

NO TO ALL COUNCIL CUTS



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100% ANTI-AUSTERITY

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The Tories' war on public services continues, with the government demanding billions of pounds nationally in 'savings' from councils that have already been stripped to the bone. Local services, that millions rely on, have been squeezed dry to pay for the bankers' bailout. You know the cuts are bad when PM Cameron is lobbying his local council against cuts; and the Conservative chair of the local government association publically complains that even by closing all the libraries, parks, children's centres and turning off the street lights, they wouldn't be able to save the money demanded by Chancellor Osborne.

The Socialist Party agrees with Jeremy Corbyn – austerity is a political choice, not an economic necessity. There is enough money to provide these vital services and more. Look at the millions of pounds that Google and other huge multinationals owe in taxes. This Conservative government prioritises filling the pockets of big business over filling the plates of old-aged pensioners.

Austerity is a cover for driving down workers' conditions and it is provoking a

huge reaction. The movement to elect Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party showed the huge popularity of anti-austerity ideas. Around the country, a handful of councillors have taken that to heart, and have taken a stance against local cuts. But in many areas across the country, Labour councils will be passing on vicious cuts to local services.

It doesn't have to be this way. Many councils have reserves and can use those reserves to refuse to implement cuts. Councils also have access to borrowing powers. These are temporary measures, but can buy time that could be used to build a mass campaign to demand funding nationally. This could reignite and build on the mood around Corbyns' election, and help launch a movement to defeat this division-ridden Tory government.

No-cuts Budget meetings

Socialist Party members across the country are working with anti-cuts councillors, activists and workers to draw up legal budgets that do not include cuts to jobs and services. In areas such as Tower Hamlets and Southampton, councillors

are taking part in these discussions and will bring them in to the council chambers. And building these united discussions should be the first step to building serious anti-cuts campaigns, before and after the council budget period.

Militant, the Socialist Party's predecessor, built a mass campaign in Liverpool in the 1980s, building 5,000 council houses, creating thousands of jobs and opening nurseries. This was in the face of Thatcher's Tory government and her war on Labour councils, which she saw together with the miners as the enemy within. Instead of retreating, Liverpool won millions of pounds extra from the government. A similar movement today, especially a national struggle from councils and unions, could defeat Cameron and Co.

We can defeat the Tories. But their big business backers will keep pushing back. Workers didn't create the crisis – but they want to make us pay for it. We need to transform society, to remove the rich from the levers of power and democratically use the huge wealth to create a decent standard of living for all. If you agree with this, join the Socialist Party!

MODEL MOTION - SUPPORT UNITE & UNISON ANTI-CUTS STANCE

This welcomes the resolutions passed by the Unite Local Government national committee and the Unison Local Government Service Group Executive which calls on councils so set no-cuts budgets. (See extracts, right)

We endorse this strategy as crucial for defending the jobs and conditions of local government workers as well as maintaining vital services for the wider community.

We pledge to work with Unite and Unison local government members in campaigning for this approach.

The Unite local government position is:

“To call on Labour Councils to set legal no cuts budgets, use reserves, capitalise eligible general fund expenditure and borrow prudentially to generate resources so that no Labour Council need make cuts. These are short term measures to buy time to build a national campaign.

That the financial measures must be combined with a national campaign, linking Councils, trade unions and communities in a fight against the Tories austerity programme.”

The Unison local government position is:

“To call on Labour, Plaid Cymru and SNP councils to set legal no-cuts budgets, use reserves, capitalise eligible general fund expenditure and borrow prudentially to generate resources so that no council need make cuts. These are short-term measures to buy time to build a national campaign.

“That the financial measures must be combined with a national campaign, linking councils, trade unions and communities in a fight against the Tories' austerity programme.

“To call on the union's political officers and department to prepare a strategy to take the points in this motion forward.”