

National Campaign for funding of local government to prevent a new phase of austerity

A letter to the Labour Party leadership

Dear Keir, Angela, Steve (Reed) and Thangam (Debbonaire)

As Labour councillors, MPs, and trades unionists, who are opposed to a new phase of austerity we believe that unless there is a national campaign to press the government to fund local authorities sufficiently then Labour councils will implement cuts which, after 10 years of austerity, will have disastrous social consequences.

If Labour leaves each local authority to its own devices then the very people we should be supporting will suffer the consequences of job and service cuts. Some key workers who have played such a critical role in the pandemic will receive their thanks via redundancy notices and more people whose quality of life is dependent on social services will not receive them.

We therefore strongly believe that Labour should be opposing this new phase of austerity with a national campaign bringing together the Party with Labour councillors, local government (and other) unions and service users, to press the government to:

1. Honour its commitment to fund councils fully for the extra costs of dealing with the pandemic, and the losses of revenue resulting from lock-down.
2. Cancel local authority debt held by the Public Works Loan Board as an emergency measure which would provide councils with an extra £4.5-£5.5 billion spending power a year, and help to stabilise their finances. The government itself set a precedent when it cancelled NHS debt.
3. Begin urgent discussions on a funding system based on an annual assessment of social needs in each locality.
4. Provide £10 billion annual grant to fund building 100,000 council homes a year, which is necessary not only to address the acute housing crisis, but will provide economic stimulus as we come out of the pandemic, putting people back to work.

The government has been pressured into a number of U-turns. They can be forced into another one on local authority finances. We must demand the finances necessary to prevent a new phase of austerity in local government.

Initial Signatories include

Apsana Begum, MP for Poplar & Limehouse	Steve Leggett, Cabinet Member Green City and Place, Southampton Council
Matthew Brown, Leader Preston Council	Shabir Pandor, Leader Kirklees Council
Ian Byrne, MP for Liverpool West Derby	Nadine Peatfield, Deputy Leader Derby Council Labour Group
Doina Cornell, Leader Stroud District Council	Bell Ribeiro-Addy, MP for Streatham
Coventry Council Labour Group	Paul Smith, Cabinet Member Housing, Bristol Council
Chris Emmas-Williams, Leader Amber Valley Council	Ian Ward, Leader Birmingham Council
Rokhsana Fiaz, Labour Mayor Newham	Claudia Webbe, MP for Leicester East
Mark Ingall, Leader Harlow District Council	Andrew Western, Leader Trafford Council
Leicester Council Labour Group	Bex White, Scrutiny Lead Environment & Community Safety, Tower Hamlets Council
Luton Council Labour Group	Gilliane Williams, Labour Spokesperson Housing, Brighton Council
Trafford Council Labour Group	Paul Holmes, Candidate for UNISON General Secretary
Louise Farthing, Cabinet Member Children, Education and Skills, Sunderland Council	Christina McAnea, Candidate for UNISON General Secretary
Lorna Fielker, Cabinet Member Adult Health & Care, Southampton Council	Roger McKenzie, Candidate UNISON General Secretary
John Gray, Cabinet Member Housing Services, Newham Council	Hugo Pierre, Candidate UNISON General Secretary

Jo Bird , Wirral Labour Councillor	Gaynor Lloyd , Brent Labour Councillor
Janis Blackburne , Sefton Labour Councillor	Jill Lovecy , Manchester Labour Councillor
Lindsay Broadwell , Leicester Labour Councillor	Tom Miller , Brent Labour Councillor
Jumbo Chan , Brent Labour Councillor	Jacky Nangreave , Leicester Labour Councillor
Jean Clark , Harlow Labour Councillor	Louise Nixon , Stafford Labour Councillor
Mandy Clare , Leader's Champion for Poverty and Equality , Cheshire West & Chester Council	Lauren O'Grady , Nottingham City Labour Councillor
Ben Clay , Manchester Labour Councillor	Gillian Pardesi , Stafford Labour Councillor
Liz Clements , Birmingham Labour Councillor	Kevin Ritchie , Leeds Labour Councillor
Sarah Doyle , Liverpool Labour Councillor	Lou Robson , Birmingham Labour Councillor
Lara Ellis , Newcastle Labour Councillor	Gabriela Salva-McCallan , Tower Hamlets Labour Councillor
Paul Goggin , Bristol Labour Councillor	Jo Sargeant , Bristol Labour Councillor
Pauline Graham , Leeds City Labour Councillors	Sachin Shah , Harrow Labour Councillor
Ronald Grahame , Leeds City Labour Councillor	Tom Shaw , Luton Labour Councillor
Helen Holland , Bristol Labour Councillor	Lena Simic , Liverpool Labour Councillor
Phil Jackson , Nottingham City Labour Councillor	Laura Smith , Cheshire East Labour Councillor
Tim Jeeves , Liverpool Labour Councillor	Kevin Stephens , Leader Gloucester Council Labour Group
David Jenkins , Leeds Labour Councillor	Anita Thorpe , Wigan Labour Councillor
Pavlos Kotsonis , Nottingham City Councillor	Ross Wilmott , Leicester Labour Councillor
Patrick Kitterick , Leicester Labour Councillor	Cate Woodward , Nottingham City Councillor
James Lavery , Telford & Wrekin Labour Councillor	Wendy Young , Newcastle Labour Councillor