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ON DECEMBER 2ND, KENT SAYS NO TO CUTS - SAVE OUR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

Kent County Council has announced cuts of £273 million over the next three years (BBC Radio Kent, 8th November), including £24.8 million in staffing costs. This is a direct threat to our public services and to the jobs and livelihoods of an estimated 600 KCC staff. This is on top of 1,500 workers already let go by the Tory dominated council. Council leader Paul Carter seems unruffled by the impending job losses. No doubt Cllr. Carter wouldn't miss the loss of one job; he holds five company directorships as well as being a private landlord (KCC register of members' interests 2013). The ordinary workers of Kent will keenly feel the effects of the cuts, however.

Meanwhile Cllr. Carter has heralded an orgy of privatisation, where the council will attempt to outsource its jobs and services to private providers. In almost every instance, outsourcing involves the loss of jobs, loss of wages, pension reductions, longer, less flexible working hours and less effective public services, where the best are cherry picked by the providers. The company directors of these privatised services may enjoy similar expenses or allowances to the £48,000 claimed by Cllr. Carter (Apr 2012-Jan 2013) – but their workers certainly won't.

The cuts of the Con-Dem government have impacted all local authorities. However we do not feel this council and especially its leader have done all they can to stop the impact of these cuts. £120 billion is avoided and evaded in tax every year by corporations and wealthy individuals, many of whom are donors to the ruling parties. This would wipe out the budget deficit. The council's argument is not with the workers they'll sack. It's not with the children and parents who will suffer from the cuts to our Sure Start children's centres, of which KCC have proposed 23 closures. Their argument is with their own Party. Kent County Council should pass a "needs based" budget and demand the missing money from the Con-Dem government.

Linking up with parents around the county, the Kent Trade Unions have begun a campaign to mobilise opposition to these Tory cuts, beginning with the Children's Centres. We held an initial protest in support of Kent parents in Maidstone on September 19th; a further protest is scheduled for **Monday 2nd December 2013, from 11.30am-1.30pm**, outside a meeting of KCC's Tory cabinet. A range of speakers will outline our strategy to unite against these cuts and all cuts.

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