



Case Study / Plaid Cymru



Comisiwn Cymru ar y
Newid yn yr Hinsawdd
Climate Change
Commission for Wales

Plaid Cymru

Energy Policy Development

Plaid Cymru's Assembly Group has commissioned a paper outlining the energy challenges we are facing and proposing possible solutions for Wales¹. Amongst some of the conclusions it mentions the fundamental need for there to be a carefully thought through transition to greater independence on indigenous renewable energy. Following publication of this document, the party underwent internal consultation, and are in the process of developing a comprehensive policy paper based on the responses. Plaid's commitment to renewable energy sources was recently supported through a "motion to conference" on energy (Llangollen Annual Conference 2014)² and also opposing Underground Coal Gasification³ calling for Natural Resources Wales to refuse environmental consents and local authorities to refuse planning permission for any such developments.

Sustainable Communities Commission

The Commission concluded its work with the publication of a final report in October 2014⁴ which uses case studies collected during a wide-ranging, far-reaching consultation to illustrate how we envisage the future of our communities in Wales. Recommendations include reforming and strengthening community councils so that they can decide what is best within their communities, mapping publicly owned land so that it can be put to best use (such as affordable housing or community growing) and supporting sustainable infrastructure, including better internet connections, to ensure more connected communities for the future.

Green Growth

Plaid Cymru's representative on the Climate Change Commission has developed a paper on green growth for the party's consideration. Amongst other things it outlines the need to move as quickly as possible to a Circular Economy, aiming to recycle 100% of materials used.

¹ An Energy Policy for Wales: Understanding the Challenges, Plaid Cymru Assembly Group, http://issuu.com/plaid/docs/an_energy_policy_for_wales_-_unders?e=1420648/5078343

² Energy, Motion to Conference, Plaid Cymru Annual Conference 2014

³ Opposing Underground Coal Gasification, Motion to Conference, Plaid Cymru Annual Conference 2014

⁴ Commission on Sustainable Communities, Plaid Cymru http://www.partyofwales.org/uploads/policies/SC_Report_final.pdf

Action within the sector

Events

During Plaid's Spring Conference in March 2014 there was a round table discussion held by the Sustainable Communities Commission on the way forward on sustainability and climate change issues. There was broad support for focussing on empowering communities with central government providing leadership and consistent regulation. There was support for a Local Democracy Bill, including reviewing community council roles. There was also support for civil service/ public service reform. There was support for more participation, recognising that capacity varies across communities. It needs to be meaningful, recognise communities have different resources and understand relationships of owners, beneficiaries and agents.

Greens for Plaid held a fringe event at Spring Conference 2014 entitled 'Extreme Energy in Wales: Fracking, coal-bed methane and opencast coalmining.' They also held a fringe event at the Annual Conference 2014 entitled 'Who homes are built for, where and how they are built and used, is a central issue for culture, community and security. Will the planning bill and other new laws and policies help?'

Assembly Business

Plaid Cymru supports the ecosystem approach to managing natural resources due to the need to protect biodiversity and the potential of ecosystem services to create jobs and boost the economy. We will therefore be closely scrutinising the Environment Bill to ensure that this approach is not watered down.

We, as a party, have also called on the Welsh Government to follow in the Scottish Government's footsteps in producing a renewable energy route map, incorporating targets for each individual source of energy, accompanied by a detailed action plan outlining how each individual target will be met. Apart from giving the Government a deadline and forcing them to stay on track, it will enable opposition parties and the third sector to hold them to account.

Plaid Cymru has consistently called for a significant up-scaling of Arbed accompanied by the necessary investment in order to facilitate a retrofit program on a far more ambitious scale. Not only does this reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it also helps to eradicate fuel poverty by reducing energy bills and it boosts the economy by creating jobs for those who make the necessary improvements. It contributes to Wales' "triple bottom line" - the environmental, social and economic - and should therefore draw resources from across government.