

## **Fighting Austerity in Local Government**

*This was passed at London Young Labour AGM January 2016.*

### **London Young Labour Believes**

1. This autumn the Comprehensive Spending Review announced a 56% cut in the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) allocated to local government. This amounts to a £6.1bn reduction in local government grants by 2019/20, and comes on top of the 37% real-terms cut in central government funding over the previous parliament (National Audit Office, 2015).
2. The services provided by local government include children's services, elderly care and services for disabled people. The cuts announced by the Chancellor will seriously undermine the quality of life of the vast majority of people in the UK and reduce vulnerable people's access to life and death services.
3. Cuts to local government services will increase the burden on the NHS as, for example, more older people will require hospital care if they cannot be cared for in their homes.
4. Cuts to the social care system provided by local government will disproportionately affect: children and families, disabled people and elderly people.
5. Although the devolution of decision-making powers from central government to local councils (the Localism Act, 2011) means local government officials can decide which services to axe, they have little to no power to raise funds to cushion the impact of reduced DELs. Councils' fiscal powers are limited to raising revenue through local business rates and the sale of assets.

### **London Young Labour Further Believes**

1. The services provided by local government, including the social care system, are vital to all members of our society; for many, they are a material necessity.
2. Government has a responsibility to ensure these services are adequately funded. The current government is abdicating this responsibility by cutting local government DELs.
3. The reduction in funding which locally-administered services will experience in the next five years is disastrous for the social care system and amounts to a state of emergency.
4. Although we have seen drastic cuts to public services, the worst is yet to come.
5. The devolution of decision-making, but not fiscal, power from central government has been used by the Conservatives to scapegoat local government.
6. The current policy framework encourages the privatization of public assets and a race to the bottom with regard to local business rates. The framework is therefore divisive and serves the interests of corporations rather than communities.
7. The Labour movement as a whole must unite to mobilise against cuts to public services: local councils and councillors, constituency Labour Parties and trade unions must work alongside the national Labour Party to campaign against cuts to the social care system and all other locally-administered public services.
8. A national campaign against cuts to local government is urgently needed.

### **London Young Labour Resolves**

1. To write to the Shadow Chancellor to express our opposition to the cuts in funding to local government DELs announced in the latest Comprehensive Spending Review, and asking him to henceforth make this issue a focus of his economic strategy.
2. To write to the Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government asking him to convene with Labour-controlled local authorities to initiate a campaign against cuts to local government budgets, and to discuss the ways in which these cuts can be tackled at a local level.
3. To write to all Labour Councillors and Labour-controlled local authorities in the London region to ask them to support the Labour Party's opposition to austerity by: actively campaigning against cuts to public services in their local areas; providing practical support for local campaigns against cuts to public services; collaborating with local trade unions, campaign groups and charities to provide support for those affected by the loss of public services; encouraging community participation in campaigns against, and projects seeking to alleviate the effect of, cuts to public services.
4. To write to all constituency Labour Parties in the London region to ask them to make opposing cuts at a local level a priority, and encouraging them to support local councillors and campaign groups in their efforts to fight back against the cuts.
5. To convene a London wide public meeting within the next three months the purpose of which will be to discuss how the Labour Party can mobilise communities in a national campaign against cuts to public services.