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Much of the change we would like to see enacted for our city centres is beyond our gift and so, on behalf of our members in Cardiff and for the cities of Wales, we present our Manifesto for Welsh City Centres.

We hope that the next Welsh Government will take our commentary into consideration as they continue the work of reinvigorating and revitalising our city centres. We know that strong local economies, community spirit and a vibrant cultural sector are key elements in the future of a prosperous Cardiff and Wales. We will do what we





dependent and unimaginative business parks. Steps to reap the positive rewards of more flexible and inclusive working practices must work alongside and in collaboration with office environments, not against them.

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Extending these powers to communities will also require improving access to financing for such schemes. We recommend that the next Welsh Government extends the remit of the Town Centre Loans Fund to cover community groups and establish a Welsh Community Fund to allow locals to purchase/repurpose vacant space, as per the recommendations of the Grimsey Covid Supplement.<sup>4</sup>

**05—  
Supercharge the Town Centre First  
approach and bring public services  
into vacant central properties**

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In January 2020 the Welsh Government announced a Town Centre First approach

for their location decision-making process, including a policy of ‘encouraging’ local authorities to act in the same manner. This is a positive step for our town centres and city centres but it lacks firepower. The long-term social value of location decisions should be a required element of the framework used by the 44 public bodies bound by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act regardless of their scale. Wherever possible public bodies should look to inhabit existing vacant space in our town and city centres rather than constructing new facilities. Public bodies should also look to use the city centre environment as a means for fulfilling the Wellbeing Goals wherever possible and relevant.

In whatever format offices emerge in the post Covid-19 landscape, it is vital that all Welsh public services and not just the Welsh Government, locate as far as possible in urban centres. Urban locations, as opposed to faceless business parks, not only drive local economic regeneration but also facilitate active travel and blended working practices, that will be so vital to the Wales of the future.

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public space, where young people can gather spontaneously without feeling pressured to spend money or move along is a vital part of this jigsaw. Cities should welcome young people and their social activities. They promote social engagement with peers and opportunities to be active on demand, rather than committed to structured programmes – any limitations on these freedoms must absolutely be needs based and evidence led.

Young people should also have the opportunity to actively participate in the planning process – we point to the Norwegian Planning and Building Act as a leading example of enshrining this practice in law.

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**Continue to invest in developing**

**integrated high-quality public transport**

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