

# **One Wales**

**A progressive agenda  
for the  
government of Wales**

*An agreement between the Labour and Plaid  
Cymru Groups in the National Assembly*

27<sup>th</sup> June 2007

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# FOREWORD

As leaders of our respective parties, we are proud to endorse this agreement which delivers a progressive, stable and ambitious programme for government over this Assembly term. We are passionate about improving the lives of people in Wales and making our nation a better place in which to live and work.

We recognise that, on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the people of Wales sought a government of progressive consensus. In reaching an agreement to work together, we acknowledge this as a significant historic moment in the governance of Wales.

This programme represents the outcome of a rapid and intensive period of discussion and negotiation. These negotiations have required courage, because this is an historic step for both our parties and compromise, because achieving stability in government has meant finding common ground. More than anything, it has required, and will require, a new maturity on both sides. The journey on which we embark is challenging for our parties and also for all those who now share the responsibility of delivering these policies. We know, for certain, that the day-to-day implementation of this programme will demand trust and that building trust between us as partners is vital if we are to maintain the confidence of the people of Wales. Given the prolonged process in forming a government, we both recognise the importance of building trust in this institution.

As a coalition of the two largest parties in the Assembly, we are acutely aware of our shared responsibility to ensure the democratic vitality of this third term and to ensure that dissenting voices and alternative points of view are represented and heard. We are also aware of this agreement's limitations, since entering a coalition does not mean merging our parties. Nothing in this agreement will stand in the way of us taking part with unconstrained vigour in democratic elections, not least the local government elections in 2008. Both parties will retain their individual identities and ideological distinctiveness throughout.

However, we remain united in the belief that a greater good makes this unprecedented course of action worthwhile.

The prize which it delivers is simply to deliver the sort of fair, prosperous, confident and outgoing Wales which its citizens deserve and demand. We believe unequivocally that our programme for government provides the best prospect of the policies and outcomes that match the core beliefs of the people of Wales.

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We will work hard to address the issues which matter most to individuals and families in all parts of Wales by listening to those in trade unions, business, local government, the voluntary sector, the professions and Welsh society at large.

We have worked together to develop a programme of government to achieve the kind of Wales of which we can be proud.

This programme is ambitious but deliverable, radical yet realistic.

We jointly commend it to you.

Rhodri Morgan  
Leader, Labour Party Wales

Ieuan Wyn Jones  
Leader, Plaid Cymru

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# 1. A Progressive Agenda for Wales

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Shared values, common goals and joint aspirations for the people of Wales will drive this four-year programme for government. It offers a progressive agenda for improving the quality of life of people in all of Wales's communities, from all walks of life, and especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The people of Wales, and their government, face unprecedented challenges. Working together, we have devised a programme of government which meets these challenges head on. Our ambition is no less than to transform Wales into a self-confident, prosperous, healthy nation and society, which is fair to all.

Our joint commitment to the principles of social justice, sustainability and inclusivity - of the whole of Wales and for all its people - run throughout this programme. These principles underpin the programme and are fundamental to its success.

In devising this programme, we have explicitly recognised the diversity of Wales – geographically, socially, linguistically and culturally. We propose a comprehensive programme of government, for the full four year term, which covers the whole spectrum of policy and action.

We propose a programme which builds a strong and confident nation, which will create a healthy future, and which creates prosperity and jobs in living communities including measures to support the Welsh language.

We set out plans to ensure learning for life, to create a fair and just society and to ensure a sustainable environment. Finally, we aim for a rich and diverse culture, which promotes Wales as a bilingual and multicultural nation.

This programme for government is ambitious yet realistic. It is radical yet deliverable.

It makes best use of the powers and resources available to the government and puts on the agenda whether further changes are needed.

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## 2. A Strong and Confident Nation

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Without strong government with a sense of purpose and direction, we cannot deliver the real and lasting changes to transform people's lives all over Wales.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 sets the framework for the Assembly's powers during the next term. During this time, we will work together to enhance the Assembly's powers further and to ensure it has a fair allocation of funding so that people all over Wales can see enduring differences and real outcomes. We recognise that in order for Wales to prosper further and to deliver that change, the Assembly needs to develop further legislative powers.

### **Assembly Powers**

There will be a joint commitment to use the Government of Wales Act 2006 provisions to the full under Part III and to proceed to a successful outcome of a referendum for full law-making powers under Part IV as soon as practicable, at or before the end of the Assembly term.

Both parties agree in good faith to campaign for a successful outcome to such a referendum. The preparations for securing such a successful outcome will begin immediately. We will set up an all-

Wales Convention within six months and a group of MPs and AMs from both parties will be commissioned to set the terms of reference and membership of the Convention based on wide representation from civic society. Both parties will then take account of the success of the bedding down of the use of the new legislative powers already available and, by monitoring the state of public opinion, will need to assess the levels of support for full law-making powers necessary to trigger the referendum.

### **Funding and Finance**

There will be an independent Commission to review Assembly Funding and Finance, to include a study of the Barnett Formula, of tax-varying powers including borrowing powers and the feasibility of corporation tax rebates in the Convergence Fund region, including the implications of recent European Court of Justice Rulings in this area.

### **Public Services**

Following the recommendations of the Beecham Report, *Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-centred local services for Wales*, we will put in place a strategy for the continual improvement of local services in Wales aimed at embedding the

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imperatives of efficiency and citizen-centred services in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan. As part of this work, we will review the governance of public service bodies in Wales to ensure their alignment with this improvement agenda.

We will also establish a Strategic Capital Investment Board to ensure that best use is made of capital funds and to develop all opportunities to access capital finance consistent with an accountable, citizen-centred public service. We will also develop Local Service Boards and agreements including a commitment to pooled budgets.

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## 3. A Healthy Future

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We aspire to a world-class health service that is available to everyone, irrespective of whom they are or where they live in Wales, and at the time when they need it. Our health services must inspire confidence in the people of Wales that they will receive the best care available.

We are proud of the National Health Service, born in Wales out of a shared commitment to top-quality services, available to all and free at the point of delivery. We remain loyal and committed to these fundamental principles, which will drive our programme for government over the next four years.

We are passionate about delivering significant improvements in the health of all of the people of Wales. We recognise the need to work harder to improve the well-being of all vulnerable and disadvantaged in Wales who rely heavily on our health service.

We are determined that the services provided by the NHS should be genuinely shaped by and meet the needs of the people it serves, at the same time as taking full account of the latest evidence on best clinical practice. To do this we will put democratic engagement at the heart of the NHS.

We firmly reject the privatisation of NHS services or the organisation of such services on market models. We will guarantee public ownership, public funding and public control of this vital public service.

For hospital patients, we will strive to ensure a positive experience at what is inevitably a distressing time, through working hard to ensure the environment is clean and food is nutritious.

Over the next four years we will deliver a programme of government that includes:

- Reviewing NHS reconfiguration
- Strengthening NHS finance and management
- Developing and improving Wales's health services
- Ensuring access to health care
- Improving patients' experience
- Supporting social care



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## Reviewing NHS reconfiguration

People all over Wales must be confident that any changes to NHS services in their communities will provide them with the best possible care. We pledge that the people of Wales will be fully engaged in any future reconfiguration of services:

- We will agree and implement a new approach to health service reconfiguration.
- We will institute a moratorium on existing proposals for changes at community hospital level.
- We undertake that changes in District General Hospital services will not be implemented unless and until relevant associated community services are in place.
- We will support changes where there is a local agreement on a way forward.
- Where proposals are contentious, we will proceed on the basis of an agreed evidence base, in which both parties will be involved, and which will be conducted on an open book basis. Where flaws or gaps are identified in existing evidence, new information will be sought and fresh public consultation will be embarked upon.
- We will revisit and revise proposals which reconfigure

individual services through single site solutions.

- We will reinstate democratic engagement at the heart of the Welsh health service by putting the voice of patients and the public at the centre of what we do. We will reform NHS trusts to improve accountability both to local communities and to the Assembly government.
- We will institute a change to the present way in which consultation is conducted. Before any consultation documents involving health service reconfiguration are published in the future, they will be subject to internal scrutiny, at the Assembly government and involving both parties. The purpose of this scrutiny will be to ensure that such documents, and the proposals that they contain, are properly based on evidence so that they will be more likely to command widespread respect.

## Strengthening NHS Finance & Management

How the NHS is financed and run matters. We are resolved to keeping the NHS publicly owned, funded and managed.

- We will move purposefully to end the internal market.
- We will eliminate the use of private sector hospitals by the NHS in Wales by 2011.

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- We will ensure that any use of NHS facilities for private practice will be appropriately remunerated.
  - We will rule out the use of Private Finance Initiative in the Welsh health service during the third term.
  - We will end competitive tendering for NHS cleaning contracts.
  - We will work to create a National Institute of Health Research.

### **Developing and improving Wales's health services**

The NHS cannot stand still. It has to adapt and change. New services and treatments are continually emerging. We will, based on the evidence available, constantly improve and develop services. We will invest in the prevention of ill health, as well as treatment and care when illness strikes.

Over the next four years, through the programme of government:

- We will provide a minimum of one family nurse per secondary school by the end of the Assembly term.
- We will pilot investment in new multi-purpose well-being centres.
- We will provide extra funding for palliative care.

- We will place a new priority on providing for mental health, including child and adolescent mental health services.
- We will seek legislative competence in relation to mental health.
- We will improve provision for long-term conditions, such as stroke and diabetes patients.
- We will refocus the provision of dental services in Wales to provide a new public health focus, building up the Community Dental Service and employing more salaried dentists.
- We will invest £190 million in public health and health improvement.
- We will, as part of improved sexual health services, plan to introduce a cervical cancer vaccine scheme from 2008 onwards.
- We will explore the opportunity to place occupational health services on a statutory basis.
- We will bring forward legislation for vulnerable children.

### **Ensuring access to health care**

We are determined that patients in all of Wales's communities have

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rapid and ready access to the care they need. Over the next term:

- We will reduce waiting times to a maximum of 26 weeks from referral to treatment, including all or any waits for therapies and diagnostic tests.
- We will ensure improved access to services including well-being centres and pharmacy based NHS drop-in centres.
- We will increase the number of nurses qualified to prescribe medicines independently.
- We will maintain free prescriptions.
- We will draw up a Charter for Patients Rights and legislation on NHS redress.
- We will extend the Health Inequalities Fund.
- We will develop and publish a Rural Health Plan, ensuring that the future health needs of rural communities are met in ways which reflect the particular conditions and characteristics of rural Wales.

### **Improving patient experience**

We pledge to make patients' stay in hospital the best possible. A positive experience of care speeds recovery, and helps people's overall well-being at what can be a difficult time. Over the next four years:

- We will work hard to deliver improvements in hospital food and nutrition.
- We will improve hospital cleanliness.
- We will reform charges for hospital parking and patients' access to telephones and televisions whilst in hospital.

### **Supporting Social Care**

We place great importance on the unpaid care provided to others by family and friends. It is just as significant as the care provided by the NHS. We recognise and support the contribution made by Wales' unpaid carers.

We are firmly committed to improving the care provided to vulnerable people by public, private and voluntary bodies. We will help people to be independent and achieve their full potential, whilst also protecting people when they are most vulnerable. We will drive forward improvements in the quality of care, creating seamless care pathways at a fair cost.

Our programme of government over the term is that:

- We will seek the powers, and then bring forward legislation, to create a more level playing field in relation to charges for domiciliary care services.

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- We will seek further powers to legislate in the fields of vulnerable children, looked-after children and child poverty.
  - We will review the Carers Strategy and prepare legislation on the rights of carers.
  - We will build on existing workforce plans to include all care staff, with a strong emphasis on work-based training to enable individuals to gain qualifications on the basis of their practical skills and to develop those skills further.
  - We will develop new not-for-profit nursing homes.

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## 4. A Prosperous Society

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Our vision is of a Wales where there is a strong and enterprising economy and full employment based on quality jobs. We will encourage and stimulate enterprise and support companies to grow and invest. Everyone must have the opportunity to achieve a reasonable standard of living, no matter where they live or what they do. Full employment supports and sustains communities in all parts of Wales and helps to tackle poverty and disadvantage wherever it occurs.

Recognising the importance of an all-Wales approach to securing economic prosperity, we will do our utmost to create and retain jobs across the whole of Wales, in rural and urban communities alike. Our actions will be firmly guided by sustainability principles, encouraging long-term, high-quality jobs. We will target those areas in greatest need, wherever they occur in Wales.

Viable businesses create jobs. It is imperative that we create a positive climate for business growth. Wales must be renowned for business success. We will use all the tools available to us, from public procurement and support for private investment to European Union funding to enable businesses to flourish and expand. In doing so, we will work closely with business and trade unions to ensure that both are

fully equipped for the challenges of global competition.

Unlocking the potential of Wales's people is vital to our prosperity. We will equip people with the skills they need, at all levels, to enable them to make the best possible contribution to the economy and their communities, and to fulfil their individual potential. We will provide every help for people to get sustainable jobs where they need advice and support.

Our programme of government provides for three sets of actions:

- Creating jobs across Wales
- Stimulating enterprise and business growth
- Promoting tourism
- Enhancing skills for jobs

### **Creating jobs across Wales**

Jobs are the lifeblood of Wales – without jobs individuals are severely disadvantaged, communities all over Wales suffer and there is no prospect of prosperity. Together, we want to create jobs to give people and their communities a brighter future. To do this:

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- We will implement a labour market strategy with a long term goal of full employment at a rate of 80%.
  - We will adopt an all-Wales approach to economic development, guaranteeing investment in all regions of Wales, and working within the framework of the Wales Spatial Plan.
  - We will continue key regeneration programmes in the Heads of the Valleys and Môn a Menai.
  - We will develop an all-Wales green jobs strategy.
  - We will support the development of a Manufacturing Forum and Skills Academies in key manufacturing sectors.
  - We will, alongside the Department of Work and Pensions, continue to introduce innovative programmes to help people back into work, such as Careers Ladders and extra support for child care.
  - We will ensure that all projects seeking to benefit from public funding, including all structural funds, seek to meet sustainability criteria.
  - We will explore options for a public sector investment agreement with the European Investment Bank.

- We will press ahead with relocation of Assembly divisions to North Wales, West Wales and the South Wales Valleys.

## **Stimulating enterprise and business growth**

Strong businesses need active support to grow and prosper. We will foster a positive climate for enterprise and business development across Wales, and in particular encourage small and medium sized businesses to thrive.

- We will, by working within the European legal framework, make it easier for small local firms in all parts of Wales to win government contracts. We will introduce an All-Wales Purchasing Code of Practice to support a progressive increase in the overall amount of public purchasing sourced from business in Wales.
- We will create a single investment fund for business support which includes provision for social enterprise and environmental incentives.
- We will enhance the business rate relief scheme, within the context of more effective support for businesses.
- We will increase support for farmers' markets.

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## Promoting Tourism

Tourism is vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. Tourism should therefore be developed across Wales on a regional basis in order to make the most of local resources and assets.

- We will continue to promote Wales actively in external markets, drawing on our unique assets in culture, history and the environment.
- We will make strategic investments in facilities and employee skills.
- We will support the tourism industry as the market moves increasingly towards shorter and activity-based breaks.

## Enhancing skills for jobs

We are committed to equipping young people and adults alike with the skills they need to fulfil their potential at work. Good skills also support the development and growth of businesses. To achieve this:

- We will develop a targeted programme to improve skill levels for current and future workplace needs.
- We will create and develop links between education and

entrepreneurship.

- We will support the development of NEWI to full University status.
- We will encourage procurement which incentivises training opportunities for the unemployed.
- We will commit to a Wales Union Learning Fund and a Union Modernisation Fund

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## 5. Living Communities

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### 5.1 A home for all

Lack of good-quality housing affects people's health and well-being, and influences their long-term life chances. Everyone has the right to an affordable home as owner, as part-owner or as tenant. A stock of good-quality, affordable homes is the foundation of thriving local communities in all four corners of Wales.

The shortage of affordable housing, to rent or to buy, is one of the greatest challenges facing many communities in Wales. Many places are already experiencing very considerable housing pressure, with local people effectively priced out of the housing market, unable to afford a home. The resulting impact on individuals, families and communities is all too evident across Wales.

Our ambition is to ensure that all households, in all communities and irrespective of their means, can afford a decent home.

Working together, we will create new tools to ensure that housing is affordable in the areas of most severe housing pressure. We will also ensure that the supply of affordable housing increases by at least 6,500 over the next four years. We will also provide financial support to young people who want to buy

their first home in their own community but cannot afford to do so.

This programme of government commits us to:

- Meeting housing need
- Improving access to housing
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Ensuring 21<sup>st</sup>-century housing

#### Meeting housing need

Many communities experience severe housing pressure, with house prices far outstripping local wages. We are committed to tackling this problem in the worst affected areas using our new powers.

- We will draw down legislative power to the Assembly in order to suspend the Right to Buy in areas of housing pressure.
- We will review and reissue Technical Advice Note (TAN) 20 with a view to allowing local authorities to use Language Impact Assessments for planning purposes in areas of housing



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pressure.

- We will provide local authorities with the ability to secure 100% affordable housing on development sites to meet local needs in areas of high housing pressure.
- We will, by drawing on the model of control of Houses in Multiple Occupation set out in the Housing Act 2004, aim to provide local authorities with the power to control the conversion of full-time dwellings into second homes in areas of housing pressure.

### **Improving access to housing**

Getting onto the housing ladder is extremely difficult for many people on typical incomes in areas of high house prices.

- We will provide grants for first-time buyers.
- We will, in the on-going review of TAN 6, extend the current agricultural and forestry worker dwelling category to a rural enterprise worker category for essential dwellings in the countryside.

### **Increasing the supply of affordable housing**

We need to ensure that there is enough housing to meet people's needs in all communities. The era of long waiting lists for social housing

should end, and new build housing developments should include affordable homes. Together, we will ensure that the supply of affordable housing increases, through investing in social housing, including council housing, and stimulating the supply of affordable private sector homes.

- We will provide increased funding to support social housing.
- We will require all sizeable new housing developments to include a percentage of social housing reflecting local need.
- We will allow local authorities greater freedom to designate non-development sites for the sole purpose of affordable housing, taking into account the principles of adjacency and sustainability.
- We will reform and reissue guidance on 'affordability' and 'local' criteria for use in section 106 agreements.
- We will improve radically the supply of publicly-owned land, including land in the ownership of the Assembly government, for local, affordable housing.
- We will provide greater power of specificity in designating Assembly owned land for affordable housing purposes.
- We will promote the expansion of Community Land Trusts in

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Wales.

- We will lobby the Westminster government to provide greater discretion to charitable organisations in disposing of land below market value for affordable housing purposes.
- We will place a statutory duty on each local authority to prepare a delivery plan for affordable housing, consistent with their housing strategy, to include target numbers.

## **21<sup>st</sup>-century social housing**

We are strongly committed to ensuring that social housing in Wales meets 21<sup>st</sup>-century standards.

- We will keep the Welsh Housing Quality Standard under review. Where, having secured the agreement of their local populations, individual local authorities put forward a case for compliance with the Standards to be achieved through an extended compliance timetable, and where applications are backed by a robust business plan, we will consider such applications on their individual merits.
- We will ensure that, where a stock transfer ballot has taken place within the lifetime of a council, no re-ballot should occur within that local authority term of office unless a significant change of circumstances can be demonstrated to have taken

place.

- We will, where local authorities decide to hold stock transfer ballots, work actively to ensure that tenants have access to impartial advice.
- We will provide extra funding for the Supporting People programme over the four years of the Assembly term.

## **Homelessness**

We will tackle homelessness in all of our communities. To do this:

- We will produce a plan to confront homelessness over a decade, seeking new powers under the Government of Wales Act 2006, where such powers are necessary to the development and implementation of a Welsh strategy.

## **5.2 Access for all**

Travelling across much of Wales can be lengthy and tortuous, whether travelling by car or public transport.

We envisage a Wales where travelling between communities in different parts of Wales is both easy and sustainable. We are firmly committed to creating better transport links, both road and rail, between the North and the West of Wales and the South.

A quarter of households all over Wales do not have a car and rely on

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public transport or walking or cycling. We will transform provision of bus services by investing in a modern, integrated public transport system. Better public transport will also help households in non-urban communities to be less dependent on car ownership, the costs of which can be prohibitive to those on low incomes.

Dramatic improvements to public transport will encourage people to reduce car use. This in turn will contribute to reducing Wales's carbon footprint.

Our programme of government over the next four years will involve:

- Improving regional and national transport
- Improving accessibility.

### **Improve regional and national transport**

We will improve transport between communities across Wales by investing in many different modes of travel.

- We will develop and implement a programme for improved North-South links, including travel by road and rail.
- We will reduce rail travel time between the North and South of Wales.

- We will create a new all-Wales Traws Cambria transport network integrating long distance rail and coach routes with electronic cross-ticketing by 2011.
- We will continue to improve the safety and quality of stations and platforms in all parts of Wales, introducing new trains and train services.
- We will introduce a National Transport Passenger Committee for Wales.
- We will improve arrangements for regional and national strategic planning for transport.
- We will press ahead with improvements to major road links between the North, the West and the South of Wales, investing over £50 million for this purpose over the four year Assembly term.

### **Improving Access**

Most journeys are local - going shopping, taking children to school, getting to work or keeping hospital appointments. To improve local transport:

- We will use new powers for local authorities to plan and support new bus routes to improve links between communities.
- We will enhance and link up cycle routes on an all-Wales basis.

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- We will enhance rail discount arrangements for pensioners.
  - We will support transport sustainability with investment in community transport, cycling, safe routes to school and 20 mph zones.
  - We will pursue legislation on improved school transport.
  - We will develop a plan to move freight from road to rail.

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## 6. Learning for Life

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Education brings empowerment. A learning culture helps to achieve social justice, ensure economic productivity and meet the challenges of new technology. It helps us to have a better understanding of our place in the world, of looking to the past in order to deliver a better future for the people of Wales.

Young people's educational achievement at sixteen can have a significant impact on the likelihood of them getting a job and on the pay levels of that job. Many young people have yet to achieve their full potential. Many of Wales' adults also need help and support to start - or continue - learning later in life.

Our vision is of a society in which learning throughout life is the norm, where the people of Wales are actively engaged in acquiring new knowledge and skills from childhood to old age. We will meet the challenge of improving the level of qualifications attained by our children, young people, and adults too. We will build upon our partnership with education providers, staff and parents to create the best possible schools for the future.

As a government, our unwavering commitment is to give the children of Wales the best start in life, through providing a first-class education for all children, whatever their social

origins or wherever they live. We are also strongly committed to promoting and supporting learning for adults, whether in further education, higher education or community-based learning.

Our programme for government involves:

- Establishing a right to learning
- Reforming funding
- Ensuring the best start for young children
- Creating 21<sup>st</sup>-century schools
- Developing adult learning

### **Establishing a right to learn**

Everyone, from whatever background, of whatever age and whether Welsh-speaking or English-speaking, has the right to an education.

- We will provide a government-guaranteed right, backed up with new money, to education and accredited training until the age of eighteen, including a broader-based baccalaureate, incorporating vocational and academic learning opportunities,

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with a legislative framework.

- We will set out a new policy agreement with Local Education Authorities to require them to assess the demand for Welsh-medium education, including surveying parental wishes, and to produce a resulting School Organisation Plan, setting out clear steps to meet need.
- We will create a national Welsh-medium Education Strategy to develop effective provision from nursery through to further and higher education backed up by an implementation programme.
- We will continue to develop a distinctive curriculum that is appropriate for Wales.
- We will establish a Welsh-medium Higher Education Network - the Federal College - in order to ensure Welsh-medium provision in our universities.
- We will explore the establishment of a Welsh for Adults Unit with sufficient funding, giving priority to tutor education.

### **Reforming funding**

We must get funding arrangements in place that allow schools and colleges to plan for the future.

- We will reform funding arrangements for schools and Further Education colleges,

including moving to three year funding.

- We will work with local authorities, unions, professional groups and parents to review the formula through which schools are funded, including ways of mitigating the impact of large scale fluctuations in pupil numbers, so as to provide schools with a secure basis from which to plan.
- We will continue the existing grant arrangements for small and rural schools, making greater use of school buildings to improve viability.

### **Ensuring the best start for young children**

We are determined that very young children will have every opportunity to develop and grow in a happy, healthy and supportive environment. In our programme of government over the four year term:

- We will commit to progressing provision of universal, affordable childcare, with additional budget support during the Assembly term, including extended free, full-time, high-quality childcare for two year olds in areas of greatest need.

### **Creating 21<sup>st</sup>-century schools**

Schools need to be fit for purpose and properly funded, with highly

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professional and motivated staff. Children must be able to get the support and resources they need, and follow a curriculum which inspires and encourages achievement.

Schools must work in partnership with parents and the community to deliver real and lasting benefits for all children, whatever their background.

To meet these challenges, our programme of government is that, over the four year term:

- We will deliver radical reductions in class sizes for three to seven year olds.
- We will support the development of community schools, to include better integration of sporting opportunities in both schools and communities.
- We will continue a major capital investment programme to upgrade school buildings, exceeding the sums provided over the previous four years.
- We will institute a programme of increased investment in sustainable school buildings, to include provision of water sprinklers.
- We will provide more resources for physical education in schools and we will promote the retention of school playing fields.
- We will initiate a pilot scheme for laptops for children.
- We will bring forward legislation on Additional Learning Needs.
- We will establish an enquiry into disengagement from learning amongst children and young people to look at evidence of what works. The remit will include the transition from primary to secondary schools, the curriculum, the delivery of post-16 education and the potential of personalised learning.
- We will maintain the programme of free school breakfasts.
- We will assess the impact on secondary school funding of developments in the 14 – 19 curriculum, and will bring forward proposals for discussion on post-14 education accordingly.
- We will review the way in which we measure educational attainment, including the use of free school meals as an indicator in this field.
- We will develop a national structure for classroom assistants.
- We will support pilot schemes for Saturday and summer schools for sport, music and the arts.
- We will develop opportunities for schools and colleges to work with

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local sports clubs and invest further in sports coaching.

- We will investigate ways in which volunteering by young people can be better recognised and rewarded.
- We will assess the impact on educational provision of new patterns of in-migration, particularly from accession countries.

## **Developing adult learning**

Wales has a strong network of colleges and universities offering further and higher education. We will maximise the economic, social and cultural impact of colleges and universities on learners and on the wider community. We are resolved to develop a further and higher education system which offers a broad range of learning opportunities, is responsive to the needs of students and employers, and tackles poverty and disadvantage. We are committed to widening participation in higher education. All educational institutions will be strongly encouraged to work together to make the most of their resources and provide the widest possible range of opportunities.

To do this:

- We will provide extra assistance with student debt and maintain existing fee levels in Wales up to and including 2009/10. We will

maintain the current level of resource throughout the four year Assembly term, doing whatever is possible to mitigate the effects on Welsh-domiciled students if the Westminster government lifts the cap on fees in 2009.

- We will substantially increase the number of apprenticeships.
- We will make full use of the Webb Report into Further Education in Wales to develop a system which is responsive to the needs and priorities of local communities, employers and the local and regional economy. A partnership approach will continue to provide the bedrock of our approach in this area.
- We will work to widen participation for all ages in further and higher education, promoting adult and community learning both in relation to employability and the wider benefits which education brings.
- We will ensure that extra funding is tied to new approaches in higher education, to develop proposals for joint working and for the further development of inter-University agreements for co-working between departments across Wales.
- We will establish a new National Youth Service Fund.



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- We will work to establish a National Science Academy.
  - We will establish new National Research Centres.

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## 7. A Fair and Just Society

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Our vision is of a fair and just Wales, in which all citizens are empowered to determine their own lives and to shape the communities in which they live.

Our ambition is a Wales where everyone achieves their full human potential and everyone can live free from poverty, discrimination, fear or abuse.

The government will be unswerving in its adherence to the principles of inclusion, pluralism and fairness. We will ensure that all sections of the Welsh population are engaged as citizens. Our programme emphasises tackling the causes – rather than just the symptoms – of problematic behaviour and protects vulnerable individuals or groups from suffering harm or discrimination.

We are firmly committed to supporting and including those who are marginalised from society. We will offer appropriate and effective treatment and support to re-engage with the wider community and to ensure that the wider community is fully inclusive.

We want to see a fair system of youth and criminal justice, in which the people of Wales have every confidence.

Our programme of government involves:

- Promoting equality
- Enhancing citizenship and community cohesion
- Regenerating communities
- Tackling child poverty
- Ensuring an effective youth and criminal justice system

### Promoting equality

We recognise that if some individuals and groups are discriminated against arbitrarily, this damages their life chances. We aim to foster cohesive, plural and just communities where people, regardless of physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, race, creed or language, can feel valued.

Over the next four years:

- We will work to make a success of the new Single Equality Body in Wales, drawing on the autonomous experience of this approach in Northern Ireland.

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- We will, continue and extend collaboration with the Interfaith Forum to promote understanding across cultures and faiths and further develop and disseminate good practice models in Welsh public bodies which acknowledge and celebrate both diversity and commonalities.
  - We will explore and implement new ways of engaging citizens through participative and deliberative methods.
  - We will implement the All-Wales Strategy on Gypsies and Travellers.
  - We will refine and implement the Refugee Inclusion Strategy including the recommendations on the interests of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
  - We will develop a strategy to reduce hate crime.

### **Enhancing citizenship and community cohesion**

We will develop and implement an overarching, all-Wales community cohesion strategy. As part of this strategy:

- We will establish units in every local authority area, encouraging positive citizenship, discouraging and addressing anti-social behaviour through strategies such as mediation, reparation

orders, child safety orders and acceptable behaviour contracts.

We will develop and implement an All-Wales Alcohol Reduction Strategy aiming to increase the number of drug and alcohol rehabilitation places available in Wales.

- We will, in relation to substance misuse, further integrate the principles of harm-reduction models by considering, if the evidence supports it, the adoption of the pilot programmes currently under way in England.
- We will take forward the report into substance misuse counselling services produced earlier in 2007, including workforce development and the establishment of an All-Wales Group to oversee standards and services.
- We will review the effectiveness of harm-reduction education programmes in schools.

### **Regenerating Communities**

We are strongly resolved to regenerate diverse communities, of place and of people, across Wales. We will empower people to rebuild the social, economic and cultural fabric of their communities and we will engage positively and purposefully with community representatives.

Over the next four years:

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- We will provide extra help for pensioners with council tax.
  - We will establish integrated and cross-cutting initiatives aimed at economic development and regeneration, particularly in areas of high deprivation - the existing models of the Heads of the Valleys Programme and Môn a Menai will be exemplars.
  - We will reinstate and refocus the Post Office Development Fund, exploring with local government colleagues, ways in which Post Offices might better be used for local authority, business and other local services and also encouraging the location of free ATMs in post offices.
  - We will work together to develop Communities First into its Communities Next phase, drawing on the experience of the wider community development movement in Wales and the findings of the Interim Evaluation of the programme.
  - We will embed and implement in full the strategy relating to the support and co-ordination of advice services in Wales, so that comprehensive benefit advice is available in all local authority areas.
  - We will continue and further support the Voluntary Sector Scheme and further enhance the role of the sector in policy

formation.

## **Tackling child poverty**

We recognise that child poverty, including severe child poverty, is a matter of great concern, whilst recognising that progress has been made.

We underline again the need for cross-cutting policies and programmes to tackle child poverty (and the poverty experienced by those families and communities all over Wales within which poor children live). This government commits itself to developing Wales-specific solutions and to integrating strategies with appropriate programmes that are currently within the competence of the Westminster government. To this end:

- We will support the aim to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate child poverty by 2020.
- We will implement an extra Children's Bond for all children entering school.
- We will legislate to establish a duty on public agencies to make and demonstrate their contribution to ending child poverty.
- We will establish an 'expert group' to address the further and wider policy requirements necessary to meet the targets set in *Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales – Measuring Success*.

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- We will instigate a robust evaluative review of the outcomes of existing anti-poverty programmes in Wales with the intention of building, where appropriate, on programme achievements while establishing robust and demonstrable outcome benchmarks and sound practice and evaluation methodologies for planned programmes (for example, Communities Next).
  - We will, as part of this process, integrate the various available and salient datasets on the extent of child poverty in Wales and the outcomes of policy interventions and also audit and integrate, where possible, existing anti-poverty programmes such as Communities First, Flying Start, Job Centre Plus, Job Match etc.
  - We will adopt the Wales Spatial Plan as an integrating tool in this policy area.
  - We will establish credit unions – as a form of social enterprise – in all parts of Wales.
  - We will, against the background of universal coverage ensure access to a credit union for every secondary school in Wales by 2011.
  - We will further develop the ability of Welsh credit unions to take deposits of Child Trust Fund accounts.

## **Ensuring an Effective Youth and Criminal Justice System**

We are firmly committed to tackling the root causes of problematic behaviour, wherever it occurs, in a robust way. We aim to prevent offending and re-offending amongst young people. We will also consider the potential for devolution of some or all of the criminal justice system.

In our programme of government:

- We will continue prioritisation of preventative intervention and non-custodial solutions in relation to youth offending and youth justice matters (a) in the funding of these areas (b) in the use of diversion from custody strategies consistent with an emphasis on evidence on efficacy.
- We will consider effective models of cross-cutting practice between the youth justice system and education, housing and mental health services.
- We will consider the evidence for the devolution of the criminal justice system within the contexts of (a) devolution of funding and (b) moves towards the establishment of a single administration of justice in Wales.

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## 8. A Sustainable Environment

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Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity. Everyone in Wales has a contribution to make in tackling it – individuals, households, businesses, public services and community groups. This government, through its commitment to sustainable development, must be at the forefront of that campaign.

Wales has a rich and diverse environment in rural and urban areas alike that needs to be protected and enhanced for people now and for generations to come.

The local environment matters and communities are blighted by littering, fly-tipping and pollution. We recognise the importance of the local environment, the effect on communities and will support its improvement to a high standard.

Wales is an energy rich country and we therefore have a role to play in producing energy from alternative sources. But we must also make every effort not to squander our precious resources, which means helping households and organisations across Wales to be more energy efficient.

Some areas of rural Wales are experiencing rapid economic, social and cultural change, facing unique challenges and having to adapt to

new circumstances. We look forward to thriving rural communities, where people live and work and enjoy a high quality of life. We will provide support to those communities in the many different parts of rural Wales to build a new future.

We will not digress from playing our part in tackling global environmental challenges, in caring for our environment and in placing the family farm at the heart of our strategy for sustainable food production and rural development.

Our programme for government over the four year term will involve:

- Tackling climate change
- Supporting rural development
- Achieving sustainable energy production and consumption
- Improving the local environment

### **Tackling climate change**

Climate change is a major global threat. We are resolved that this government and the people of Wales will play the fullest possible part in reducing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This cannot be a short-term project – there must be radical changes in

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people's behaviour and their expectations which will require concerted action over the full four year term of the Assembly government.

- We will establish a Climate Change Commission for Wales. which will be chaired by the Minister for Sustainability and Rural Development. It will include members from all four political parties, businesses, local government and voluntary sector groups. The Commission will assist with the development of new policies and the creation of consensus on climate change. It will work in partnership with Wales' representative on the UK Sustainable Development Commission.
- We will aim to achieve annual carbon reduction-equivalent emissions reductions of 3% per year by 2011 in areas of devolved competence. We will set out specific sectoral targets in relation to residential, public and transport areas. We will work with the heavy industry/power generation industries to reduce emissions in those sectors.
- We will commit to targets on the carbon neutrality of public buildings.
- We will provide support for indigenous woodlands, including a tree for all new babies and adopted children, helping to create a Welsh National Forest of

native trees to act as a carbon sink.

## **Supporting rural communities**

Rural communities across Wales are experiencing massive changes. Where necessary, they need support to thrive, adapt and diversify in order to achieve a better and more prosperous future. They need this support for the full term of the Assembly government.

To help rural areas of all kinds, we resolve that:

- We will submit a Rural Development Plan for 2007 – 2013 to the European Union, based on the level of Tir Mynydd funding agreed by the Assembly in March 2007 and develop a replacement scheme post 2010, including a new farm entrants scheme, taking into account the impact on other elements within Axis Two.
- We will set in motion a major initiative on local food procurement.
- We will very shortly complete, publish and implement a Strategic Action Plan for the dairy industry.
- We will seek a derogation from EU Regulations to prohibit the burying of fallen stock on farm land.

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- We will vigorously pursue a programme of bTB eradication.
  - We will encourage work with the relevant local authorities to identify and address the particular needs of deep rural areas.
  - We will make a commitment to maximum restrictions on GM crops.

### **Achieving sustainable energy production and consumption**

Wales has long been a significant producer as well as a consumer of energy. We are committed to ensuring that Wales adapts to changing energy production in a sustainable way that brings benefits to Wales's people. We will:

- Draw up an Energy Strategy, which will be integrated with a planning framework, to include actions on energy efficiency, microgeneration, eco roofs, diversified renewable energy generation and biomass, an improved advisory service for citizens and communities, and support for a study on the proposed Severn Barrage, including its environmental impact.
- Continue to provide energy efficiency grants, including a non-means tested element within the context of a National Energy

Efficiency and Savings Plan.

- We will, following production of an Energy Route Map and an Assembly government Energy Strategy, review TAN 8, revising upwards the targets for energy from renewables, drawn from a range of sources.
- We will promote research and development into renewable technologies including their application on-shore and off-shore.
- We will develop a support programme to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy production on-farm.
- We will explore the introduction of a grant scheme to convert to energy crops.

### **Improving the local environment**

To achieve clean, healthy and sustainable local environments in which people can take pride:

- We will improve targets for recycling with legislation and support for better and more coordinated waste management.
- We will establish an initiative to support local authorities and voluntary action to improve the quality of their local environment.



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- We will introduce compulsory Health Impact Assessments for open cast coal applications, together with buffer zones, and with an emphasis on planners and developers working closely with local communities.
  - We will pursue the devolution of building regulations to the Assembly.
  - We will create an all-Wales coastal path.

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## 9. A Rich and Diverse Culture

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We celebrate Wales as a community of diverse cultures: united for our common good, celebrating our many traditions, ensuring that Wales uses its two national languages to their full potential, and bringing people of all origins together.

We envisage wide participation in the full range of arts, cultural and sporting activities. Our aim is that high-quality cultural experiences are available to all people, irrespective of where they live or their background. We will celebrate and conserve Wales's outstanding heritage, of ordinary people and well-known artists, alike.

Wales is renowned across the world for the performance of its teams and sportsmen and women, from rugby to cycling to wheelchair athletes.

However, we need to broaden participation in sport and physical activity because of its significant health benefits. Our ambition is for a nation where everyone gets their recommended thirty minutes of exercise five times a week, and sporting clubs and teams are flourishing.

This programme of government involves:

- Supporting the Welsh Language
- Promoting arts and culture
- Encouraging sport and physical activity
- Placing Wales in the World

### Supporting the Welsh Language

The Welsh language belongs to everyone in Wales as part of our common national heritage, identity and public good. We will work to ensure that more people, young and old, can learn Welsh and encourage it to thrive as a language of many communities all over Wales.

- We will be seeking enhanced legislative competence on the Welsh Language. Jointly we will work to extend the scope of the Welsh Language Legislative Competence Order included in the Assembly government's first year legislative programme, with a view to a new Assembly Measure to confirm official status for both Welsh and English, linguistic rights in the provision of services and the establishment of the post of Language Commissioner.

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- We will drive forward our efforts to obtain agreement on the use of the Welsh language in specified areas of EU business. We will use this experience to explore with the Westminster government the making of an official application to the Council of Ministers for the Welsh language to receive official EU language and working language status.
  - We will expand the funding and support for Welsh-medium magazines and newspapers, including the establishment of a Welsh-language daily newspaper.
  - We will support the dot.cym campaign to gain domain name status for Wales on the internet.
  - We will continue research work into population shifts in order to promote balanced populations in all parts of Wales.
  - We will ensure that opportunities to enjoy Wales's rich cultural and sporting activities are available to all, with continued free access to museums and galleries.
  - We will establish a National English-language Theatre and explore the creation of a National Gallery for Wales.
  - We will, by building on the success of free entry to museums and galleries, give Welsh pensioners and children free entry to Assembly-funded heritage sites.
  - We will continue to implement the recommendations of the Stephens Review into the future development of the arts in Wales, so that there is a clear approach to setting strategic policy.
  - We will place a statutory obligation on local authorities to promote culture and encourage partnership to deliver high-quality cultural experiences for their communities.

## Promoting Arts and Culture

Our arts and culture programme widens access to Wales's many heritage, cultural and sporting activities so that low income should not be a barrier to participation. We will foster local cultural and sporting activity and support two major new centres. Wales's libraries will be dramatically improved so that they can develop free access to cultural materials for all, fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In this programme of government

- We will support opportunities for Wales's artistic producers to participate on the international stage.
- We will consider enshrining the concept of *artistic freedom* in Welsh law, subject to the Assembly's new powers.
- We will continue to support the

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case for making St. David's Day a Bank Holiday.

- We will support establishing a Kyffin Williams gallery.
- We will establish an all-Wales Collection of People's History, backed by a permanent curatorial staff with responsibility for the promotion and development of the collection.
- We will, through working with local authorities, establish a major programme of capital investment and refurbishment of our public library network.
- We will continue to invest in improving ICT in libraries, including maintaining free, universal public access to the internet, to help bring them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Encouraging Sport and Physical Activity**

Seven out of ten people in Wales do not undertake enough physical activity to gain any health benefits. We will encourage greater participation by people of all ages and social backgrounds in grassroots sport. Recognising that physical activity other than sport is also beneficial to health, we will support greater participation in cycling and walking, and encourage the people of Wales, of all backgrounds, to enjoy the natural environment.

Over the next four years:

- We will continue to fund schemes which have enabled older people and children to enjoy free swimming.
- We will significantly extend the children's scheme by giving *all* children the opportunity to use a sport or leisure facility or a swimming pool free of charge at weekends.
- We will provide extra support for sports bodies wishing to develop Welsh national teams.
- We will increase investment in school sport and boost after-school activities, including the continued support of Dragon Sport and schemes to improve the participation of girls.
- We will, in order to help boost grassroots sport we will train additional coaches to the latest standards and ensure that school children undertake at least five hours of physical activity each week.
- We will deliver a successful UK Schools Games in 2009, as part of the run-up to the 2012 Olympics – which will provide a platform to help our young athletes deliver their full potential.
- We will promote Wales's contribution to international sporting events, building on the

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opportunities of the Ryder Cup.

- We will work with Supporters Direct to help give Welsh fans of all sports a greater say in how their clubs are run.
- We will create more fun and healthier opportunities for mass participation in walking, cycling and running events.
- We will foster a sense of public ownership in relation to the countryside, urban green spaces and our coastline, recognising that many socially excluded groups do not currently enjoy their social, cultural and health benefits.

## Placing Wales in the World

As this document ends, we turn to the Wales which we will attempt to fashion over the next four years - a confident and outgoing nation where we recognise the strength of our own identity and the part which we can play in the world. We envisage a Wales which is increasingly known and recognised throughout the globe, and in which Wales is a country to which the world is increasingly welcomed.

Many Welsh men and women are already renowned for their outstanding contributions in the fields of film, music, literature and industry. The next four years will provide some great opportunities to welcome into Wales events

which take place on that world stage – an Ashes test match in 2009, the Ryder Cup in 2011. For whole weeks at a time, Wales will be in the living rooms of nations right around the globe.

Sport, of course, is only one of the ways in which the world will come to Wales. In a globalising economy, those places which will prosper in the future will be those which offer the clearest sense of stability, sustainability and identity. When information flows around the globe in nano-seconds, so that it no longer matters if your desk is in Hirwaen or Honolulu, Snowdonia or Singapore, it will be the attractions of local natural assets - of coast and climate, of scale and cultural infrastructure - which will provide an economic edge.

In a world where people and organisations can go anywhere, the *somewhere* has to be not just another anonymous spot on the world's surface but a place which offers a sense of identity which is confident and out-going, and a quality of life beyond the workplace which sustains a sense of creativity and well-being: in other words, the Wales we hope to foster during the lifetime of this agreement.

Over the next four years:

- We will widen Wales' membership and effectiveness in appropriate international bodies,

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including institutions associated with the European Union.

- We will support the campaign for Wales to become a fair trade nation.
- We will enhance Wales's role in key European organisations and networks such as the Committee of the Regions, the Regions with Legislative Power and the Conference of Peripheral & Maritime Regions.
- We will continue to build on the work already done to raise the international profile of Wales, to make Wales a location of choice for people to live, work, study, visit and do business.
- We will continue to make our contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, with support for the Wales for Africa programme and its international development fund.
- We will work hard to ensure that Wales becomes a strong international trading nation and a valued partner in international relationships.
- We will develop a more strategic approach to putting Wales on the world map, bringing greater coherence to

the breadth of the Assembly government's overseas activities and representation, and working with other Welsh interests outside government to maximise the impact and benefit to Wales.

- We will develop and promote the Wales Brand in the context of a coherent marketing and public diplomacy framework.
- We will engage with Welsh interests overseas – diaspora, alumni, business – to derive maximum benefit from the as-yet untapped resource they can contribute to our international agenda.
- We will work actively within the re-affirmed Memorandum of Understanding, signed with Patagonia (Chubut Province) in March 2007.

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# 10. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

## **Labour Party Wales - Plaid Cymru Coalition Government: Governance Arrangements**

### **Guiding principles**

The parties' objective is to form and maintain in partnership the devolved Government of Wales, until the dissolution of the Assembly before the election in 2011 with its Ministers holding office in accordance with the provisions of the Government of Wales Act.

To work effectively, to deliver their Programme, and to achieve their shared common goals, the parties will need good will, mutual trust, and agreed procedures which foster collective decision-making and responsibility while respecting each party's distinct identity.

The principles of good faith and fairness will underpin the two parties' approaches to all aspects of the conduct of the Government's business, including the allocation of responsibilities; the Government's policy and legislative programme; the Government's budget; the conduct of business and the resolution of disputes.

Close consultation between the First Minister, Deputy First Minister; other Ministers; and the AMs of the two

parties will be the foundation of the Government's success.

### **Collective responsibility**

Collective responsibility is accepted by the parties to mean that all the business of the Government, including decisions, announcements, expenditure plans, proposed legislation and appointments, engages the collective responsibility of the Government as a whole and must be handled with an appropriate degree of consultation and discussion so as to ensure the support of all Ministers in a collective basis. Ministers have the opportunity to express their views frankly before decisions are made; opinions expressed and advice offered within the Government remain private (subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act); decisions of the Government are binding on and supported by all Ministers; and that mechanisms for sharing information and resolving disputes are followed.

To achieve this, the Government will update and publish the Welsh Ministerial Code and produce a protocol for the Coalition Government to incorporate the principles of collective decision-making and the procedures to be followed to promote the good conduct of business, drawing on best practice elsewhere.

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## **Portfolios**

The initial structure of portfolios and their allocation between the parties will be agreed between the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. Within this context, the First Minister will, with the approval of the Queen, formally appoint Ministers, including Plaid Cymru members nominated for appointment by the Deputy First Minister.

The portfolios and the names of the Ministers, as well as any alter changes, will be announced to the Assembly in plenary session at the earliest opportunity.

Any changes to the structure of portfolios or their allocation between the parties during the lifetime of the Agreement will be agreed between the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Before seeking the approval of the Assembly to the nomination of a Counsel General, the First Minister will agree the proposed nomination with the Deputy First Minister.

## **The roles of the First and Deputy First Minister**

The parties agree that, subject to the nomination of the Assembly and the approval of The Queen, the Leader of Labour in the National Assembly will be nominated as the First Minister and the leader of Plaid Cymru will be appointed as Deputy First Minister.

The First Minister will be responsible to the Assembly for all aspect of policies and retains ultimate responsibility for all policies. However, in order to provide consistency across portfolios and the need to engage the two parties of the coalition government, both the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will be engaged in policy presentation. Such arrangements will include deputising for the First Minister in the Assembly and making public announcements.

It is essential that both the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister are kept fully and promptly informed across the range of Government business, so that they can engage in any issue where they consider that appropriate. The procedures to be established for handling business within the Government will require officials to copy all relevant material to the offices of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

The First Minister and the Deputy First Minister will have appropriate official, political and specialist support to enable them to discharge their roles effectively.

A Cabinet Committee will be formed comprising the First Minister, Deputy First Minister, Business Minister, and the Business Manager of the other party.

The Committee's responsibility is to ensure the effectiveness of the



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Coalition Government. The Committee will:

- monitor implementation of their programme
- agree the participation of the partnership parties in public appointments made by government when appropriate
- co-ordinate the presentation of Government policies, initiatives and statements within the National Assembly and externally
- Ensure that procedures are in place for the involvement of all the partnership parties in major Government announcements.
- Subject to external restraints, agree the representation of the Government in all dealings with the Secretary of State for Wales; other UK Government Ministers; other institutions at UK/EU/International level.

## **Shared Financial Governance**

A Cabinet Committee on Finance will be formed comprising the First Minister, Deputy First Minister, the Finance Minister and the finance spokesperson of the other party which, amongst its other responsibilities, will meet to discuss the overall resource position and strategic spending priorities before the end of July in each year.

The Cabinet Committee will be responsible for the continuous process of financial monitoring and control including key resource allocation formulas.

## **The Parties' Support for the Government in the Assembly**

The parties should aim to agree on all matters of Government policy. Both parties are committed to constructive dialogue between Ministers and backbenchers to build a strong partnership.

The two Assembly parties will operate in support of the Coalition Government on all issues covered by this Agreement. Whilst each will make its own business management arrangements to ensure effective party support for the Government, the Business Minister and the business manager of the other party will consult and co-operate with each other to ensure the delivery of the Government's programme.

Whilst preserving the independence of the committee system, members of the two parties serving on the same committee will co-operate as far as the formal business and legislation of the Government is concerned.

Matters of new Government policy outside this Agreement must be agreed by both parties. In all portfolios, Ministers will meet regularly with the nominated spokesperson or lead backbencher

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from the two parties to discuss policy. Any disagreement should be referred through internal party mechanisms until all parties agree.

Neither of the parties will support spending proposals brought before the Assembly other than by the Government or covered by this Agreement unless considered and agreed by both party groups.

The parties will agree and put in place appropriate political arrangements to facilitate an effective working relationship at all levels, including AMs of both parties who are not Ministers.

Matters reserved to the UK Parliament, other than those mentioned in this Programme, are outside the scope of this Agreement. Whenever necessary, the parties will decide, through the Cabinet Committee, how to deal with such matters on a case-by-case basis.

### **Distinctive Identities**

The two parties recognise the need for parties to be able to maintain distinctive political identities in Government and in the National Assembly. They will therefore develop processes for:-

- Ensuring appropriate credit which recognises the policy contribution of each party; and
- The expression of different views publicly and in the National Assembly in a way

which does not undermine the principles of collective responsibility and good faith or the basis of partnership working set out in this Agreement.

### **Disputes**

The parties' objective is that this Agreement will remain in place until the dissolution of the Assembly before the election in 2011. To achieve this, they will make every effort to resolve any disagreements which may arise, particularly those which threaten its continued operation.

Where a dispute arises between the partnership parties, or Ministers of the two parties, the matter will be referred to the Cabinet Committee for resolution by consensus.

### **Ratification of This Agreement**

The parties will ratify this Agreement according to their own internal procedures. The Agreement will come into effect after ratification immediately on signature by the partnership party leaders.

Signed by

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**Rhodri Morgan,  
Leader, Labour Party Wales**

Signed by

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**Ieuan Wyn Jones  
Leader, Plaid Cymru**