

Paul Davies: Time for Change

Paul Davies AM, Leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the National Assembly for Wales, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

“Cynhadledd, prynhawn da, a gai ddechrau trwy ddweud mor falch ydw i, i siarad â chi heddiw fel arweinydd newydd Ceidwadwyr Cymru yng Nghynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru.

Mae'n anrhydedd enfawr.

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and for those of you who don't speak the language of heaven, can I begin by saying how proud I am to speak to you today as the new leader of the Welsh Conservatives in the National Assembly for Wales.

It's a huge honour and a privilege and I am grateful to Welsh Conservative Party Members for putting their trust in me and it's great to have the opportunity to work alongside our hardworking Secretary State for Wales, Alun Cairns who has delivered so much for Wales and our formidable team in CCHQ Wales.

And we have a great Chairman of the Welsh Conservative Party in Byron Davies – Gower's loss is our gain.

A few weeks ago, my election concluded my Party's efficient and decisive leadership contest – in complete contrast to that of the Welsh Labour Party's contest to replace current First Minister Carwyn Jones.

He announced in April his intention to stand down as First Minister in December – an eight month long goodbye, during which time Welsh Labour have been debating whether to adopt similar leadership election procedures to those which elected Jeremy Corbyn.

Surely that should ring alarm bells!

Conference, I speak to you today as a man on a mission.

A mission to kick Labour where it hurts.

A mission to transform our public services.

A mission to change Wales!

And I tell you, it won't be one small step we will be taking ...

... we are aiming to make a giant leap...

... a giant leap from being the official opposition in the National Assembly

for Wales ...

... and into Government in Cardiff Bay!

You see, conference, Labour have been running Wales for almost twenty years.

But they are running it into the ground.

Performance in our NHS and education systems is consistently worse than other parts of the UK.

Welsh patients generally wait longer for an ambulance, longer for tests, and longer for treatment than in any other part of the UK.

Millionaires have access to free prescriptions...

... while cancer patients are denied access to many of the modern treatments available here in England.

Under Labour a third of hospital beds have been axed.

Cancer and A&E targets have been missed for a decade.

And hospitals have been closed and downgraded across the country.

And our education system is faring no better.

It has slipped down and down and down in the international league tables...

... to become the only UK nation in the bottom half of the OECD world rankings...

... and has the accolade of being the worst performing education system in Britain.

The rankings placed Wales below former communist states of Eastern Europe and we are even being outperformed by countries which 20 years ago were recovering from civil war.

What an absolute disgrace!

Now, the Labour clan will try to tell you that these appalling facts are all down to 'Tory cuts'...

... but the reality is that for every £1 spent on hospitals and schools in England...

... Wales receives £1.20.

While NHS spending has risen each and every year since 2010 under the Conservatives in England...

Spending in Wales was actually cut in some years.

Conference, I am proud to say that no modern day Conservative Prime Minister

has ever cut an NHS budget.

Shame on Carwyn Jones and the Welsh Labour Government for cutting theirs!

And in spite of getting 20% more in funding per pupil to spend on education than in England...

... Labour spends almost £700 less per pupil each and every year.

It's no wonder that scores of schools have closed their doors in the past decade and that this summer Wales saw its worst GCSE results in 15 years!

This week in Birmingham, we have already been hearing about Jeremy Corbyn's dangerous hard-left policies and the threat he poses to our country.

But don't forget that there is a part of the UK where Labour is already in power – propped up by the only Lib Dem in the village and as a result of grubby pork barrel budget deals with Plaid Cymru!

Now, you may have noticed that Plaid Cymru elected a new leader last week.

Well, I have a message for Adam Price.

The people of Wales are crying out for a change of Government in Cardiff Bay.

Prop up another Labour administration at your peril!

The message is clear – we will never agree on everything, but where we can, let's work together in the interests of the people of Wales to deliver the change Wales needs.

After almost ten years of Carwyn Jones as First Minister, we've seen a decade of downgrades and closures in our NHS.

And falling standards in our schools.

We don't know yet who the new First Minister will be but it seems likely that the choice will be from one of three Cardiff based AMs.

One a Baroness!

One responsible for a catalogue of failures in our NHS!

And the other a Corbynite before the term was even coined!

Whoever emerges as the next First Minister, this much is clear.

The people should have the opportunity to have their say.

You will have no mandate to govern the people of Wales.

Only an Assembly election will give you that...

...so BRING IT ON!

...so today I'm calling on the wannabee leaders of the Welsh Labour Party to commit to give us that election.

We Welsh Conservatives are ready for the fight for the future of our precious nation.

We are ready to take that giant leap.

We are ready to CHANGE WALES.

Thank you."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.