A Just and Green Recovery in Wales briefing

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by Gethin Rhys

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What's the context?

The Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary public health restrictions have meant challenges to the economy, rising unemployment and a stretched social and health care system. The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated inequalities across our society[1]. It has thrown into stark relief our reliance on social infrastructure and its ability to cope with demand. All this has happened in the shadow of the climate and biodiversity crises.

As we look ahead, how might these elections play a part in establishing a just and green recovery from Covid-19?

What's the vision?

As we build back from the pandemic, we can prioritise decisions which enable flourishing for people and the planet. This means balancing the need for a strong social infrastructure, properly resourced and safe work and a secure welfare system with policies which help us reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. One of the last actions of the outgoing Senedd was to pass legislation mandating net zero emissions in Wales by 2050, with a legal obligation to achieve a reduction of at least 63% (compared to 1990) by 2030 and at least 89% by 2040.

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[1] See for example the Technical Advisory Cell's report on Covid-19 and health inequalities in Wales - https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-10/technical-advisory-cell-coronavirus-covid-19-and-health-inequalities.pdf

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These elections present opportunities for candidates to explain how they will legislate for and encourage policies which can enable us to move forward in line with this commitment.

Key areas to look out for

- **Health and social care:** a plan which enables proper funding of the NHS and social care systems (see our [election briefing on social care in Wales](#)).

- **Public services:** reliably funded public services, including those which are provided in whole or in part by the churches and other third sector organisations.

- **Transport:** well-developed public transport systems which encourage safe and clean travel.

- **Jobs:** new jobs which support decarbonisation and adaptation to the changing climate, such as sustainable travel, renewable heat and energy, and energy efficiency in homes, workplaces and public buildings – including church buildings.
  [Real living wage](#) accredited work which ensures everyone has enough to live on.

- **Climate-positive recovery funding:** ensuring that funding for businesses in recovering from the pandemic accounts for climate

impact and prioritises development which encourages net-zero[2]. This might build on the existing [Economic Contract](#) between Welsh Government and businesses in receipt of government funding.

- **Housing:** The right kind of affordable housing in all communities across the country which mean everyone has a safe place to call home.

- **Local government:** Local authorities with the right kind of resource and responsibility to make decisions which benefit the local community and move towards net-zero carbon emissions.

- **Rural and urban:** Policies must enable everyone in both rural and urban communities across Wales to be part of change. The nuances between policies which will encourage developments in these different contexts must be recognised by policy makers.

- **Everyone together:** Policies which ensure the poorest and most marginalised in our communities are not left behind as we seek to recover. This means properly funded welfare support, including devolved matters such as housing and social care.

Questions to ask

1. Do you support the aspirations in [Llwybr Newydd](#) (the current Welsh Government's transport strategy) to move towards active

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[2] See, for example, these proposals by the Wales TUC - https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Wales%20TUC%20-%20Transition%20Economics%20-%20Job%20Creation%20Just%20Recovery.pdf

travel and sustainable transport? How do you think this can be done while also safeguarding, for example, the options for disabled people?

2. How will you ensure that the NHS and social care in Wales recover from the pandemic so that the most vulnerable are protected and that the backlog of work is carried out fairly?

3. Do you believe that funding from Welsh Government for businesses should involve an 'Economic Contract' imposing conditions related to employment practices and decarbonisation? If so, what should those conditions be?

4. Should policy regarding social housing in Wales prioritise increasing the number of homes available, or making sure that new housing is low carbon? Is it possible to do both? If so, how?

Contact

We would like to know how this guidance was useful and what should be added or changed for future publications.
If you have questions, suggestions or comments please write to:

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