustainable funding for the channel.

Plaid will continue to maximise the social, cultural and economic benefits of a vibrant film and creative-industries sector in Wales as one of our designated key sectors for growth. We remain committed to the process of digitising more Welsh print and visual material as well as developing the screen and sound archive. We will continue to support the creation of a Welsh cultural and linguistic internet domain dotCymru.

An active nation

We will ensure all children and young people, especially girls and young women, are able, and encouraged, to access a range of sporting opportunities as part of the formal curriculum, after school and in the community.

We will encourage stronger links between schools and clubs in order to share facilities and resources, with more school facilities being available after school and on weekends. We will encourage the building of a new Urdd Centre for the Valleys. Plaid will continue to support the protection of playing fields. We will link urban centres with outdoor spaces in order to support active lifestyles and leisure activities.

We will invest in the development of coaching, through our Coaching Plan for Wales, to increase both participation in sport and excellence. We will develop a professional and voluntary workforce which is able to provide an engaging and high-quality sporting experience for everyone.

We will develop and maintain a physical environment that makes it easier and safer for people to choose to be more physically active, by extending safe footpaths and cycle routes around our towns and cities, with a particular emphasis on Safe Routes to School.

We want to increase participation in sports by all sectors of the population and will do this by supporting a vibrant club culture and infrastructure across Wales. Plaid will support a stadium of international quality in Wrexham. We will continue to identify and nurture talent in order to deliver sustained success for Wales on the world stage.

A language for everyone

In 2011, as a result of Plaid Cymru's work in Government, the Welsh language gained official status for the first time in its history. This legislation was a major milestone which also brought about the new post of Welsh Language Commissioner which will come into being next year and allowed the Assembly to increase the provision of services available in Welsh in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Our aim will be to ensure that these new provisions are both successful and widely supported, with a view to extending the number of organisations which provide services through the medium of Welsh in future. We will develop a voluntary scheme to encourage private sector organisations to continue to develop the services they provide through the Welsh language.

In the next Government, Plaid will focus on increasing the use of Welsh in addition to increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers. We will ensure that the future of the Welsh language is a key consideration across all decision-making in Government. The First Minister will be responsible for providing an annual report on the Government's progress in relation to the Welsh language.

A new dedicated Welsh Language Unit will be created to mainstream the language and to effectively deliver

the Welsh Language Strategy, and it will be supported with a new Welsh Language Innovation Fund in order to provide greater protection to Welsh as a community language. Plaid will support the work of the new Welsh Language Commissioner.

We will create new Language Development Areas in order to reverse the decline of the language in areas where Welsh is a community language. An integrated programme will be drawn up for those areas, which will include action on employment, housing, culture, planning and public services. We will increase opportunities for Welsh speakers to use Welsh through our Bilingual Towns and Cities scheme.

We will create Welsh language workplaces within the National Public Service so that more staff are able to work through the medium of Welsh, particularly within Welsh Government.

We will work with representatives across Government as well as with Mudiadau Ysgolion Meithrin, Welsh for Adults, our broadcasters, Mentrau Iaith and other partners to create and implement a Welsh Language Delivery Plan for the 0-7 age group.

Our Environment BetterWales// A sustainable future for our land and people

A healthy natural environment is the foundation for our well-being and for a prosperous economy. It's a source of great pleasure but it's also a source of vital and productive natural assets including water, food and energy on which our society depends. In Wales we are fortunate that we are rich in natural resources and are well placed to exploit these in a way that can nurture a healthy natural environment as well as support a fair and prosperous society.

We know that our natural environment is under huge pressure, which presents us with a series of significant threats. Climate change is the biggest of these, but there are also looming crises in energy, food, water and wildlife. Our challenge is to live our lives in a way that enables our natural environment to sustain a strong economy and a fair society into the future.

A greener, cleaner Wales

We want to build a resilient Wales, one that is more able to cope with the effects of climate change and to utilise its own resources – energy, land and water – to the maximum extent. Plaid Cymru believes, for

both environmental and economic reasons, that it is vital we maximise our own abilities to produce our own energy and food.

The National Assembly for Wales has agreed to reduce emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2020, and Plaid in Government will work to ensure that this decision is turned into meaningful and effective action.

We will ensure that climate change is a consideration in all Government decision-making and we will incentivise the development of climate change planning across the Welsh public sector. We will introduce carbon budgeting across Welsh Government and we will encourage its introduction across the Welsh public sector.

We will expand the Low Carbon Zones project. These projects will help people to save energy, cut fuel bills, and protect and create jobs.

We will ensure that investment in green technology research and development is linked to clear outcomes so that we can increase Wales's market share of the green industry. We will support the work of the Low Carbon Research Institute.

Plaid will invest substantially in a green transport infrastructure. We will continue to roll out our Sustainable Travel Town initiative with excellent public transport services and better provision for cyclists and pedestrians.

Planning for the future

How we use our land defines our economic and environmental potential as a nation. Publicly-owned land and water would yield a better economic return and better environmental outcomes for our country. Environmental regulation, financial incentives and planning policy should work to provide more public and economic benefits on privately-owned land.

We will undertake a wholesale reform of the Welsh planning system to encourage the development of a low carbon economy and new business growth, respond to local needs, and create sustainable and modern communities.

We will publish a Planning Reform Paper, as a precursor to new planning legislation in Wales. Current planning legislation, policy and guidance is antiquated and does not provide the mechanism to allow businesses to flourish, local homes to be built or renewable energy and communications developments to be realised.

Planning policy should obsess less about development control and focus more on good design and the promotion of good environmental and energy standards. Planning policy should facilitate, not hinder, economic and business projects and infrastructure projects for the public good.

We will establish a Planning Inspectorate for Wales answerable to the National Assembly, as well as an Independent Commission to advise on a National Park, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Nature Reserves Policy for Wales. This will be tasked to consider whether planning responsibilities should remain with National Parks Authorities; whether we should create one national organisation to run all National Parks, AONBs and Reserves, with one integrated Warden Service; and whether there should be any changes to boundaries.

We will immediately instigate a change to planning policy to presume in favour of micro, small-scale or community-owned renewable energy projects, in every area of Wales. Achieving consents and planning approval for renewable energy production will be simplified.

We will consider the future role of the Countryside Council of Wales, the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission Wales. We will seek the full devolution of the Environment Agency and Forestry Commission.

We will launch a 'Nature for People' programme of major habitat restoration and creation projects throughout Wales, with delivery coordinated between agencies, NGOs and landowners. This will contribute to achieving our biodiversity targets as well as delivering sustainable community development

and economic benefits. We will expect that all public bodies maintain and, where possible, enhance biodiversity on their land.

Plaid is committed to the ambitious target of becoming a high-recycling nation by 2025 and a zero-waste nation by 2050. In doing this we will create more green jobs and skills as well as protect and enhance our natural environment. We will achieve this through reducing the amount of waste that we produce, reusing products, and finally, responsible recycling.

We will support Welsh local government to achieve national recycling and compost targets of 70%, as well as ensuring that local authorities can favour materials from recycled and local sources. We will work with the university sector and industry to develop a range of technologies to deal with non-recyclable waste.

Our energy and water

We urgently need to change the way we generate and use energy. In Wales, our reliance on energy imports means we are more vulnerable to international events outside our control. With energy bills hitting families hard, we simply have to act.

Our natural resources are vitally important to the future of Wales. In the next Government, Plaid will negotiate

with the UK Government to ensure that all functions in the areas of water and energy generation are devolved. In the meantime we will use the powers we have more effectively to increase renewable energy production.

Wales has abundant sources of renewable energy, which could not only cut Wales's carbon footprint and find sustainable solutions to our energy needs, but would also bring significant business and employment opportunities to our country.

Plaid will establish *Gwyrdd Cymru*, a not-for-distributable-profit organisation for the renewable energies sector, in which the project company would be tasked with the single purpose of managing renewable energy projects in Wales, with no shareholders, run for the benefit of customers, and with profits ploughed back into investment and cutting the costs of electricity bills for consumers.

In the next Government, Plaid will aim to make Wales self-sufficient in renewable electricity by 2030. This will be a major boost to the Welsh economy and will bring clear benefits to local communities.

We want to see more community leadership and Welsh ownership of renewable companies with more cooperative and not-for-distributable-profit models so that public benefits are maximised. We will develop a strong renewable energy sector through targeted Government

investment and support. We call for reform of the UK Ports Fund. Currently, just over 1% of this non-devolved funding comes to Wales to develop low carbon technologies.

We will make loans available for individual home micro-generation projects. People in the areas around renewable energy installations should receive discounted energy to encourage more community involvement and take-up. We will encourage further development of hydro-electric schemes and we will use our review of planning law and environmental bodies to reach this end. We will look into creating a smart grid for renewable energy in Wales. We will also commission a Welsh Government study on the feasibility of building a tidal lagoon for Wales. We will support the development of lagoons and tidal-stream turbines to harness tidal energy.

Plaid Cymru recognises the importance of the coal industry to the Welsh economy whilst recognising the environmental challenges posed by coal production. We would limit further coal production to situations where it would be a substitute for imported coal.

We will legislate to make Community Liaison Committees a statutory requirement for all opencast mining projects in Wales. Committees will meet regularly to review progress and issues arising from mining activities, and will consist of representatives from local communities, the mining companies involved, and local councillors.

Water is a vital natural asset and it is becoming increasingly precious in the context of climate change, growing populations and water intensive lifestyles. Fortunately, it's a natural resource in which Wales is rich. The people of Wales should be the ones who benefit from the wealth created by our water resources, whether those water resources are used by us or others. Plaid believes that powers and responsibility over water should rest with the National Assembly for Wales. We will seek the full devolution of water policy, regulation and management, as a key resource for our nation's future.

We will reduce the risks of flooding to our villages, towns and cities by investing in flood defences and sustainable urban drainage systems and providing incentives for landowners to better manage water upstream. We will establish a National Flood Agency as a central point of contact for people affected by flooding. We will ensure that every local authority agrees a target with Dŵr Cymru to reduce surface water drainage input into the adopted sewerage network.

Our rivers and lakes are a significant tourist and economic asset. They are also important habitats for the restoration of endangered wildlife and varied biodiversity. Anglers already play an important role in improving this habitat and in providing tourism

opportunities. Their use of the river is already regulated. A regulated system for access to inland waters by other river users should also be introduced.

Our food

Most of our land in Wales is used to produce food, which is vital for our health, our economy and the way we use our natural environment. Plaid wants family farms across Wales to continue to be the cornerstone of our food sector, producing high-quality sustainable food, protecting our natural environment and increasing the supplies that feed our population.

Reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) will be completed during the next Assembly term. Plaid Cymru believes that, for food security and good land and climate management, there is a greater need for a strong CAP. We believe that there needs to be a direct income payment to farmers to make up for the continuing deficiencies in the marketplace. If this direct payment were to be reduced, this could seriously jeopardise the viability of the Welsh family farm.

We believe that on-farm environmental measures are best delivered on a voluntary basis under Pillar 2 arrangements in the CAP. We will continue to review Glastir in order to ensure that it is a scheme that meets the challenges of climate change, biodiversity decline, water

management and renewable energy, whilst integrating well with day-to-day farm activity.

The enthusiasm of young people to enter the agriculture industry is evident in the successful uptake of the Young Entrants Support scheme (YESS) and the dramatically increasing numbers of young people studying agriculture-related subjects at our colleges. We will seek to build further on this success, and continue to develop the scheme. Wales needs to provide veterinary education. We will commission a full feasibility study into the establishment of a Veterinary School in Wales.

Dairy farming is a capital-intensive sector. We will provide an Investment Loan to dairy farmers to aid their investment plans for promoting efficiency and increasing productivity. We will also ensure that TB eradication remains a priority for the next Welsh Government. A comprehensive approach addressing disease levels in cattle and wildlife needs to be pursued.

Plaid will continue to promote Welsh produce and will increase the use of local, healthy and sustainable foods in schools and hospitals by launching the Square Meal, Square Mile initiative to support local food systems. We will pilot the Square Meal, Square Mile initiative in one District General Hospital, a local cluster of schools and one University. We will continue to put pressure on the UK Government to

introduce a Supermarket Ombudsman. We support compulsory country of origin labelling.

We will support community-based food production and land use including allotments and promotion of local food markets and festivals. We will work with schools to provide them with access to an allotment or other land so they can teach pupils about skills in growing food and making meals with fresh produce. We will work to ensure that people living in areas of deprivation have access to low cost, good quality fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables. We will support the establishment of food cooperatives across Wales.

We will continue to promote a sustainable coastal fishery. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy is essential, but we should ensure that our small fishing industry is able to continue and to seek stronger, diverse and local markets. We will work with our fishermen to develop sustainable fishery accreditation for more of our fisheries and will seek better market opportunities for this fish and shellfish.

Forests for all

Our woodlands provide employment, support the timber and tourism industries, and have a major role to play in helping us to tackle climate change and halt the loss of biodiversity. They also provide a great deal of pleasure through public access.

In the next Government, Plaid will ensure that our publicly owned forest estate remains in public ownership. We will seek to fully devolve the functions of the Forestry Commission and pass a Forestry Act to enshrine public access and the use of the National Forest Estate for economic, environmental and energy benefits.

We will promote investment in 100,000 hectares of new on-farm woodland over the next 20 years. We will also support communities and social enterprises that can demonstrate they would provide public benefits to take on management agreements of public woodland.

Wind, water, land and sea

Plaid wants to see the land and water in Wales used for the greatest environmental, social and economic gain and we want to see the people of Wales reap the benefits of our precious land and water. The Crown Estate is a significant rural landowner in Wales. It also owns the sea bed out to 12 miles offshore and owns 65% of the foreshore. These are valuable assets, particularly in light of the potential for Wales to become rich in offshore renewable energy.

Plaid believes it's high time that all profits from the Crown Estate in Wales were used for the benefit of the people of Wales and we will call for its ownership to be transferred to the Welsh Government on behalf of the people of Wales.

All publicly-owned land and water should be used for maximum public benefit, whether it's for affordable housing, community food initiatives, renewable energy, and green spaces for healthy lifestyles or for transfer to community ownership to provide local projects that match local aspirations. Plaid will ensure that publicly-owned land can be leased on a preferential basis to community firms and other community groups seeking to produce renewable energy, food and affordable housing.

We will improve the management of existing Marine Protected Areas and we will publish marine plans covering all activities to secure sustainable resource use throughout Welsh seas.

**For more
information
visit:**

www.plaidcymru.org

