

BUILDING A BETTER WALES, TOGETHER.

2021 Manifesto Policy Paper

Policy Development Committee

PURPOSE

This Policy Paper provides an overview of the driving themes, policy priorities, and narrative for the Welsh Liberal Democrats for the 2021 Senedd Cymru elections. This paper will be presented alongside a motion to the party's conference in Autumn 2020. It does not contain detailed policy proposals, but rather aims to present and seek consensus from members on the strategy, approach, and overarching priorities as a party for 2021, for the Sixth Senedd, and for the future of Wales.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think about the assumptions, the framework, the approach, the principles, and values outlined in this document?

How could this work and look in your community? How would the ideas here benefit you and your family?

What concerns do you have that we either address or don't address in this policy paper?

Tell us! Email chloe.hutchinson@libdems.wales and share your views!

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WHO WE ARE

The Welsh Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free, and open society in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality, and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

We have the deepest roots of any political party and have played a major role in creating a modern democratic Wales. For more than a century Welsh Liberalism has combined ambition for Wales with a commitment to social justice that is rooted in, and speaks with, our communities.

The contribution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats was crucial to establishing the Senedd, and subsequently in securing legislative and tax-varying powers for the institution. Welsh Liberalism blends an international outlook with a Welsh identity that is adaptable and open. Wales is changing and we face significant challenges at home and abroad that ask for our politics to stand up to meet those challenges. Our nation and its communities already face an underperforming economy, and levels of poverty and deprivation that are stubborn and deep-seated. The over-centralised UK union is creaking at the seams. Populist ideas and policies threaten the future of our democracy.

We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, and acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives.

However, for too many people, things are not working out the way they should. The coronavirus pandemic has not only shone a spotlight on this, it has made things worse, especially for the most vulnerable in our society. **We need bold solutions to these challenges - both in dealing with the current crisis, and in how we rebuild, in order to create a brighter future for the next generation.**

The Welsh Liberal Democrats will develop ideas, solutions, and policies *with* the people of Wales. We will build a better Wales, together.

OUR VISION FOR A LIBERAL WALES

Our country is stuck. In a fair society, we should have what we need to get ahead: a place to call home, access to efficient public services, an excellent education, and enough money in our pockets. But that's far from the reality for too many people in our country today. One quarter, or one in four, or 25% of our Welsh population is living below the level of poverty; that's 800,000 people, and this figure is rising.¹

Today in our national politics, the prevailing values and rules are heavily stacked against us, and bend very much in favour of the powerful and of the entrenched status quo. The yawning gap within our communities is growing. And when some of us fall behind, this means we all fall behind.

But the way things are today is not the way they have to continue. It doesn't have to be like this. We shouldn't settle for the way things are. Our country needs a fresh start. We can demand better together and create a fairer, greener future for us all.

We need the equivalent of a Beveridge plan for the 21st Century; to rebuild, to refocus, and to give people hope. Under our leadership we will agree to a new social contract - a new promise - wherein we will all be able to thrive, upon a thriving planet. Hope for the future. A great education, a place to call home, great public services, a strong economy, a thriving planet, and a stronger safety net for when the going gets tough.

It will be a Wales where entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation are central to our economy, where people and planet can thrive together.

It will be a Wales that enables our public services to support thriving communities, enabling everyone to lead fulfilled lives with the support they need to get ahead. A Liberal Wales will give people and communities the power and freedom to shape and deliver services that support strong, healthy, and inclusive communities.

We will be an open, caring and inclusive Wales where each of us is free to be ourselves. Opportunity will be for all and no one will be held back by their upbringing, and our diversity is celebrated. Every aspect of our lives, our economy, our public services, and our democratic institutions will be inclusive and accessible to all, responsive to the needs of every individual.

It will be a Wales that looks to the future - what can be, what should be, and what needs to be for Wales. A Wales that puts the needs of the next generation and future generations at the fore.

A Liberal Wales will recognise the transformative power of education to provide everyone with a fair start in life. It will have a truly lifelong education system which empowers people from cradle to grave.

¹<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Poverty/householdbelowaverageincome-by-year>

It will be a Wales where everyone can access the care and support services they need to live healthily, freely, and independently for as long as possible. It will have a health service that not only gets the basics right but gives staff the freedom to innovate, to be creative, and deliver the patient-centred care they want to provide.

Ours will be a global Wales. A connected, outward looking Wales, playing our part in creating a fairer world. A Wales recognised on the world stage for our culture, language and heritage, our entrepreneurialism, and our education system.

We will create a truly democratic Wales where power lies in the hands of people and communities. We will create a society where power is for everyone, and the powerful are held accountable.

We will create a Wales that is hopeful. We will be an open, inclusive and fair Wales. We will be forward thinking and radical about how we address the challenges of the present, and meet the challenges of the future.

Never again will the next generation be left worse off than we were. Living standards have stagnated, poverty has grown and an increasing number of individuals and communities feel left behind by the global economy. People are disillusioned with a political process that has seemingly forgotten them, and a UK that has left Wales behind. We must leave a better, more prosperous Wales to the next generation. We must create a Wales where everyone has a stake in our economy and a voice in our society.

Let it not be forgotten that it was liberals who transformed Britain, paving the way for the welfare state and the NHS as we know it, and it'll be the Liberal Democrats who'll do it again. With your support, we will create a greener, fairer, more caring Wales, together, for everyone.

Jane Dodds,
Leader, Welsh Liberal Democrats

WALES AFTER CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus has changed everything.

It has exposed failures and fundamental weaknesses in our economy, shortcomings in how we fund our public services, revealed deep and painful injustices and inequalities, and has highlighted just how many families have to balance everything on a knife-edge.

It has thrown so much into question. However, it has also given us an opportunity to reset Wales afresh with a new, bold, modern blueprint to lead us with confidence and hope into forging our own future.

We have asked, *“What does this mean for our health and care services, our communities, for education, for our economy, and for our environment?”* We have identified a set of principles that should inform our response to challenges we will face in future - and what we have learnt - as a result of the Coronavirus. As a result, we believe we must refocus on:

- 1. An economy that supports secure, well-paid work and good public services, recognising that work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty.**

We must refocus on long-term economic priorities to bring about thriving communities, thriving businesses, and a thriving economy. We will ditch the outmoded narrow, singular focus upon exclusive economic growth as the primary marker of success, since this model has left so much of Wales behind, and re-focus on well-being and creating a thriving economy, thriving communities, and a thriving planet.

We should bring together our commitment to maintaining a thriving planet, supporting entrepreneurs and businesses to grow and thrive in all parts of Wales, and creating a living-wage economy.

We must recognise that some sectors and industries stand to be hardest hit by the pandemic, with huge consequences for communities, and for young people.

We will reform the social security system in Wales and work with the UK Government to create a genuine social security system based on values of dignity and compassion. We will work with the UK Government to trial a Universal Basic Income.

- 2. A health and social care system that ensures people can access the right care, in the right place, at the right time according to their needs, and which provides health and social care workforces with the resources and recognition they need and deserve.**

We must refocus what our National Health Service and our Social Care System are for - enabling people to live well, to live healthily, and to live independently for as long as possible, with access to the right services in the right place when we need it.

We also cannot ignore the disproportionate impact of the Coronavirus on Black, Asian, and Ethnic communities and on the poorest in Wales. Fairness must be at the heart of our approach to creating a health and social care system fit for the future.

We will take a strengths-based approach that looks at the social-determinants of health - your home, your financial resilience, access to green spaces, the opportunities available to you. We'll look to and support people's capacity to act and to lead change. Our approach must be truly liberal - asking how we ensure that every person has their basic needs met so they can take control of their lives. By doing that, we focus on people's strengths and we work with them to maximise their ability to take advantage of opportunities and to get ahead.

We will also focus on creating a resilient and resourceful workforce across health and social care which has the tools necessary to deliver for those in their care.

3. Connected communities - digitally and physically - which are home to thriving communities, essential services, and public utilities such as public transport networks and digital connectivity.

The Coronavirus showed us all how reliant we are on access to essential services, to local community resources, our local shops and supermarkets, and the importance of digital connectivity. Too many, isolated and cut off since before the pandemic, have fared worse as a result of lockdown measures.

We must focus on significant, long-term investment in creating thriving and connected communities, that have access to essential services, digital connectivity, public transport, and community resources. By doing so we can support small businesses and smaller communities to thrive.

This will require a re-think in planning, infrastructure investment, and the role of national and local government in driving and sustaining connected communities.

Coronavirus has thrown so much into question, however it also gives us an opportunity to reset Wales.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE SIXTH SENEDD

We will create a fairer, greener and more caring Wales where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and realise their ambitions.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats will develop ideas, solutions, and policies *with* the people of Wales. We will build a better Wales, together.

In response to coronavirus, the climate crisis, and Brexit we will support businesses to invest in and grow a greener economy, put supporting a thriving planet at the heart of our plans, and ensure that everyone, no matter who you are, has access to a world-class education, a good-quality affordable home, and well-funded public services.

We will make the case for a social floor, meeting our basic needs, and an environmental ceiling to protect our planet for future generations.

We want to live in a fair, green and more caring Wales:

1. Where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and realise their ambitions;
2. Which supports and encourages businesses to invest in and grow a greener economy, providing good jobs as well as maintaining a thriving planet;
3. Where everyone has access to a world-class education, good quality affordable homes and well-funded public services.

We need a better politics and will demand better of our politicians:

1. We will insist that elected representatives act with integrity and honesty and treat people with respect;
2. We will continuously listen to and speak up for the people of Wales, to help them achieve their hopes and aspirations;
3. We will always put our people, our communities and our planet first, creating a better future for all of us.
4. We will hand power back to people, reforming our political systems to make them fairer, more representative, and based on mutual understanding and respect.

Our priorities will be:

1. **Economy and Jobs:** We will support businesses and entrepreneurs to create a stronger, fairer, more sustainable economy that unlocks talent, gives us all access to the tools we need to thrive while balancing the essential needs and limits of our planet;
2. **Education and Training:** We will support our people to look to the future with confidence. We will complete the job of building a world-class education system to equip us all for an adaptable future, giving everyone access to lifelong training, and we will re-envision our Public Library services to assist in the delivery of this transformation into our local communities.

3. **Housing and Homelessness:** We will ensure everyone in our country has a safe place to call home. We will build 30,000 new social homes in communities where they are most needed. We will end homelessness in a decade while improving standards and security for both private renters and landlords.

We believe in a truly federal United Kingdom. We believe in building relationships with our closest neighbours, recognising that we can achieve more when we work together. We believe in a new relationship based on mutual respect, trust, and responsibility to each other.

Our plan for Wales will have a green thread throughout. We will leave a planet fit for the future, putting climate and ecological breakdown at the heart of our plans.

OUR APPROACH TO TAX AND SPENDING

During the coronavirus outbreak, we all saw first-hand the real power that sits behind our public services. We saw that when we come together, when we collaborate, and when we give communities and our key workers the space to breathe, they can transform communities, save lives, and give us all hope for the future.

And yet, as the impact of the coronavirus unfolds and Brexit threatens to puncture a hole in our economy, our public services - and public servants - face a challenge like no other.

As a result of the economic downturn in 2008, Welsh public services stand to face a funding gap of between £2.6 billion and £4.6 billion by 2025². That's our schools, children's services, local councils, social care - the bedrock of a compassionate, fair, and equal society. And then there's Brexit, with suggestions that the average UK household could stand to lose between £2,519 to £5,573 of their household income per year³.

The days of public services hanging on by the skin of their teeth has to end. It risks long-term damage to services, to communities, and to those who are reliant on public services to keep a roof over their head, their care package going, keep our communities clean, and keep people safe.

The days of an economy bumping along, lagging behind the rest of the UK with fewer opportunities, lower wages, and huge income inequality must end. Our tax and spend priorities must balance the need to keep our public services running with the pressures on the people of Wales.

Our approach will draw on the principles of Doughnut Economics:

² Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery, Summary Report

³ Centre for Economic Performance, Who Bears the Pain? How the costs of Brexit would be distributed across income groups

'Humanity's 21st century challenge is to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In other words, to ensure that no one falls short on life's essentials (from food and housing to healthcare and political voice), while ensuring that collectively we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth's life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend – such as a stable climate, fertile soils, and a protective ozone layer. The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries is a playfully serious approach to framing that challenge, and it acts as a compass for human progress this century.'

Work is ongoing to develop our taxation and spend proposals for the next Senedd term. This work is underpinned by values of fairness, entrepreneurialism, and aspiration, with a focus on our climate and a green recovery.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats will consider options for:

- Replacing Council Tax with a fairer, more progressive alternative which provides local authorities with the resources they need to deliver excellent public services. For example, introducing a new annual levy based on the value of people's homes. If this was to be the case a house worth £250,000 could have an annual rate of 0.5% and bring in a revenue of £1,250.
- Replacing Business Rates, to promote and enable businesses to invest in their properties and their businesses. For example, by implementing a Land Value Tax alongside incentivising businesses to become more environmentally-friendly by investing in alternative energy sources e.g. solar panels and water saving technology to reduce bills.
- New Green Taxes, to fund climate action and interventions to halt climate breakdown.
- Long-term reform of Wales' fiscal powers, including borrowing powers, and a reform of the Welsh Government's taxation levers to create a fairer, more progressive tax system in Wales.

OUR APPROACH TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Our planet is in crisis, and as Greta Thunberg has said, "our house is on fire". From the flooding across our communities to pollution, climate and ecological breakdown is affecting us all. We must act now. We will put the environment at the heart of rebuilding our economy from coronavirus, creating a fairer, more resilient economy that works for people and planet.

Despite the extensive economic disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic, global emissions of greenhouse gases are projected to fall by only four to seven per cent during 2020. A future Welsh Liberal Democrat government would put the climate and our planet at the heart of its agenda for Wales, leaving a planet fit for the future.

A future Welsh Liberal Democrat government will introduce an emergency package of measures to kick-start a green economic recovery, cut household bills, and stop climate breakdown.

The party would deliver an investment - public and private - of **£1bn per annum on measures to stop the climate breakdown and decline in biodiversity, create new green jobs, and cut household bills**. We will immediately launch programmes for:

1. Greener Homes
2. Clean Air and Healthier Communities
3. Climate resilience and greener communities

We will seek wider reform to deliver a climate emergency response worthy of its name, including:

- Public sector divestment from fossil fuels, redirecting investments and pensions to 'green spending';
- Seek the devolution of new powers from Westminster to create greater capacity for investment and control in Wales;
- Work towards Zero Carbon Buildings for public sector funded buildings across Wales.
- Accelerate activity to support the creation of a Carbon Literate Public Sector - embed decarbonisation in all public sector planning, decision making, and procurement.
- A programme to "Rewire Wales", including:
 - Embarking on a national programme of delivering green infrastructure (starting with rural areas) and upgrading local networks to support deployment of heat pumps and embedded community-scale generation
 - Upgrading the transmission grid to facilitate large scale marine generation
- Reforming planning regulations to focus on increasing the energy efficiency of new homes and delivering 'homes as power stations'.
- Supporting community energy projects and community energy generation, cutting household bills.

OUR APPROACH TO THE ECONOMY AND JOBS

We want to see a Welsh economy that balances the fundamental needs of people with the limited resources of our planet. We want an economy which supports businesses and entrepreneurs to create a stronger, fairer, more sustainable economy post coronavirus and Brexit that supports communities and Wales to recover and thrive.

Our economy must support secure, well-paid work and good public services. It must recognise that work is not a guaranteed route out of poverty. We want to see an economy that ensures that work pays and that there is meaningful support for those that are unable to work, working with the UK Government to create a genuine social security system based on values of dignity and compassion. We will work with the UK Government to pilot a Universal Basic Income here in Wales.

We will re-shape an economy that works better for everyone, and our planet, embedding a green foundation to our economy and ensuring that working families have access to childcare to give families and children the support they need. We will focus on projects which maximise local supply chains, create new jobs, and give communities the resources to invest in people and their environment. Our priority here will be green, sustainable development.

We want to see an economy that works for all, from our coastal towns to city centres, which supports our communities and spreads prosperity across all of Wales. Welsh Liberal Democrats have always been passionate about protecting Wales' farming tradition in order to protect the land and natural environment, safeguard food security, and sustain flourishing rural communities. In the face of challenges such as, coronavirus, Brexit, and the Internal Market Bill, we seek to support an agricultural sector that strengthens our communities and environment.

We will work to simplify and maximise benefit for our entrepreneurs and businesses, particularly in the face of Brexit. We will ensure that entrepreneurs and businesses have access to the resources - financial and otherwise - to invest, including by reforming business rates.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats will not shy away from, where appropriate, reforming taxes, introducing new taxes, or increasing taxes in the next Senedd term, if they enable us to create a fairer, greener and more caring Wales. This includes:

- Replacing Council Tax
- Replacing Business Rates
- New Green Taxes
- Long-term reform of Wales' fiscal powers

OUR APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education has the potential to transform an individual's chances in life - that is why it has always been a priority for us. In Government, we are proud to have worked with teachers, with parents, with pupils, and the wider education family to deliver wide reaching and radical reforms to drive up standards, deliver fairness, and give children the best start in life.

- With Kirsty Williams MS in Government, we have:
- Invested in the teaching profession
- Protected small and rural schools
- Developed the first ever 'made in Wales' curriculum
- Raised standards, achieving our best ever PISA performance
- Reduced infant class sizes across Wales
- Invested in the Pupil Development Grant
- Ensured that 100% of Welsh schools can now access super-fast broadband, and distributed thousands of MiFi devices to support digitally excluded learners during the pandemic.
- Implemented the Diamond Reforms in Higher Education, ensuring that Welsh students receive adequate support with living costs.

During the last few months, schools have shown how central a role they play in providing support for their learners, families and wider communities. We now need to further build on this progress and embed good practice across our education system. **Community focused schools are essential in helping to support the wellbeing and raise standards of all learners**, but particularly learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We recognise that to meet the potential of the curriculum, we need to ensure our teachers are supported. Kirsty Williams secured record levels of investment for professional learning over the last parliament. **We will match this investment, ensuring that every single teacher is supported to raise standards for all.** We will look to take forward recommendations featured in Professor Charlotte Williams' review, to ensure that we improve the teaching of themes relating to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and experiences across all parts of the school curriculum.

We will also ensure universal access to the curriculum, for example ensuring that all children benefit from modern, sensitive and improved relationships education. This will help ensure that they are supported to discuss and understand their rights and the rights of others, as

well as being provided with access to information that keeps them safe from harm, including online safety.

In the next parliament, the Welsh Liberal Democrats will immediately work with local authorities to review the operation of the local government funding formula to ensure it contains an accurate assessment of relative of needs and costs. We will also set up a review made up of experts to look at the range of evidence and assess whether there is a more efficient way to funding our schools, including the possibility of direct funding.

Our colleges and universities are also an essential part of the education landscape here in Wales, however they face huge challenges with both Brexit and coronavirus. They play a key role in the economy, both as major employers, as well as through developing skills and training, and through research and development. We want to see a post-16 education system that centres partnership and collaboration, with learners, communities, and business.

Under Welsh Liberal Democrat reforms, Wales has seen a massive increase in people taking a part-time course at university. We want to build on this phenomenal progress. We will expand on the current Personal Learning Accounts and ensure everyone has the chance to access free and flexible courses within certain sectors to gain the relevant skills and qualifications they need to kick-start a new career. A system that not only promises lifelong learning but delivers it.

OUR APPROACH TO HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

In a fair and Liberal Wales everyone will have access to affordable good quality housing which supports stable, healthy lives. Everyone will have a place to call home and the support they need to maintain it. Children and families across Wales should have access to the care and support they need when family and support networks break down.

We will ensure that services and workforces get the help they need to deliver on our vision of a social floor, preventing people from falling through the cracks in support services. The coronavirus pandemic has shown just how many people are balancing the rising costs of living, rising costs of renting and stagnant wages, threatening to push people into homelessness. But it has also shown us that we can provide safe shelter for all and help end everyone's homelessness.

A housing market should provide choice and security for everyone, across a range of tenures. This will be a central component of ensuring that Wales is a healthy, connected nation; tackling loneliness, creating inclusive and accessible communities, and ensuring that all homes in Wales are habitable. Young people and families should be able to access good-quality, affordable homes in their communities.

Everyone will live in clean communities which support a healthy environment and healthy lives. All communities will have access to accessible, welcoming and green public spaces that maintain healthy lives and reduce isolation.

We will legislate to make the Right to Adequate Housing a reality in Wales, driving investment in good-quality, affordable homes across Wales, in response to the needs of communities. This will help drive security and standards for private renters and help end homelessness in a decade.

A BEVERIDGE REPORT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Over 75 years ago, we – our country – made a promise.

It was a promise that each and every one of us would have the opportunity to get on in life; to be healthy, to be well educated, to have a place to call home, and that there would be a safety net for when the going got tough. Today, we still face those same challenges that Beveridge identified. Coronavirus has highlighted just how far we have to go.

We need the equivalent of a Beveridge plan for the 21st Century; to rebuild, to refocus, and to give people hope. We will agree to a new social contract - a new promise - that we will all be able to thrive, within a thriving planet. Hope for the future. A great education, a place to call home, great public services, a strong economy, a thriving planet, and a safety net for when the going gets tough.

POVERTY

Poverty is antithetical to Liberalism. It destroys opportunity, restricts the freedom of those it afflicts, and entrenches inequality. We believe that society should guarantee a basic standard of living, a safety net for its citizens, and opportunity for everyone to aim high and reach their potential.

We will provide the opportunity for individuals to break the cycle of poverty that has held too many people and communities back. We will create an economy and a society of opportunity which provides a genuine route out of poverty, and enable people and communities to build a better future together.

We will invest in high-quality public services and - in its broadest sense - the principle of Universal Basic Services, recognising the significance of access to childcare and the networks that public services support as a basic right.

We will create opportunity so everyone has the opportunity to escape the economic poverty and the poverty of ambition which has held our communities back. We will give people and communities the resources and the confidence to grasp opportunity and lead fulfilling lives, driving innovation, partnerships, and investment that benefits communities.

No generation will be worse off than their parents. Everyone should be able to provide for themselves and their families. We must first level-up those worst off in our society and then transform our economy and institutions to enable them to fully participate and thrive.

- 1. We will give children the best start in life by providing all families with access to high-quality, free childcare and early-years education from the age of 9 months, and before-school, after-school and part-time holiday care.**
- 2. We will work with the UK Government to pilot a nation-wide Universal Basic Income, alongside reform to create a coherent 'Welsh Benefits System', bringing together existing funds and devolved benefits.**

- 3. We will deliver a living wage nation, and focus on place-based investment, supporting supply-chains, local business, and creating jobs. We will draw on the strength of our colleges and universities to support re-skilling, up-skilling, and innovation.**

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

In a fair and Liberal Wales, individuals will enjoy seamless access to a range of health and social care services accessible in the right place and at the right time to deliver high quality services and person-centred care. This requires urgent reform to provide seamless care across the NHS and social care system by creating a unified system of care and wellbeing.

Our health and social care systems will enable people to live healthily and live independently for as long as possible, not held back by poor health. Our social care system will provide individuals with support and equal access for all, regardless of their background. It will not discriminate on sexuality, gender, ethnicity, income, or geography; ensuring everyone has an equal right to live a long, healthy life.

It will harness technological developments to create a truly accessible and empowering system of care where collaboration between services is encouraged, patients and professionals work together to co-produce care, and health and social care professionals are supported to provide the quality care they want to provide.

Our vision is of a truly cradle to grave health and social care system that educates and empowers people to achieve and maintain good health and take control of their health and wellbeing. Ours will be a truly compassionate, properly funded, and inclusive care system that supports healthy lives. Supporting healthy lives will drive wider priorities and developments, from the homes we build, to the environment we build and maintain, and changing behaviours so we all lead healthier lives.

Our approach will embed the social-determinants of health model - going beyond a narrow focus on services and illness, to the quality of our homes, the quality of our environment, access to opportunities and community networks.

- 1. We will deliver the biggest programme of reform to our social care system, to create a system that enables everyone to lead independent, dignified lives, where care is provided on the basis of need, rather than the ability to pay.**
- 1. We will drive investment to primary and community care services ensuring people have access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place according to the needs of the individual.**
- 2. We will refocus on a national wellbeing service, focussing on the social determinants of good health, and tackling health inequalities and poorer health outcomes among poorer communities, and Black, Asian and Ethnic communities.**

HOUSING AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Access to safe, affordable, and good quality housing is an essential part of a fair, free, and liberal society.

In a fair and Liberal Wales everyone will have access to affordable good quality housing which supports stable, healthy lives. Everyone will have the opportunity to have a roof over their head. Children and families across Wales will have access to the care and support they need when family and support networks break down.

Scandalously, it is the marginalised who are let down by society when our housing system fails. Whether it is victims of domestic violence, young LGBT individuals, those who've been in care or people experiencing mental ill health. We will ensure that those whom we should be doing the most to protect can get the help they need and don't fall through the cracks in support services.

A housing market that provides choice and security will be a central component of ensuring that Wales is a healthy, connected nation; tackling loneliness, creating inclusive and accessible communities, and ensuring that all homes in Wales are habitable.

Everyone will live in clean communities which support a healthy environment and healthy lives. All communities will have access to accessible, welcoming and green public spaces that maintain healthy lives and reduce isolation. We will reform planning to enable a Homes as Power-stations approach, and ensure that we unify approaches to community energy generation, digital connectivity, service-design, and transport networks and infrastructure.

- 1. We will ensure everyone has the dignity and security of a good-quality, affordable home, kick-starting this by building 30,000 new social homes over the course of the next Senedd.**
- 2. We will introduce into Welsh law the Right to Adequate Housing, to deliver good-quality, affordable homes, properly funded support services, and end homelessness in a decade.**
- 3. We will create connected, resilient, and welcoming communities by investing in sustainable, environmentally-friendly public transport, active travel networks, digital connectivity, and accessible public services in town centres.**

EDUCATION

We know that a good education sets a child up for life. Their achievements, skills, even their future happiness, hinge on giving children the very best start in life. Our educators will have the confidence, the skills, and the resources to prepare our children for life. The next generation will be confident, inspired, and well-rounded citizens empowered to shape their own destiny.

In a fair and Liberal Wales education will be accessible for all, meaning our further and higher education systems will connect positively to our economy, to other modes of learning, and will support people of all ages and build on research to help our economy grow. There will be parity of esteem between vocational and academic education, where everyone has the opportunity to improve and put their talents and abilities to use.

We will facilitate lifelong learning to encourage people to embrace the future, allow them to continually improve their skills, and give individuals the ability to remain competitive and contribute positively to our economy.

Our education system will provide opportunity for all, giving everyone the chance to succeed regardless of their background. Success will depend on an individual's willingness to learn, not their ability to pay. It will be a liberated and inclusive education which all children can connect positively to the wider world. It will be a truly multilingual and multicultural education system which provides every child with the opportunity to meaningfully engage in Welsh language and culture, and with languages and cultures from across the world.

- 1. We will review schools funding so it provides a fairer framework for schools funding, and continue to invest in the education workforce and education leaders.**
- 2. We will create a Right to Lifelong Learning, and invest in Personal Learning Accounts to give everyone access to education and training throughout their lives.**
- 3. We will ensure our education system is fair and inclusive, ensuring the most disadvantaged pupils have access to the support they need to get ahead, and improve the teaching of themes relating to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and experiences across all parts of the school curriculum**

OPPORTUNITY

Wales must be a nation of opportunity. An opportunity for everyone to leave free, fulfilling, and healthy lives. We will create a dynamic and creative economy which supports good public services, a good quality of life for all, and create a resilient nation.

We will create an economy where small and medium-sized enterprises are supported to grow, flourish, and innovate; connecting positively to the global economy. An economy that recognises the vital role these businesses play in their communities.

Everyone will have the opportunity to experience Welsh and global culture and heritage, to be global citizens in an open, tolerant and united Wales which embraces the world around us.

Our economy will promote entrepreneurship, reduce barriers to work, and provide access to skills, advice and training so everyone can be competitive in our economy. It will be a sustainable economy that utilises Wales' strengths, delivers prosperity for Wales today and harnesses the power of our natural environment to protect our environment for generations to come.

We will continue to work with our schools, universities, and colleges to create a Right to Life-long Learning, ensuring that children leave school with the skills needed to aim high and achieve their ambitions, and ensure everyone can up-skill and re-skill throughout their lives. We will bring our economy and the innovation, talent and resources of our universities and colleges.

- 1. We will reform public services to deliver Universal Essential Services, which meet people's fundamental needs for shelter, food, warmth, healthcare, education and connection with others.**
- 2. We will create and fund a Right to Life-long Learning, giving everyone the opportunity to face the future with confidence, access a changing economy and jobs market, and pursue their aspirations, talents and ambitions.**
- 3. We will ensure that Wales is a nation of fairness, freedom, and equality ensuring that our society, our economy, and our politics gives everyone the chance to get ahead, to take control of their lives, and create the Wales of the future.**

LONELINESS

Loneliness limits opportunity, impacts on our health, and leads to a less fulfilling life. Loneliness and isolation limit our individual freedoms and liberty. We will create connected and inclusive communities, which give people access to public services, accessible public spaces, and promotes a more tolerant society.

Loneliness affects most those who face discrimination and stigmatisation in society, further reducing their individual liberty, and restricting their access to and readiness to take on opportunity. Loneliness affects our physical and mental health, our productivity, and our contribution to communities and society.

A fair and Liberal Wales will ensure that nobody is limited from leading fulfilling, connected, and meaningful lives because they lack the opportunity to remain connected to people, services, and our economy. Our Wales will promote rural and urban connectivity here at home, and global connectivity with communities and people across the world.

We need to learn from our time in lockdown and in responding to the Coronavirus. Communities organised, provided, made connections, and were supported by local authorities and businesses to do what was needed to connect with the most vulnerable and isolated in our communities. Our response showed what was possible when we worked together - we must learn from and embed that going forward.

- 1. We will re-wire Wales, investing in our digital and physical connectivity to ensure that we're all connected to vital services, to community resources, to opportunities and to each-other.**
- 2. We will deliver a properly funded, accessible, efficient, and green public transport network to ensure communities are connected, people can access services, and to cut air pollution.**
- 3. We will create a more caring Wales, valuing carers and our caring profession, supporting communities to maintain community assets and resources, and learning from the connections between volunteers, community groups, business and public services throughout the coronavirus pandemic.**

CONCLUSION

We can be in no doubt that the challenges that face us as a nation - as a planet - are the biggest challenges facing Wales in a generation, and the biggest challenges yet for devolution.

The actions of the next Welsh Government in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus, responding to the impact of Brexit, and tackling the climate emergency will shape a generation. We are at a critical juncture, and our actions could make or break the chances of the next generation.

That is why this Policy Paper considers a different approach, in addition to beginning to outline specific policy priorities for the Welsh Liberal Democrats. Wales cannot afford to carry on as we have. The politics of pre-coronavirus are not equipped to deal with what's ahead.

We will create a fairer, greener, and more caring Wales where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and realise their ambitions.

Together, we will build a fairer, greener and more caring Wales,

A Wales where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and realise their ambitions.

A Wales where our economy provides good jobs with fair pay, champions entrepreneurs and innovators, supports thriving communities, and leaves a thriving planet for future generations.

A Wales where everyone has access to a world-class education, good quality affordable homes and well-funded public services.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats will develop ideas, solutions, and policies *with* the people of Wales. We will be your voice in the Senedd.

We will build a better Wales, together.