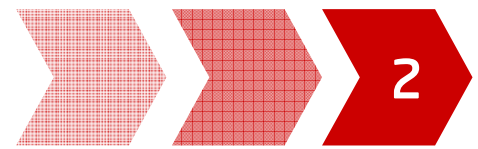


Local Elections 2012: Improving Services Together in Wales

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Communities across Wales need Labour councillors to speak up for them in these tough times. Welsh Labour councillors who will speak up against the damage being caused to our communities by the Tory-led UK government.

Welsh Labour councillors will work with local communities, neighbouring authorities and the Welsh Labour Government to improve local services. Electing Welsh Labour councillors is vital as they will:

- Speak up for jobs for our young people,
- Campaign for Safer streets,
- Improve education for our children and
- Care for the vulnerable in our society.

Whereas local councils across England have faced major cuts from the UK Tory-Lib Dem coalition, local government in Wales has been given a more beneficial financial settlement. This provides an opportunity for councils to respond to the many demands facing local services in what we all know are challenging financial times for the public services in Wales.

In these tough times Welsh Labour councillors will make sure we work to improve services together, give young people a fair chance in life, stand up for vital local services and to keep our promises.

Rt Hon Peter Hain
Shadow Secretary of State

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones
First Minister

Welsh Labour is preparing for the elections to Unitary Authorities that are to be held across Wales on May 3rd 2012. The party will seek to build upon the encouraging results of the recent Assembly elections so as to dramatically improve the position of Welsh Labour's voice in local government in Wales. After disappointing local election results in 2004 and 2008 our aim at the 2012 polls is to significantly increase the Welsh Labour voice in local government and to secure a greater influence in as many Unitary Authorities as possible. This will also require a renewal of local government as one of the foundation pillars of Welsh Labour.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest some **core messages** that local parties should address in preparing manifestos for the forthcoming elections. Each local government group in Wales, working with their local party structures, is responsible for the detailed electoral programme they will present to their local communities. However the core issues identified in this paper will ensure reasonable consistency between the work of Labour in the Welsh Government, the actions we take in Unitary Authorities across Wales, and have regard to the emerging messages from the Shadow Leadership at Westminster.



Our core messages at the 2012 elections are that Welsh Labour will be:

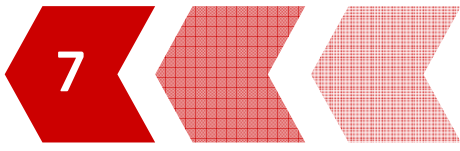
- Improving Services Together
- Providing Community Leadership in tough times
- Delivering Renewal and Reform
- Promoting equality, safe streets, social justice, greener and cleaner communities.
- Best practice employers promoting social partnership and workforce development.
- Delivering good value services that meet Community Priorities.



Improving Services Together

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- **Promoting partnership and collaborative work** and using effective partnerships, with both local communities and regional neighbours, to deliver ongoing improvements in council functions, the effectiveness and efficiency of services during these challenging times.
 - **Ensuring Capital investment** is maximised to renew our local economies, providing jobs for local communities. Welsh Labour Councils will make best use of their prudential borrowing arrangements to deliver local and regional benefits. This will include appropriate pooling of funds to deliver investment across Wales.
 - **Ensuring there is good value** for council taxpayers so that the demand for improved services is balanced with affordable council taxes.
 - **Delivering better outcomes** for citizens and users of services by working to renew and reform local government services.



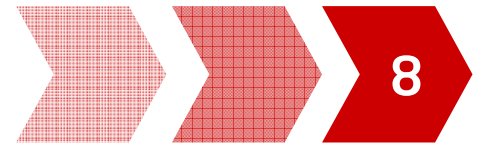


Community Leadership in tough times

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- **Providing local communities with strong leadership** ensuring local priorities can be matched with available budgets.
 - **In challenging times** Welsh Labour Councils will provide leadership for local communities in order to help those communities respond to the challenging times we all face.
 - **Leadership will include** rolling out the programme of legislation and the manifesto policies put before the people of Wales at the Assembly election of 2011.



Delivering renewal and reform

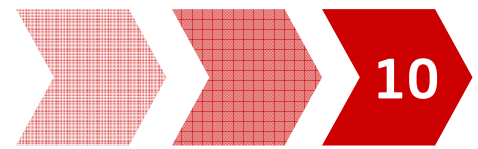


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- **Provide a sharp focus on delivering better outcomes** for local communities and ensuring a more cost effective delivery of council functions and services.
 - **Ensure improvements** to education, social care and a focus on reviving the local economy as part of delivering renewal and reform. This will include promoting co-operative and mutual models of service delivery.
 - **Commissioning of appropriate** educational, social care and other functions at regional and sub regional levels in order to deliver the most effective management and delivery of services.
 - **Economic renewal** - seek to regenerate local communities and cooperate with neighbouring local authorities to drive up skills and deliver jobs and regeneration. This renewal will include investment that can be delivered through the regeneration of local housing stock.
 - **Improving Travel and Transport** - co-operate in the delivery of initiatives to secure integrated transport, improving bus and train services for local communities.
 - **Housing initiatives** that help meet the need for more homes, affordable homes and a better quality of housing in local communities.
 - **Strategic and Local Planning** frameworks that provide a sustainable future for communities across Wales including action to meet the zero waste challenge.

Promoting equality, safe streets, social justice, clean green streets

- **At the heart of Welsh Labour's** work in local government is the drive for fairness, equality and promoting progress towards greater social justice and the need for sustainable communities across Wales.
- **Working to tackle poverty** and improve not only opportunities, but also the outcomes for the citizens of Wales.
- **Put the safety of local communities** high on our agenda and promote positive relationships with the Police, local communities and other partners. Welsh Labour is the only party prepared to take the action needed to make our streets safer.
- **Work closely with local policing teams** to deal quickly with local hotspots for crime and anti-social behaviour.
- **Tackling local community problems including** graffiti, rubbish/fly tipping, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour. This will include steps to secure responsible drinking in local communities.
- **Recognise sustainable development objectives** must be integrated in our work and that each Welsh Labour Council has a responsibility to promote sustainable activities in respect of the quality of their local environment, waste, transport, energy, biodiversity and eco systems and other activities.

Promoting equality, safe streets, social justice, clean green streets



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- **Promoting the Welsh language** as part of the social and economic life of local communities. We will seek to increase the number of Welsh speakers and plan for the appropriate level of Welsh language educational facilities.
 - **Providing effective local planning services and cutting the carbon emissions** produced by local council services.
 - **Ensure a rapid response** to the needs of veterans and military personnel who may require council services such as assessment and adaptations.
 - **Promote Fair Trade** practices.
 - **Promote Labour's free travel scheme** for older person, the disabled and their carers.
 - **Support work** to tackle and eradicate violence and domestic abuse.

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- **Strive to be beacons of best practice**, promoting the principles of social partnership, developing our workforces and encouraging a constructive relationship with trade unions.

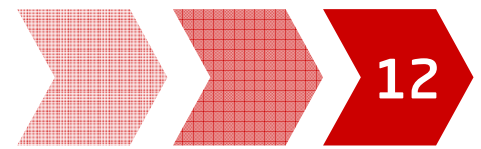
 - **Delivering on the principles of the Welsh Local Government Workforce Cost Reductions Memorandum of Understanding of January 2011** by:
 - > *Meaningful two-way consultation and negotiation with a view to reaching agreement at a local level,*
 - > *Transparency of information regarding the local financial position,*
 - > *Aim to avoid job loss and protect services by exploring all the potential options including, for example, service changes and Council Tax levels.*

 - (See the Memorandum for full details).*

 - **Recognising that staff training and development**, healthy and contented workforces are major contributors to the successful delivery of council services.

 - **Promoting the principles and practice of equality** across the council.

Delivering a step change for local schools



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- **Our mission** is to deliver the step change in schools standards and educational performance that will equip young people and learners for the future.

Welsh Labour Councils will:

- **Delegate** at least 85% of schools funding to local schools.
- **Focus on how education and schools money is spent**, not just the size of the budget.
- **Promote free school breakfasts** and support the **Flying Start programme** for the early years.



Delivering support for people

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- **Ensure closer and smarter collaboration** in delivering care services through integrated social services departments.
 - Participate in, and facilitate, the work of **partnership consortia**.
 - Ensure a **strategic approach** to commissioning, especially of specialist services.

Welsh Labour councils recognise that people require a seamless integration between health, social care and other public services. Our aim is to break down barriers, reduce disadvantages and secure equality of outcomes for people in communities across Wales.



This document provides a framework of policy ideas that can be used to develop manifestos for the 2012 elections to the unitary authorities across Wales.

The 2012 elections are vital for Wales and for Welsh Labour.

They provide an opportunity to strengthen our electoral voice in communities across Wales.

They are also a vital stepping stones towards the next General Election.

Queries on this document and support and advice for local policy development can be obtained from:

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