



**Labour Local  
Government  
Agenda 2015**



# Foreword

Local government has faced significant challenges in recent years. The Tory-led government has imposed unprecedented cuts to local authority budgets, which were unfairly distributed and hit poorest areas the hardest. Due to demographic changes, an ageing society and more entrenched needs, demand for local services is increasing and they are creaking under the pressure, although frontline workers are doing a brilliant job. Added to that, local authorities must deal with the fallout in our communities from the Tory-led Government's damaging reforms in many areas including health, education and welfare.

Yet Labour councils across the country are not giving up hope. They are rising to the challenge and demonstrating the Labour difference. With creativity, determination and community leadership our councils are demonstrating that our values can be put into practice despite tough times and limited resources. When many thought Local Government would simply manage decline a new spirit of innovation has formed.

The innovation and good practice from Labour Local Government, highlighted in this report, demonstrates that although Labour is out of power in national government, locally we are leading the way. While housebuilding has been falling off a cliff nationally under the Tory-led Government, Labour councils have been delivering new homes against the odds. As the education system is fragmenting and control of schools is centralising,

Labour councils are demonstrating how they can add value locally and work with schools to deliver for education. And although unemployment levels remain too high, Labour councils are pioneering new ways to provide sustainable routes into work for people.

As we head towards May 2015, these local successes in turn have implications for Labour's approach nationally and for the prospect of devolution within England. Local innovation charts a route to a different style of governance: one which distributes power locally rather than hoarding it centrally. Already ideas from Labour Local Government have been at the forefront of Labour's Policy Review, with the Local Government Innovation Taskforce setting out a clear agenda for devolution, building on the lessons of local innovation that already exists.

We now need to take this forward and ensure this vision for devolution is cemented throughout Labour's agenda. This publication provides ideas for practical manifesto commitments which embody and take forward a clear commitment to localism and an opportunity for a genuinely radical, new and exciting agenda for 2015 and beyond.

There is currently disconnect locally, with many members of the public unclear about the relationship between the council tax they pay and the services they receive. Many believe that councils are funded solely by council tax and that

is used exclusively to empty bins – perhaps that’s an exaggeration, but it won’t be too far from that.

Enabling more local decision-making can make better use of scarce resources and maximise returns on investment by ensuring relevance to local circumstances. In an age of extreme mistrust of politicians and institutions, making sure local people have a real say over decisions is an urgent priority.

Devolving power to people and communities is not a separate initiative or a particular policy, and by definition it cannot be prescribed from the centre. Instead it is a way of governing that empowers people and communities, working with them not bypassing them.

In short, Labour must gain power in order to give it away again. We in Labour Local Government are ready to work with colleagues nationally to ensure we can deliver an ambitious agenda, one which truly enables everyone, and all parts of the country, to play a part. But in doing so it is vital that Local Government is seen as the conduit for that and not bypassed in search of ‘the community’, we *are* the community.

**Cllr Jim McMahon**  
**Leader, LGA Labour Group**



# Labour Local Government Agenda 2015

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# Labour councils are...

## Boosting local economic growth



The **Oldham Enterprise Trust** is a £1 million scheme that offers financial support to budding young entrepreneurs to realise their business ambitions. Enterprise Hubs in every secondary school nurture entrepreneurial talent and provide an employability addition to the curriculum. A £1 million **Oldham Town Centre Fund** also supports local independent businesses.

The **Wakefield Business Support Programme** has achieved 42 SME assists, created 54 new jobs and supported 79 new businesses to start. The programme is on track to achieve over £1 million of additional GVA by 2015 and there was a 30 per cent growth in company formation rates in 2013.

The £50 million **Coventry Investment Fund** established by the council and funded through prudential borrowing will be used to encourage businesses to start up, locate or grow in the city by providing infrastructure, premises and facilities to boost success. It is estimated this will result in more than £100 million worth of new private investment.

**Bassetlaw council's** dedicated growth team identifies future projects and investment opportunities to facilitate business and housing growth, channelling separate funding streams towards achieving a growth vision that includes boosting competitiveness and developing an appropriately skilled workforce.

**Corby council** has formed Electric Corby, a not-for-profit community interest company with private sector support to generate economic growth and employment, establishing the area as a practical community test scale centre for future low carbon living and transportation.

**Stevenage council's Business and Technology Centre (btc)** has supported 180 businesses to start up, created 215 jobs and helped 500 businesses overall providing advice or space.

**Tameside council** is supporting local digital sector growth by creating new open application neutral infrastructure designed to enable new disruptive services which can transform how the public and private sector work. A new Digital Innovation Centre will incubate businesses in the creative, digital and media sectors.

**Durham council** is supporting the development of a more diverse local economy. Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors and the council is developing the county's cultural offer by staging exhibitions, festivals and sporting events. This has contributed to attracting 500,000 visitors and boosted the economy by over £30 million.

**Royal Borough of Greenwich** is investing in physical infrastructure to underpin future prosperity, including an accelerated programme of road improvements which will also provide around 100 training and employment opportunities and enhance river transport infrastructure.

**Croydon council** has committed to a major growth plan to create 16,000 new jobs and 9,500 new homes by 2019. Plans include supporting a new creative sector, boosting the area as a retail and leisure destination and office centre and attracting a major university.

**Redbridge council** is giving all motorists 30 minutes free parking on-street pay and display bays in order to encourage footfall and boost trade.

# A new Labour Government should:

- 1** **Rebalance our national economy so that everyone, and all parts of the country, can contribute to and benefit from growth.** Devolve economic powers and funding for local growth, regeneration, skills and employment through new city and county deals to local authorities working with LEPs. Creating more local economic levers and flexibility to base decisions on what local areas, people and businesses need will better coordinate and maximise returns on investment, boosting the delivery of jobs, housing and growth.
- 2** **Create a fairer system of resource distribution that doesn't penalise the poorest areas** by reforming local government financing to create a system which links funding to local needs and service demand. Combine this with more flexibility over local revenue, so that areas have effective incentives to grow local economies and can become more self-sustainable in the future.
- 3** **Ensure investment in public transport and roads meet needs in all parts of the country** by giving all local areas the same transport management and decision-making powers that London currently has through TfL and the funding certainty and spending freedoms over road projects promised to the new strategic highways company. This would enable a more responsive transport network which would shape bus markets in line with needs of local people; better integrate transport spending to other public services and boost economic returns on investment in transport infrastructure.
- 4** **Offer a New English Deal to embed a commitment to localism for the future of all our communities** by legislating for a new settlement that devolves significant further power and freedom to local government. This should recognise local government and central government to be independent and equal partners. A Labour Government should respect and uphold the independence of local government with the right and freedom of local authorities to do what is in the best interests of their communities.
- 5** **Incentivise all local public services to collaborate and invest in prevention across a place** by allocating multi-year funding settlements for the full Parliament. This should encourage a shift from high cost reactive services towards prevention to better support local areas to thrive.

# Labour councils are...

## Delivering more and better homes

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**Islington council** is delivering 2,000 new affordable homes by 2015 and proposing to use its planning policy to end 'buy-to-leave' – new build homes sold as overseas investments but often left to stand empty – and issue fines which would be used for new affordable housing.

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**City of York council** is planning 22,000 new homes by 2030, and the council taking action to unlock stalled sites. A programme to build 60 new council homes by 2018 is underway.

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**Plymouth council** has committed to releasing 100 acres of land for development, with 27 sites already providing 1,200 homes. The council established a £50 million fund to help meet its target of 1,000 new houses a year by lending to housing associations and cooperatives at a 3% interest rate.

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**Oxford council** established a joint venture with an investment partner to share risk of the development of a council-owned site that requires significant infrastructure including a new primary school. The scheme will deliver 885 new homes, at least 40 per cent of which will be for social rent.

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In **Wakefield** 903 new homes were built in the last year, of which 28 per cent were affordable. The council has worked with owners to bring 345 empty properties back into use.

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**Stoke-on-Trent council** has supported 31 first-time buyers to move into 33 newly-renovated houses for £1 each, part of a wider longer term strategy to bring derelict homes into use.

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**Knowsley council** is investing in the development of 426 affordable homes and making land available for up to 2,250 additional homes in the borough.

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In **South Tyneside**, over 1,000 affordable homes have been built and the council has established a new housing ventures trust to build new council homes.

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**Corby council** has built 82 new council homes and with a further 108 to be delivered by 2018.

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**Leeds council** plans to create 1,000 council homes through house building, bulk purchasing off plan acquisitions, buying back right to buy properties sold off and returning empty homes to use. A new Leeds Standard for housing will be required for new council homes, and it is seeking to work with developers to achieve it in new private homes.

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The **Excellent Homes for Life** project in **Kirklees** will build 466 new one and two bedroom flats for council tenants including 35 designed for wheelchair use and 140 extra care flats.

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**Lewisham council** plans to build 500 new council homes by 2018 and a new private rented sector unit is taking action against rogue landlords including targeting identified problematic landlords, taking action to improve properties failing to meet decent homes standards and going to court on behalf of tenants unfairly treated.

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**Hackney council** is launching its own not-for-profit letting agency to help tenants struggling to find a home in the private sector without charging fees, and only letting on behalf of accredited landlords.

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**Barking and Dagenham council** formed a partnership with institutional investor Long Harbour to develop 477 homes for affordable rent.





# A new Labour Government should:

**6** **Tackle the housing crisis and build much-needed homes** by letting councils contribute by removing the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap and replace it with the same controls that apply to any other form of council borrowing. The Local Government Association projected this will deliver 80,000 homes over five years, in addition to the 80,000 already in the pipeline from councils partnering with housing associations and developers.

**7** **Make sure developers build out existing sites** by giving councils more powers to incentivise action including financial penalties for developers who allow planning permissions to expire; stronger compulsory purchase powers where permissions have expired and development has not yet commenced and levies on land that is suitable for development but has not been built out. These powers should be enabling and allow for exemptions in exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the developer.

**8** **Enable a fairer playing field for people in housing need** by repealing the Bedroom Tax and reforming Right to Buy. Ensure local decisions over the Right to Buy discount can be taken in line with the local housing market and enable the full retention of receipts from sales so that councils can reinvest in replacement housing.

**9** **Protect and enhance the rights of tenants in the private rented sector** by giving local councils more powers to drive up standards and drive out bad landlords through licensing and enforcement, and create a new right to a longer term tenancy of three to five years for more stability.

# Labour councils are...

## Reducing unemployment and tackling skills gaps



**Get Bradford Working** brings together employers and partners to address the local jobs shortage and create new opportunities. Since 2013 the scheme has created 400 new jobs and placed 525 people into existing posts. A new Apprenticeship Training Agency has increased the number of placements with SMEs and the construction industry. The council and the chamber of commerce have set up E3 Bradford, which is developing an enterprise curriculum and brokering employer engagement in schools and colleges.

**Islington council** has set up an independent Employment Commission to tackle the main local employment challenge: high unemployment rates despite more jobs than people in the borough. Local stakeholders are being consulted about how to get more residents into work and establish 'whole person' employment services better coordinated between agencies.

The **Preston Community Wealth Creation Initiative** involves working with the public sector in the Preston area to increase local purchasing, so protecting and creating local jobs. Where there is no local provision the initiative will explore the potential to fill the gap through the creation of local co-operatives.

The **Warrington Skills Commission** launched by the council is a business-led forum which provides employers with a platform and voice to influence the shape of skills provision. It facilitates ongoing dialogue, engages businesses in co-designing skills provision and enables skills and training providers to understand and plan a coherent response to local employers' requirements, for example evidencing a new Universal Technical College with a curriculum of energy and nuclear engineering.

**Derbyshire council** worked with the six learning provider networks in the county to evaluate and review the post-16 provision offer, exploring levels of disengagement, and whether the breadth and quality of provision met young people's needs and aspirations. Issues identified such as skills gaps are now being tackled: for example in a locality with no provision related to logistics yet close to a national logistics hub the council is now working with providers to introduce some.

The **Oldham Youth Guarantee** will offer every 18 year old an employment or training opportunity by 2015. The council has brought together local employers, job centres, colleges, schools and the voluntary sector to commit to this shared outcome and a total of 474 young people have been supported into jobs, traineeships, apprenticeships, work experience placements or a volunteering scheme.

The **Sandwell Guarantee** is a partnership being launched with businesses to create new jobs and apprenticeships. The scheme will guarantee every young person between 16 and 24 a paid job or training for at least six months. Placements will start with a six week college course related to different sectors and the council matching young people with opportunities from local businesses.

**Wirral council** is developing a Health Related Worklessness project to tackle this specific issue which persists in spatial concentrations in the borough. The initiative involves partners in employment, skills, health and housing to develop new approaches that can reduce health related worklessness in a sustained way and has potential to generate significant financial savings.

# A new Labour Government should:

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**10** **Provide more effective support for unemployed people** by devolving funding and responsibility for employment support, including the Work Programme, to local authorities working in partnership. Refocussing employment, skills and back to work support by bringing different strands together across a place can ensure more effective coordination and integration of available support. This will mean local areas are better able to make sure provision meets people's identified needs and better overcome individual barriers to work. It means that more effective routes into jobs can be created that match the reality of local labour markets, producing more sustainable outcomes.

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**11** **Overcome skills shortages and mismatches where too many people are trained for jobs that don't exist**, by devolving funding and responsibility for further education (16–19) and adult skills (19+) to local authorities working in partnership. This will overcome gaps in the fragmented national system which results in skills provision not linked to the local labour market. This can involve employers more effectively in locally-coordinated approaches that ensure training will lead to actual job outcomes for people.

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**12** **Support young people's particular route into work and tackle youth unemployment** by creating a locally-led youth transitions service to provide tailored support to unemployed under-21 year olds. This would address their specific needs as they transition from education to employment and provide careers advice, skills and training and work experience placements. This can boost engagement and ensure young people are able to access opportunities that support them at the early stages of their career.

# Labour councils are...

## Giving every child and young person the best start in life

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**Lambeth's Early Action Partnership (LEAP)** between the council, the VCS, local CCG, schools, police, parents and others aims to give all children, from pre-birth to 4 years, the best start in life. LEAP takes a holistic approach to social, emotional, nutritional, communication and language development using evidence based interventions and social networks.

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**Camden council** re-introduced fulltime nursery provision for three and four year olds, topping up the 15 hours of statutory early education and childcare to 25 hours per week.

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**Lambeth and Southwark councils** have set up an Affordable Childcare Commission to find new ways of ensuring childcare is affordable, accessible, flexible and high quality for all children.

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**Royal Borough of Greenwich's** school improvement strategy has resulted in raising achievement for all children and specifically narrowing the gap for disadvantaged pupils. This includes effective school self-evaluation, school to school support to build capacity and early, swift, decisive intervention in schools causing concern.

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In **Newcastle**, the council has used its local knowledge of communities to support groups of schools to establish shared foundation trusts. This enables schools to take collective strategic ownership of their future development by collaborating, sharing expertise and resources to improve opportunities and outcomes for all pupils.

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**Plymouth's School Food Co-operative** uses economies of scale between 69 member schools to reduce costs and maximise labour efficiencies, whilst providing quality meals. The collaborative arrangement ensures schools influence the shape

of the service with the council transferring staff to deliver it.

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**Newham council's Every Child a Musician** scheme offers a free musical instrument and music tuition to all children in Years 5, 6 and 7. 91% of children across participating schools, an estimated 10,000, have taken this up and an evaluation by the Institute of Education found that participating children have high levels of social inclusion, health and happiness.

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**Barnsley council** is raising aspirations and attainment by identifying those 14 to 16 year olds at risk of dropping out and supporting them with a named mentor and targeted information, advice and guidance integrated with other council services. The "I Know I Can" programme supported by the council provides young people with opportunities to develop entrepreneurial ideas and link up with businesses to develop employability skills.

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**Leeds council** supported young people to scrutinise and improve the information, advice and guidance offered by Connexions, schools and colleges to ensure everyone has access to age-appropriate and high quality support. Young people played a direct role in determining what the careers service should offer and the council developed a self-assessment toolkit that schools can use to review their offer and ensure it meets young people's needs.

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**Lewisham council** created a tool to track the pathways of 16 to 19 year olds in local schools and colleges, enabling the council to work with them on issues like the curriculum, students dropping out or at risk of dropping out of education, and post-16 advice and guidance.



# A new Labour Government should:

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**13** **Make sure all children get a high quality education** by establishing clear local accountability for all schools and placing the same expectations of high standards for all schools. For local accountability to be robust, democratically elected and transparent local authorities, working with all local stakeholders, should be at the heart of this system, so that parents can easily understand where responsibility rests. Councils should have direct powers to challenge underperformance in any school funded by public money regardless of structure, and intervene where necessary, to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

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**14** **Ensure every child gets a place at a good school and tackle the school places crisis** by supporting local authorities to build new schools. Allocate indicative five-year capital budgets to councils into a single, local pot so councils can more effectively meet increasing demand for school places.

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**15** **Give all young people the chance to make positive future choices** by ensuring appropriate and effective careers advice is available. Local authorities should have a role coordinating careers advice in a local area, working with schools, further and higher education and in the context of the local labour market and employers so that information is relevant, timely and leads to positive career outcomes for all young people.

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**16** **Ensure high quality, reliable childcare is available for all children.** Renew Sure Start Centres as hubs to support children and families in communities by ensuring a range of services co-operate and co-locate around centres. Strengthen the role local authorities can play in brokering childcare provision for parents and make sure supply better meets demand by establishing a duty to cooperate on all childcare providers. Strengthen the role that local enterprise partnerships have in removing childcare as a barrier to work as a part of wider growth strategies.

# Labour councils are...

## Providing health and care support when people need it



To support 22,000 older people to live independently, **Leeds council** partners with the NHS to fund Neighbourhood Networks embedded in communities and staffed mostly by volunteers including many who are retired. Taking an integrated approach across medical, public health and social care, they prevented 1,450 hospital admissions and supported 617 discharges in the last year.

**South Tyneside council's** approach to health and social care integration across partners has resulted in a 31 per cent reduction in permanent admissions to residential and nursing care since 2010 and 96 per cent of adult social care clients receive self-directed support, 40 per cent above the national average.

**Southwark council** has developed its own ethical care charter following a review of its approach to commissioning homecare. This aims to change the problem of zero hours contracts, upskill the workforce and pay home care workers for travel time.

**Wolverhampton council** is coordinating partners across business, faith groups and the VCS to become a dementia-friendly city. Dementia cafes provide spaces for people with dementia and carers to meet and find out about further support. In partnership with academic specialists, 80 dementia care leaders and champions have been trained and dementia awareness training is available to all councillors and officers.

**Lancashire council** piloted a new approach to having carers assessments undertaken by local carers services in the county to incorporate benefits of VCS involvement – 98% of carers reported an increase in their knowledge, support levels and wellbeing as a result.

**City of York council** is partnering with Science City York to create GeniUs! York, to use open innovation and collaborative engagement to involve people and practitioners in developing new ideas. Initial challenge pilots addressed developing assisted living for elderly and vulnerable people at home and innovations in healthcare to understand and tackle what patients and medical staff find ineffective and frustrating.

**Dudley council** has supported 75 people with learning disabilities or autism over four years to live independently by developing personalised accommodation plans to cover daily living requirements and specialist support.

To drive participation, **Blackburn with Darwen council** made leisure activities free at set times: rates rose by more than 50% with one in four adults now active for 30 minutes, three times a week.

**Wigan council** offers a range of weight management programmes for residents including specific support for pregnant women and, responding to identified under-use, a Trim Down Shape Up initiative targets men and is designed specifically to increase their participation rates.

**Knowsley council** has trained 180 frontline workers in an accredited '2 minute health message' to encourage people to make positive lifestyle choices.

To improve health and wellbeing, the council is making **Preston a Cycling City**. A Cycling Forum facilitates partnership working and the council has invested in cycle safety opportunities including mass participation events, a dedicated Cycling Officer, Bikeability training and a new 21 mile cycling and walking route around Preston.

# A new Labour Government should:

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**17** **Address the chronic under-funding of social care**, and ensure a system of care and support that is properly resourced to promote dignity and independence, and be sustainable for the future.

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**18** **Create a seamless system of health and social care which gives people the right support at the right time in their lives.** By giving health and wellbeing boards new powers and responsibility to drive whole person care through collective commissioning, the barriers between physical health, mental health, social care, public health and wellbeing can be removed to secure better outcomes. Locally-led integration around whole person needs, in the context of clear national standards, can ensure holistic, personalised services by designing them around identified needs, creating a more responsive system. This has more potential to effectively tackle health inequalities by integrating with other local services including early years, housing, environment and employment support.

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**19** **Make sure people stay independent and healthier at home for longer** by reviewing the tariff system of costs for NHS services and incentivising long term prevention rather than repeated episodic treatment. With a local pooled budget based on year of care funding for people with long term conditions, disability and frailty local partners can drive commissioning for care which meets people's long term needs and better prevents emergency admissions.

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**20** **Overcome public health challenges that stop people fulfilling their potential in life** – obesity, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption – by investing in locally-led programmes that support sustainable behaviour change. Divert a proportion of existing VAT on soft drinks and fast food to support activity programmes for children and reinvest a proportion of tobacco and alcohol duty in preventative measures. Support local authorities in their work to reduce the impact of alcohol misuse on their communities by introducing a minimum unit price for alcohol.

# Labour councils are...

## Making all communities safe



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**Plymouth council** offers a £6,000 grant fund in each of the top ten neighbourhoods with the highest crime rates to tackle the top three local crimes. The council also coordinates Operation Encompass between police and education to ensure children present at domestic abuse incidents receive next day support at school or early years settings.

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**Newham council** has a One Stop Shop support service for victims of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, sexual violence, “honour”-based violence, forced marriage, exiting sex work and female genital mutilation (FGM). These specialist services maintain their independence but share building space and advertising to the community to provide an accessible service and overcome previous difficulties women had accessing the right support speedily. A new FGM prevention service provides specialist support for victims, raises awareness and challenges cultural acceptance of the practice.

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The **Camden Safety Net** is a multi-agency domestic violence project which provides a crisis centre co-located with the Metropolitan Police, with medium-long term support and advice from a range of partner agencies such as women’s aid refuges, housing and legal services.

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**Luton Access** addresses the needs of the most vulnerable customers by providing a single source of fully integrated, wrap-around partnership support for vulnerable individuals, people in crisis and families with complex needs. A partnership between the council, the NHS, the DWP, and key VCS advice organisations, the service provides early effective support to people to manage the risks of escalation to higher cost specialist services.

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**Liverpool council** is working with the Transforming Choice Community Interest Company to deliver of an alcohol withdrawal detox and re-habilitation programme to deal more effectively with street drinking and homelessness by addressing the underlying causes of harmful behaviours.

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**Manchester council**, with the RecoRa Institute and Mobedia digital agency, has developed a Safeguarding against Radicalisation Digital Learning Tool for frontline workers designed to help mainstream Prevent activity. Using different learning styles, it promotes the local approach to Prevent in the context of safeguarding and building resilient communities, and is being Home Office quality-assured so it can be used by other areas. The council has also established a Prevent Champions Network made up of representatives from different organisations across the city to share practice.

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**Allerdale council** has created a user-friendly piece of software using GPS technology and QR codes to enable people to file on-the-spot reports about everything from dog-fouling to fly-tipping, graffiti to missed bin collections from their mobile phones. An interactive map identifies clusters so hotspots can be targeted and users can track responses.

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**Islington council** has introduced a 20 mile per hour speed limit on all roads it has responsibility for, in order to reduce casualties and make streets safer.

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**Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority’s** free home safety check service supports 60,000 homes a year to fit life-saving smoke alarms. The service is developing a Community Risk Intervention Team with ambulance and services designed to deal more effectively with high volume low priority incidents and better prevent escalations.



# A new Labour Government should:

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**21** **Give local people more of a say over tackling crime and increasing safety in their area** by strengthening local accountability of policing. Give local authorities the powers to set priorities for neighbourhood policing and tackling anti-social behaviour, in consultation with communities. Replace Police and Crime Commissioners with locally-led policing boards composed of local authority leaders, to improve and strengthen policing governance at force level, with more effective community representation and checks and balances in the system.

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**22** **Help excluded families and vulnerable individuals overcome the challenges they face and get the support** they need by providing more funding and freedom to local areas to develop effective interventions. A top-slice of central government departments should be pooled and devolved to support local identification, targeting and appropriate support to be commissioned that produces sustainable results for families and individuals most in need.

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**23** **End violence against women and girls (VAWG)** by working with communities to effectively tackle crimes, support victims and track down perpetrators. Ensure appropriate resources are available to provide victims with support that is accessible and meets their specific needs. To protect vulnerable women affected, it should be made a specific offence to promote or encourage FGM.

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**24** **Eradicate child sexual exploitation (CSE) and human trafficking** by making sure all public services in a local area are able to effectively coordinate, share intelligence, data and develop joint protocols to intervene rapidly and robustly where there is evidence these are occurring. Local and national partners to work together to ensure effective practice is shared and all partners with responsibilities towards children and vulnerable people have institutional cultures of awareness and vigilance towards these issues.

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**25** **Provide a sustainable fire and rescue service that people can rely on to keep safe** by ensuring funding follows risk. Improve collaboration, both between emergency services to ensure effective co-responding and hazard minimisation for groups such as elderly people, and with local authorities to promote resilience, prevention and protection from risks such as flooding, and to ensure appropriate support for higher risk individuals and families.

# Labour councils are...

## Tackling climate change and supporting the environment

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**Nottingham council** is setting up its own energy company designed to benefit 177,000 households through cheaper energy bills. It is hoping to take on the big six energy firms directly by providing better value for people and reinvest any profits for public benefit.

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The **Plymouth Energy Community**, supported by the council, helps people save money on fuel bills, reduce energy usage and consider swapping to renewable energy. It will share dividends with members and reinvest in schemes to tackle fuel poverty and reduce the city's carbon footprint.

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**Oxford council's** private sector safety team use thermal imaging to help deal with excess cold in private rented properties in the city. The proactive approach engages landlords in what they can do to reduce heat loss and heating costs for tenants.

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**Kirklees council** is saving an estimated 3,000 tonnes of carbon each year by providing advice and grants to local businesses to take up resource efficiency measures. 485 local businesses have benefitted from resource efficiencies to reduce costs on energy, waste and water bills, with combined savings of over £1 million a year.

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The **Tees Valley** local authorities, including **Darlington, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton**, are collaborating to boost growth whilst driving the transition to renewable forms of energy. Capitalising on their industrial heritage and existing base, the area is attracting investment and emerging as a hub for the 'waste to energy' sector. A gasification project using local authority and commercial waste will provide renewable electricity for up to 50,000 homes and new anaerobic

digestion bio-gas and energy from waste plants will bring construction and permanent jobs to the area.

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**Oldham council** has developed **Warm Homes Oldham** to tackle fuel poverty, a community budget initiative with the CCG and the Oldham Housing Investment Partnership. Since launching in summer 2014, 240 homes have had free heating upgrades and 47 dwellings have had external solid wall insulation fitted.

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**Bolsover council** supported over 1,000 households in one year to address affordable warmth issues, particularly focussing on vulnerable groups including elderly, people with disability and flu clinics at GP surgeries.

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**City of York council's** low carbon and fuel poverty approach includes subsidised new energy efficient boilers to low income households; subsidised solid wall insulation in target areas; a smart meter trail in 75 homes; a social housing photovoltaic scheme that provides free electricity to tenants in 500 homes; and maximises energy efficiency in new developments through the planning system.

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**Halton council's** Rewards for Recycling scheme rewards residents who recycle with points that can be redeemed for vouchers for money off goods and services in local shops, businesses, restaurants, leisure and entertainment facilities.

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**Waltham Forest council** works with a local housing provider, its waste contractor and the London Re-use Network to deliver a project that reuses discarded waste paint and unwanted furniture, offering them at reduced rates to families on low incomes and in social housing.



# A new Labour Government should:

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**26** **Boost energy efficiency and reduce household energy costs** by enabling councils, not energy companies, to use money already collected for energy efficiency through fuel bills to insulate homes which would in turn reduce household energy bills. This would enable better targeting of resources where needed most whilst also maximising returns on investment of public funds and jobs in the green economy locally.

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**27** **Tackle fuel poverty robustly** as part of a wider strategy to ensure the energy companies play fair. This should include addressing the poverty premium of the poorest paying more for energy through prepayment meters.

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**28** **Empower local communities to benefit from opportunities in a reformed energy sector** as part of wider measures to fix the broken energy market. The multiple barriers to local authorities entering the energy supply market, where to do so benefits their residents, should be identified and removed. A duty to consult the local authority should be placed on energy companies to ensure their investment plans are in line with local economic regeneration plans.

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**29** **Reduce waste and increase recycling rates** by allowing councils to deliver the right waste and recycling services for their local communities. Explore incentives to increase investment in recycling locally, for example by redistributing the revenue raised from landfill tax to local areas on a needs basis rather than being retained centrally, in order to drive investment and improvement in new recycling technology and solutions. Roll out the plastic bag charge across all providers to encourage reduction and reuse; with the receipts coming back to councils to fund 'on the go' recycling opportunities.

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**30** **Drive new ways of making reuse easier and more accessible** by enabling local authorities to take a lead role in developing infrastructure and partnership arrangements to increase reuse and realise the associated value. Establish rules and develop disincentives to placing selected reusable and recyclable materials in landfill – such as furniture, mattresses and textiles – to stimulate supporting industry and infrastructure for alternative treatment.

The LGA Labour Group exists to provide a strong voice for Labour in local government and acts as a platform for ideas and discussion for all those committed to an effective localist element in Labour politics and policies.

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