

Senedd Cymru Elections 2021

What does the result mean for planning? May 2021

Welsh Labour gained the most seats in the Senedd (30 of the 60 seats) following the elections in May 2021 and will be forming the next Welsh Government. RTPI Cymru will build on the relationship we have had with the Government which recognises how planners, planning and the planning system can support their ambitions.

RTPI Cymru published its [asks](#) of the next Welsh Government in advance of the elections and here we compare the commitments of the [Welsh Labour Manifesto](#) with our asks.

1. Long-term Decision Making for Future Generations

We asked for: Deliver long-term climate mitigation and resilience actions, including biodiversity enhancement.

Welsh Labour have committed to building a stronger green economy by:

- Develop a new major routes fund to improve the attractiveness and biodiversity of areas alongside major transport routes into Wales.
- Deliver £800m of new rolling stock for our railways and ensure that 95% of train journeys are on new trains by 2024. Progress plans for a metro in North Wales and Swansea Bay. Explore opportunities for multi-modal extensions to Metro networks, such as the North West Corridor and across the South Wales valleys. Press the UK Government to electrify the North Wales mainline. Develop the exciting Global Centre of Rail Excellence in the Dulais Valley to promote rail innovation.
- Modernise transport grants and invest in travel options that encourage public transport and support walking and cycling – options that are low or zero-carbon and mitigate air pollution.
- Invest in bus services and complete major new bus infrastructure projects, including reallocating road space to support dedicated bus lanes and new rapid transit routes that make bus travel easier.

Welsh Labour made commitments to greener energy and environment by:

- Create a National Forest to extend from the North of Wales to the South, improving 20 existing woodlands to achieve National Forest designation. Support communities to create 30 new woodlands and connect habitat areas. Strengthen the protections for ancient woodlands. Harness the economic, cultural, and recreational potential of the National Forest in consultation with local communities, building on progress towards creating a sustainable timber industry.



- Ensure coal tip safety by introducing legislation to deal with the legacy of centuries of mining, strengthening local authority powers to ensure protection of the public and the environment.
- Fund additional flood protection for more than 45,000 homes. Deliver nature-based flood management in all major river catchments to expand wetland and woodland habitats at the same time as relieving pressure on hard defences. Legislate to strengthen the requirements for the use of sustainable drainage systems that provide wildlife habitat.
- Set the highest international standards of air quality into law in a Clean Air Act for Wales, consistent with World Health Organisation guidance. Extend the provision of air quality monitoring to encourage positive behaviour change to reduce exposure and eliminate pollution at source.
- Designate a new National Park to cover the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley. Begin to designate Wales' inland waters for recreation, strengthening water quality monitoring to enable rivers to reach the same high standards achieved by Wales' beaches. Establish a targeted scheme to support restoration of seagrass and saltmarsh habitats along the coastline.
- Uphold the policy of opposing the extraction of fossil fuels in Wales, both on land and in Welsh waters, using the powers available to us. Expand renewable energy generation by public bodies and community groups in Wales by over 100MW by 2026, working towards our target of 1GW in public sector and community renewable energy capacity by 2030.
- Support innovation in new renewable energy technology. As part of a balanced energy policy, we will develop a Tidal Lagoon Challenge and support ideas that can make Wales a world centre of emerging tidal technologies.
- Enforce a moratorium on the consenting of all large incineration facilities.
- Expand the successful scheme supporting community groups across Wales to create or significantly enhance green spaces accessible to and valued by local communities, including:
 - 2,000 pollinator habitat sites.
 - 1,000 community food growing sites.
 - 200 community orchards cultivating native fruit.
 - 100 'Tiny Forests' – dense and diverse woodlands the size of a tennis court.
 - 50 habitat creation schemes at rail stations and transport interchanges. 50 sensory gardens for therapeutic purposes, delivered in partnership with health charities and the Welsh NHS.

We asked for: Invest in and seize the opportunities from Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 to prioritise the right investment decisions.

Welsh Labour have committed to invest for the long term in the green and modern infrastructure Wales needs to thrive by:

- Launching a new 10-year Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan for a zerocarbon economy.
- Implementing the new Wales Transport Strategy to develop a high quality, sustainable and affordable public transport system. Giving Transport for Wales new powers to better integrate rail, bus and active travel and regulate for them to meet Welsh language standards.



- Work with local authorities to develop new Regional Transport Plans and work towards a new target of 45% of journeys by sustainable modes by 2040, setting more stretching goals where possible.
- Take forward the Burns Commission report for Newport, pressing the UK Government to help realise its exciting vision for transport integration and for easing M4 congestion.
- Take forward a new Digital Strategy for Wales and upgrade our digital and communications infrastructure.
- Create a modern legislative basis for transport in Wales.
- Build a sustainable future for key ports and Cardiff Airport.

We asked for: Support and use the hierarchy of plans to make long-term decisions, including supporting the delivery of SDPs.

Welsh Labour has committed to:

- Ensure that each region in Wales has effective and democratically accountable means of developing their future economies with coordinated regional transport and land use planning.

2. Placemaking

We asked for: Support and invest in the delivery of quality homes in the right places across Wales.

Welsh Labour has committed to:

- Build 20,000 new, low carbon social homes for rent and also support cooperative housing, community-led initiatives, and community land trusts.
- Continue to improve existing homes, to help tackle fuel poverty, create much needed jobs, training opportunities, and supply chains.
- Build in the right way using materials with low levels of embodied carbon, such as timber, and specifically Welsh timber, creating a timber based industrial strategy that can develop and sustain the high value production and processing of Welsh wood. This will take us further in tackling fuel poverty, create sustainable jobs and provide research and training opportunities.
- Help businesses to work co-operatively to support local supply chains, including local delivery and logistics services to enable our communities to become more sustainable and more agile economically.
- Keep the 1% increase in Land Transaction Tax charged on second home purchases.
- Improve building safety so that people feel safe and secure in their homes. Alongside this important work, develop a fire safety fund for existing buildings.
- Legislate to enact the recommendations of the Law Commission in relation to leasehold and ensure that estate charges for public open spaces and facilities are paid for in a way that is fair.

We asked for: Continue to enable the delivery of active travel.

Welsh Labour has committed to:

- Work with Transport for Wales and local authorities to strengthen the promotion of walking and cycling to make Wales an active travel nation.



- Implement the new Wales Transport Strategy to develop a high quality, sustainable and affordable public transport system.
- Invest in travel options that encourage public transport and support walking and cycling – options that are low or zero-carbon and mitigate air pollution.
- Develop new Active Travel Integrated Network Maps and work with schools to promote Active Travel and Road Safety.
- Make 20mph the default speed limit in residential areas and ban pavement parking wherever possible.

We asked for: Support the delivery of vibrant town centres.

Welsh Labour has committed to:

- With local partners, develop masterplans for towns and high streets to coordinate and focus economic opportunities and services, so more people work and spend time in these vibrant centres and empower communities to have a greater stake in local regeneration.
- Enable town centres to become more agile economically, by helping businesses to work co-operatively, increase their digital offer and support local supply chains, including local delivery services.
- Support the development of a register of empty buildings and help small businesses move into vacant shops.
- Develop new remote working hubs in communities, increasing footfall and creating new opportunities in town centres.

We asked for: Invest in and roll out a common methodology to carry out linguistic impact assessments.

On the Welsh language and planning, Welsh Labour has committed to:

- Creating a Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan to strengthen Welsh language communities and work with partners in these communities to support young people in securing affordable homes.
- Work to protect Welsh place names.

3. Resourcing

We asked for: Invest in planning as an essential public service.

Welsh Labour has committed to strengthening the autonomy and effectiveness of local government to make them more successful in delivering services.

We also asked for the investigation of new models of funding for planning and whilst this wasn't explicitly picked up, it was inferred in some of the commitments.

4. Community engagement

We asked for: Promote and support community engagement in plan making at all levels.

Welsh Labour has committed to:

- Work with communities to explore and develop effective tax, planning and housing measures - which could include local rates of Land Transaction Tax - to ensure the interests of local people are protected.

What's missing?

We also asked for:

- The introduction of the Infrastructure Consenting Bill.
- Support capacity-building in public sector planning.
- A Bill on Planning Law Consolidation.
- Introduction of a chartered town planning apprenticeship.
- Establish the role of the Chief Planning Officer.

These were not included in the Welsh Labour Manifesto but we will continue to work with the Welsh Government to support an effective planning service for Wales to support the delivery of homes, supporting the economy and taking climate action.