



Annwyl Huw,

We would like to place on record Cardiff Liberal Democrat Group's heartfelt thanks to all staff across the Council, partner agencies/outside organisations and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to help residents and businesses during this time.

The loss and suffering caused by this outbreak has put an incredible strain on our citizens and, as local councillors embedded in our communities, we feel that acutely.

The pandemic has shown how reliant we are on each other to get ahead, and what we can achieve when we work together. It has shown that we are all stronger when our public services are strongest.

There is no going back to the way things were, but we have to choose to get it right. Cardiff Liberal Democrats are ready to play our full part in supporting every effort to lead our city through the immediate and long-term impact of the outbreak.

Local government is at its best and achieves most when we work together. As councillors we all have a duty to act as a critical friend to ensure that the decisions this council take are tested and can deliver the very best for residents and our city.

As lockdown measures are lifted in Wales – and with significant implications of decisions taken by the UK Government - we're challenging the administration to look at ways to allow us, collectively, to shape our own vision and our own roadmap through the pandemic and beyond.

We are entering a critical moment; we have one chance to deliver meaningful change for the greatest number of people in our city and on our shared ambition for Cardiff.

Attached to this letter is a number of priorities and questions that we believe would help us create the necessary change to give more people in Cardiff a sense of control over their lives, greater confidence as we emerge from this period, and more hope for the future. Some of this may seem obvious, or be what the administration believes it articulates, but it's our joint experience as a council group.

This is being sent to you as an open letter. I am committed, as are my colleagues, to taking an open, honest and constructive approach to our role as an opposition. We also passionately believe that with genuine engagement with citizens and by sharing the power that we hold as leaders in our communities, we can achieve more together.

We would welcome the opportunity to expand on any of our suggestions and look forward to working with you and other colleagues.

Yn gywir,  
Cllr Rhys Taylor, Liberal Democrat Group Leader  
Cllr Emma Sandrey, Liberal Democrat Group Deputy Leader

Cllr Joe Carter, Cllr Joe Boyle, Cllr Bablin Molik, Cllr Ashley Wood, Cllr Nigel Howells, Cllr Asghar Ali, Cllr Robert Hopins, Cllr Rodney Berman, Cllr Daniel Naughton



## **ANNEX**

There is no going back to the way things were, but we have to choose to get this right. Below we have set out some key initiatives, ways of working, and aspirations for our city post-COVID.

1. **Citizens' engagement, including creating a Citizens' Assembly**
2. **Balance economic needs with our declaration of a climate emergency**
3. **Ensure robust democratic oversight**

### **Citizenship**

We recommend a new approach to citizen engagement, creating the confidence needed to lead us through this pandemic.

We would recommend the creation of a Citizens' Assembly, or similar structure, that would be tasked with answering key questions and challenges on the future of our city.

### **Communication**

As we emerge from lockdown, residents need assurance and clarity on what those changes mean for our services and their daily lives. We are concerned that an over-reliance on digital communication risks significant numbers of residents being left in the dark over changes to services. This carries with it risks, particularly for some of those most exposed to the virus, when lockdown measures are lifted.

We would recommend a diversification of those communication methods according to residents' needs.

### **Democracy**

Robust scrutiny and challenge are a key component of a healthy democracy. This is not scrutiny for the sake of scrutiny. All councillors, across all parties, have a shared aspiration for our residents and our city. Robust scrutiny leads to better decisions.

Acknowledging concerns about the resources needed for scrutiny, we urgently need to devise a method that would allow for the scrutiny function to operate as normal, insofar as resources and practicalities allow.

### **Communities**

If people were ever in any doubt, we've seen that we're all stronger when our public services are stronger. Local government has a crucial role to play in building and nurturing the networks people and our communities need to get by. This is a crucial moment in time where we can choose to do things differently, drawing on those new and strengthened partnerships and use the innovation and creativity across our city and the region.

Building resilience and sustainable approaches must be a real focus moving forward.

### **Environment**



Since the coronavirus outbreak began, more and more people have a better understanding of the value of our environment – and particularly of a city without toxic levels of air pollution and a more natural environment.

This includes ensuring the sustainability of our public transport network, rapid measures to improve walking and cycling, balanced and measures restrictions on car use and revisiting how we manage our green spaces that protect and nurture biodiversity, balancing the need for sufficient open green space for recreational use with the needs of nature.

### **Economy**

The effects of an economic recession pose significant challenges to our city and our residents.

The council's economic recovery plan and economic development programme must focus on our significant network of small and independent businesses, the sustainability and resilience of the local economy, and balancing economic recovery with the declaration of a climate emergency made by this council.

### **Safety**

Creating public and communal spaces that people feel safe and confident accessing will be essential in ensuring that, as we emerge out of lockdown, people are able to go about their daily lives as is necessary.

We are particularly concerned that the approach thus far is very city centre focused. This should be done strategically and communicated in a way that gives residents, businesses, schools and others the confidence they need as lockdown measures are lifted.