

The Common Ground Alliance

Manifesto for Cardiff 2022

A City for Communities

A City for Culture

A City that Cares

Dear resident.

Cardiff is the inspiring capital city of Wales. Fantastic people, great communities. Wonderful parks, treasured buildings. Rich in culture and heritage, full of dynamic enterprises.

Such a place, and such people, deserve the best from their Council.

Yet behind the facade of glass office blocks, student halls, luxury flats and multi-story car parks, our basic services no longer work and inequality is ever-increasing. Our independent venues and businesses are struggling and disappearing, and the quality of life in our homes and communities is declining - and much of this is because Cardiff Labour can't get the basics right.

The last 5 years has seen them play fast and loose with our communities, heritage and environment - in stark contrast to their national leader's safe and steady approach.

The people of Cardiff deserve better. And so, The Wales Green Party, Plaid Cymru and members from community groups across the city have joined forces behind the Common Ground Alliance, bringing a new kind of politics to Cardiff.

This manifesto embodies this new politics, created by those who care. In such tough times, we need new answers, based on the values that make this city what it is: working together, being brave and taking real action, creating genuine local democracy and building our city with care and love for all - especially those most marginalised.

Read our 12 point plan to find out more about how we'll work with you - our city's greatest asset - to make Cardiff a green Capital City with functioning public services, supporting a thriving culture, communities and local economy, and planning the infrastructure it needs to be prepared for everything the future throws at it.

Vote for the Common Ground Alliance on the 5th of May, for the change Cardiff needs.

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A City Which Works for Communities

Fed up with disconnected public transport and cycleways? Sick of unaffordable, low quality housing? Devastated at the loss of historical venues and green spaces, and a city at the mercy of property developers?

We will prioritise people over profit and make the city work for those who live here.

1. TRANSPORT

Cardiff is the Capital City of Wales with a population of almost 370,000 people, but our transport infrastructure is disconnected and impractical. We'll deliver a fresh start for transport services, by developing transport infrastructure so that it actually works for the people who live here, commute here, and visit here. At the heart of our planning will be the ideal of 20 minute communities, where everyone can access their local high street and amenities via a safe, clean 20 minute walk or cycle. We will also:

- make it an absolute priority that Cardiff finally gets a bus station which can connect people to all parts of the city and region.
- clean up public transport by transitioning buses to zero emissions by 2028.
- plan transport hubs to the north and east of the city that enable quick connections in, out, and across the city and work for local people.
- investigate all options in order to provide an affordable bus service that runs at accessible times to serve the needs of the city.
- provide free public transport for under 18's and those in full time education.
- develop a network of quality bike lanes which rather than disrupt travel, actually connect people to their local community in 20 minutes or less, as well as to the city centre and other regions.
- ensure that any serious infrastructure changes have minimal disruption on public transport by putting public services as the first deliverable of any scheme.
- work to end the edge of city retail development schemes often built on green belt, biodiverse spaces and which encourage car journeys; any ongoing developments will prioritise public transport and active travel connections.
- explore and plan for how electric car charging infrastructure can be integrated throughout the city.

2. HOUSING

Cardiff is a growing city, but right now it's difficult to predict what the future holds for us. We won't blindly follow the short-sighted, build build build agenda of Cardiff Labour, based on outdated projections of the city's growth. We'll prioritise creating

sustainable, affordable, and safe homes that are fit for the future. We are ready to take on the challenge of changing our ways so the vibrant city we love can house everyone, without costing the earth. We will:

- speed up the council house building programme, and commit to supporting the people on the council house waiting list and in council houses to have safe, secure, quality, homes.
- use extra revenue from taxes on second homes to invest in council housing, taxing second homes at the highest possible rate, committing to the new maximum premium of 300%.
- where practicable take long-term empty properties into council ownership.
- insulate homes properly and create new builds that are equipped with Solar PV systems and heat pumps instead of gas boilers as their heat source.
- recognise the private sector currently delivers most housing in this city, and build working relationships to ensure public needs are delivered from the start, clearly communicating to developers the requirements and standards on matters such as fire safety that we want for homes in Cardiff.
- address all issues from drainage to transport management during the planning process to avoid new homes sitting empty, such as those in Plasdwr without sewage capacity.
- ensure public need and wellbeing informs our approach to housing, rejecting 'viability' arguments which result in no affordable housing contribution and lead to unaffordable executive homes being built on biodiverse spaces.
- reject more huge housing estate developments which lack infrastructure or local services ensuring at least 30% of new developments are affordable homes, and incorporating the principle of the 20 minute community in these new spaces.
- work with the Welsh Government to ensure legislation on rent caps that means we can do what is needed for the citizens of Cardiff in limiting the cost of living.
- work with partners to combat rogue landlords and stopping the rental of damp, dangerous properties - we'll work to ensure as much of the city's housing as possible is of high quality and landlords can't get away with dodgy guarantor and rent in advance practices.
- recognise the difficulty of living in flats with dangerous cladding, and represent those suffering to the Welsh and UK Governments, fighting to ensure that problems are resolved and that all buildings in Cardiff are built with excellent fire safety standards.
- recognise homelessness is a political choice that can be addressed, working with stakeholders and the homeless to take collaborative action to eradicate homelessness in our city.

3. PLANNING

For years we've seen too many appalling decisions by the Planning Committee and Cardiff Council. Permission for expensive, inappropriate, and profit-driven development repeatedly permitted by the Labour-led Planning Committee has created some of the most uninspiring and damaging developments Cardiff has ever seen. We'll end the reign of profit in Cardiff and work hard to deliver a local planning system that decides in favour of people, heritage, and environment. We will change the face of planning and development by overhauling the Planning Process and Planning Committee:

- involving communities from the point of pre-application, ensuring developments respond to local needs and wellbeing, with community groups and individuals involved at all stages.
- stopping the practice of developers paying for advice from Planning Officers who then recommend the granting of permissions. We'll ensure the Planning Officers operate independently in preparing the planning report sent to the Planning Committees.
- protecting human health and wellbeing and caring for our environment by rejecting applications to build on open green and biodiverse areas, in line with the sustainable development principle of the Planning (Wales) Act 2016 and Planning Policy Wales.
- Fostering a culture that is not permissive and instead interprets national policy frameworks in a manner that benefits residents not developers.
- Holding a free and open vote amongst Council Members for an independent Chair of the Planning Committee, rather than one elected by the ruling party.

We'll create change immediately from point of election by:

- giving communities reasonable periods of objection in the consultation process, with 3 weeks for small developments and 6 to 12 weeks for large, place-making developments.
- ensuring the planning committee fulfils its remit by considering applications properly within the context and impact on the local area.
- providing petitioners with double the presentation time and a right of reply to applicants, as well as creating time for councillors to question petitioners on their case.
- enable Planning Officers to work with communities and support their writing of technical objections which can be considered by the Planning Committee, and seek to give communities the right of appeal against a planning decision.

Over the long-term, we will:

- ensure the ambition of 20 minute communities is at the heart of our programme, and all place-making planning applications demonstrate where local public services, safe active travel routes, accessible green spaces, and sports grounds are provided.

- investigate the council's enforcement capabilities and seek to improve them.
- protect council owned green spaces, refusing to sell off or grant easements for development on our parks and biodiversity.
- enforce Section 106 community payments, taking developers to task when they say payments aren't viable, instead of accepting the bare minimum.
- implement the Community Infrastructure Levy to secure more money for creating safe, sustainable community spaces.
- lobby for a land fund for Wales to make community ownership easier, enabling our communities to buy unloved spaces to make them amazing again.
- reject proposals for new incinerators and say no to more dirty air.

The Local Development Plan (LDP)

The LDP is a crucial document that provides the framework for developing the city over the next decade and more, impacting all aspects of life, from education to leisure to housing. The way it is written and designed will decide the long-term future of Cardiff. We'll implement positive long-term change for Cardiff by updating the Local Development Plan, involving communities, businesses, and developers. Adapting, mitigating and preparing for the impact of the climate emergency and creating a Cardiff ready for the future will lead our agenda. We will

- plan public developments in an appropriate way, trialling and evaluating new ways of developing and working, and making difficult decisions where necessary.
- protect against the huge risk climate change has on Cardiff, implementing adaptations and mitigations which will work long term.
- address flooding with a strategic, expert and community-led approach to help those who are at risk.
- address air pollution by clearing up high-risk areas with man-made and natural solutions, creating healthy streets, active travel routes, and monitoring pollution in key spaces such as schools, hospitals, and busy residential streets.
- ensure our creative heritage is front and centre of developments. Cardiff's changing, creative character is reflected in the planning decisions made, and new developments are inspiring spaces.
- ensure arts, music, sports, play, and culture are key considerations throughout the plan.
- develop sustainable, environmentally friendly, and active school infrastructure.
- prioritise greening Council buildings and infrastructure, leading greening by example; buildings should be sustainable, environmentally friendly, and accessible, working for the people who use and access them.

- the LDP will reflect the need to work well with other local authorities in the region, pushing for a democratised Capital Region.

A City of Culture: Arts, Sport and Fun

Culture is not only our art galleries and museums; culture is ordinary, it's our way of life. It's around us in our daily lives, giving us meaning and allowing us to thrive, from our journey to work to our free time. At a time where we need to support wellbeing and the local economy, we want to make Cardiff a city where people can get good quality jobs, where everybody can enjoy themselves through easy access to the arts, sports, recreation, and a great local high street.

4. A THRIVING CITY AND REGION

The Cardiff economy is supported by wide and diverse sectors, organisations, and businesses, and people travel here from across the UK. We'll work to ensure we address the challenges facing businesses, and that we're prepared to face the challenges of economic recovery together, supporting jobs, opportunities, and keeping money in the Local Economy. We will:

- work with the private sector in Cardiff and the region to develop procurement policies aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, that keep significant public sector money in the city and region, and dovetail to ensure wider policy objectives - such as paying the real living wage - are met by our suppliers.
- work with those who create jobs in our city and build supportive relationships, promoting schemes such as Citizens Cymru Community Job Compact; a thriving city is one where we work together, in consensus and avoid diverging approaches. This includes employers, employees and trade unions.
- maintain retail relief on business rates for eligible small businesses.
- work with all partners to ensure our young people have opportunities in their communities for apprenticeships and employment, and also work with our Universities to ensure those who come to the city to study have opportunities and are encouraged to stay.
- assess our digital infrastructure and identify where it needs to be improved to serve us and our region.
- support small and medium local businesses, by working together on and delivering a business strategy that helps Cardiff and our region, prioritising creative, inspiring people who need business spaces to be affordable and accessible.
- work to support more creative, open and connected community spaces, recognising the huge value the arts and music scenes create for the people living in our city and region.

- engage partners in the city to build a strategy for the night-time economy that's connected to local transport and the region, ensuring it works for local people, and is safe, fun, and creative, with the ambition of becoming a city renowned for its thriving and safe nightlife.

5. A CITY FOR THE ARTS

Our diverse, shared heritage is demonstrated best by the amazing artists who live here, and the thriving spaces across the city which are delivered not-for-profit. We want to support these spaces, organisations, and communities in producing their work, bringing in new talent, and enhancing the amazing spaces we already have. We will:

- work with the creative industries, universities and colleges to create and deliver a joined-up plan that creates opportunities and bolsters our civic pride - prioritising community cooperatives and creating apprenticeships, funding pots, and spaces for the arts.
- commit unequivocally to supporting independent music venues and working with musicians and businesses to ensure Cardiff is the city for live music and nights out for years to come.
- impose a moratorium on the Cardiff Bay Arena development, ensuring expansive community and local industry engagement, with a view to community-led planning.
- reject plans for a Military Medicine Museum on Britannia Park, and develop achievable plans for museums and galleries that the people of Cardiff want and deserve - prioritising our multicultural heritage and supporting initiatives in Butetown and across the city.
- create more legal spaces for street art and graffiti away from the city centre, bringing the talent of our young people and street scene to the fore.
- support, develop and maintain affordable rehearsal spaces for musicians.
- support, develop and maintain Welsh-language spaces, activities and community groups.
- creating art trails across the city to tempt visitors away from our city centre to see more of what Cardiff has to offer via safe, green, and awe-inspiring active trails.

6. A CITY OF SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

The sports teams and venues of Cardiff are globally renowned and contribute to our collective health, wellbeing, and economy. Creating accessible, quality sporting facilities, and opportunities that focus on enjoyment and healthy living will ensure Cardiff is a city which continues to develop world standard athletes and healthy, active citizens. We will:

- prioritise our Sports Development team to create quality, accessible, affordable, multisport and play opportunities across the city and region.
- improve sports and leisure facilities, to make sport and physical activity accessible to all communities, and seek to bring costs down for kids and families.
- protect and create more spaces for play, especially playgrounds and children's facilities, emphasising safer streets for all.
- collaborating with schools, universities, and local sports teams to create sustainable careers in the industry in the city, using the city's sporting prowess to ensure sport is a sustainable career path.
- protecting Maindy Velodrome, and working with Cathays High School, Better Leisure, and the local community to identify a solution which works for everyone.
- create and improve public and active transport links to the sports village, using the neglected land as accessible, biodiverse open space and facilities.
- recognising the value of urban sports such as skateboarding, BMX, and parkour and improving the quality of the facilities available.
- develop opportunities for those with mental ill health to engage in sporting activities at an affordable and accessible rate.

A City that Cares - for its People and its Environment

What seems to typify the politics of our time is a disregard for ordinary people, and a disregard for the climate emergency; unfortunately Cardiff Labour are no exception to this rule and the seeming lack of care and attention for residents of Cardiff and their environment has been heartbreaking for many communities. We will seek to bring care back into politics, and serve the people of this city and the environment they live in with the love, solidarity and affection they all deserve.

7. A SAFE CITY FOR EVERYONE

The streets of Cardiff are unsafe sometimes. We'll work to support everyone to feel safe in the city, and identify what we can do for those at risk of harassment and violence, and support women, Black, Asian, and minority ethnic people, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people and others to feel safe in Cardiff. We'll make strategic commitments to support all communities by applying the findings to all areas of infrastructure planning, and service delivery. We will also:

- recognise the preventative approach of addressing poverty combats violence, and do all that a Council can to address the inequality in our communities, making it a major priority.
- fight criminalisation by building up youth services and shared community spaces such as libraries, youth centres, and spaces to receive support.

- actively and appropriately representing and supporting those facing difficulty and injustices in the city.
- work to reflect the diversity and creativity of our population; for example we'll stop the uninspiring, unaffordable building work which is harming and disconnecting our communities such as the flats on the old BBC buildings and new arena development.
- fight racism and intolerance by engaging communities, and empowering the "BAME task force" established by Labour to gather an extensive evidence base and focus on the underlying, structural causes that prevent us from addressing these issues properly.
- establish similarly empowered groups which can represent other marginalised communities, who inform decision-making with meaningful involvement and action.

8. EDUCATION

The 21st Century schools programme has developed some of our schools to be fine establishments where students can reach their potential. But education has to mean more than test after test delivered by overworked teachers. Our schools can help address inequality in the city by delivering for children in all communities from all backgrounds. Common Ground will work to ensure schools are places of opportunity for students, teachers, and communities.

We will:

- recognise education is not just about tests; sporting, musical, artistic, and cultural opportunities have been curtailed and we will work with stakeholders, including teaching unions to develop a plan to deliver opportunities in these areas for our young people.
- work with regional consortia and national government to realise these aims.
- review the current schools decision-making process that sees many children making longer, expensive, and sometimes unsafe journeys across the city.
- develop a sustainable, environmentally friendly, and active school infrastructure; our 20 minute community plans apply to education and we will endeavour to provide education opportunities within active travel distances for most people.
- apply this principle equally to Welsh-medium schools, delivering for communities such as Ely without access at present, and committing to ensure that all new primary schools in the city are Welsh-medium, in order to ensure equality of access whilst delivering the Labour Government's national policy.
- expand and improve access to the Welsh language, both amongst school children through a strategy for moving all schools and early years providers along the language continuum, and amongst marginalised groups in the community through adult classes.

- ensure students of all ages in Cardiff - including those returning to education - have the support and resources to reach their potential and can take advantage of new and diverse opportunities to build their knowledge, skills, and experiences.
- need full support from our teachers to implement our plans; we'll commit to working with teaching unions and teaching staff, addressing concerns about management, unsafe working environments, supply work and low wages, working to ensure Cardiff is a city where teaching is a sustainable and attractive career.

9. CARDIFF SOCIAL WELFARE

A key priority of the Common Ground Alliance is to support those who have few on their side. For example, the city cares for large numbers of children in away from home situations such as care homes, and our social services support more at home. Those the city cares for will be a priority with the aim to be the best in care and support work. Those without a vote or a voice will be those whose issues we will champion. To fulfil this promise we will:

- ensure people, including children, older people, and the disabled who are cared for by city staff will have a voice in decision making regarding their care. Although this may be difficult at times, all people deserve a say in their care and support.
- ensure that the commitment to become a recognised Child Friendly City is prioritised and that the work is focused on all children not just some, with the rights and resources of the most vulnerable at the heart of this project.
- work with our professionals, staff, and wider stakeholders to develop an action based, sustainable plan to deliver care and support to our vulnerable citizens.
- work to ensure Cardiff's Care Homes and caregivers, those that foster and adopt our vulnerable future generations, will have greater support and priorities in areas that the city can deliver in.
- seek to improve the quality of our care services by increasing support and wages for staff in the care sector in a sustainable and planned manner, with a commitment to making caring in Cardiff a sustainable and attractive career.
- implement wherever possible policies promoted by institutions such as the Bevan Foundation that will help those in most financial need, addressing inequality at a local level by ensuring access to funds and removing obstacles wherever possible.

10. A CLEAN CITY

Right now, our streets are synonymous with litter, dog fouling, and fly tipping. Removing services without replacement - such as the Wedal Road recycling facility - is unfair and contributing to our problems instead of making life easier. We'll address these challenges by working with communities to deliver appropriate, locally accessible support services and plans. We will:

- establish a properly funded, adequately enforced plan for getting to grips with the issues in the local environment like littering, dog fouling, and waste disposal. We'll engage people to identify where waste services are needed and create local spaces where waste can be disposed of without a car journey.
- increase the number and size of the bins in the city, with regular collection services and increased support for local litter picking groups.
- investigate how we can reopen public toilets and bring them back to local high streets; public toilets have been closed because of budget cuts and the pandemic, but we know it's possible for these vital services to be provided.
- talk about sewage - no one wants to mention it, but Cardiff's sewers are ancient and ill-prepared to deal with overdevelopment and high rainfall. We'll explore how we can ensure sewerage and drainage are key considerations in the planning process and are adequate and affordable for people and developers.

11. A GREEN CITY

We want Cardiff to be a green city, with clean, breathable air, natural and man-made flood defences, and enhanced, biodiverse spaces for nature accessible to everyone across the city. To be a city that cares, Cardiff has to be a city that cares for nature. We'll push boundaries, lead by example, and create a fresh start for the city in a way that addresses the long-term challenges of the climate and nature emergencies. We will:

- make action to address the climate and nature emergencies a key aspect that cuts across all decisions taken by the Council and its Committees.
- deploy air pollution monitors for schools and our busy spaces. We'll identify where our problem areas are and take action - such as by closing streets to cars, increasing accessible public transport and 20 minute communities, and implementing low emissions zones if necessary and proportionate - to improve air quality.
- establish a strategic approach to flooding that implements natural and man made solutions in collaboration with those most at risk.
- acknowledge we need more than just tree planting! Whilst expanding the tree planting programme, we will prioritise enhancing all areas of biodiversity, from scrubland to forests, and creating spaces for nature in communities.
- refuse to accept 'tree planting' as mitigation to the development of biodiverse spaces, requiring prevention in place of mitigation, and insisting all new developments have protected spaces where biodiversity can thrive.
- ban the use of pesticides by Council Departments and encourage pollinator friendly pest management practices.

- lead on the energy crisis by developing renewable energy when and where we can, including via schemes such as local heating from the Viridor plant in the bay and solar panels on all our public buildings.
- address energy waste and loss by making new builds, rented homes, as well as our public buildings energy efficient.
- 'green' the city, ensuring all possible spaces - including on our buildings - are used to increase flora and fauna across the city, invigorating biodiversity, and making sure it looks at its best by developing blue and green corridors.
- improve the green coverage of our most densely populated urban areas by retaining green spaces owned by the city and not selling them off, while actively looking to green spaces in collaboration with community groups in our concrete jungles.
- work in partnership with neighbouring authorities to create an ambitious 'New Parks' initiative to establish larger "country" parks on the outskirts of the city in areas such as St Fagans and St Mellons, to prevent urban development and ensure a green belt around the city - partly aimed at developing natural flood defences.
- invest in our Parks Department to increase their capacity to work beyond our parks, bringing parks to people and their communities by utilising long term abandoned spaces.
- be on board with Bee Bus Stops - enhancing the scheme and bringing bee bus stops, bee verges, and bee homes to urban areas.

How Will we do it?

By working with you, and for you.

Local Democracy is the backbone of the Common Ground programme. People make this city what it is, so the people should be involved and represented in all decision-making and budgeting. We'll put an end to seemingly arrogant, carefree politics, and increase public reporting of the Council's decisions and policies. If we are elected you will see immediate changes in the way that the Council is run, so that rather than feeling powerless and unable to influence decisions in the city, which impact your lives, you will have every opportunity to be heard, and every opportunity to get involved.

1. More Local Democracy

- a. We'll involve local people in decision-making, and increase representation with citizens assemblies and community councils.
- b. This means listening to you, being transparent, accountable, honest, and putting care and representation of the needs of the people first.
- c. We'll introduce proportional representation for the 2027 Council election.

2. Working Collaboratively

- a. We recognise we can't know everything, and we never stop learning. So we want to work with local people and groups to create services, spaces, houses, and infrastructure that works for the people who live here.
- b. By working with everyone from businesses, groups, organisations, to individuals, and local people, we'll bring benefits to every corner of the city.
- c. We'll also seek to work with local experts, other local authorities, and the Welsh Government to deliver services and create solutions so we can face the challenges of the 21st century head on.

3. Taking Action

- a. When you need help and support from Common Ground, we'll work to make sure you get what you need.
- b. We'll take considered actions to address the decades of irresponsible neo-liberal budgeting, low quality developing, and cutting of services.

4. Creating a City that Cares

- a. Caring for the people, communities, spaces, and heritage of Cardiff is at the heart of Common Ground.
- b. We'll create a city that cares by caring for our staff first. When staff are properly supported, we can provide better services for everyone.