

Jeremy Corbyn speech to Labour's Local Government Conference

Check against delivery

Speaking today (Saturday) at Labour's Local Government Conference at Warwick University in Coventry, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

"Thank you for that welcome and for that introduction Alice [Perry].

As someone who was a Labour councillor for several years it's always a great pleasure to be among so many talented, innovative and hard-working local representatives standing up for their communities.

And on behalf of the whole Labour party I want to say thank you for what you do in the most difficult circumstances.

Because we meet at a time when there is now a state of emergency in our local services.

That emergency is perhaps most acute in social care an absolute scandal that leaves 1.2 million elderly people without the care they need.

By cutting billions of pounds from local government Downing Street has created a social care crisis which the Royal Society of Medicine just yesterday said was linked to 30,000 excess deaths in 2015 yes 30,000.

People are dying because of the choices made by this government.

Councils are at breaking point on social care. Decent people deserve decent treatment. Our social care system has been privatised, outsourced and cut. It has dehumanised our parents, grandparents and neighbours.

They have now become 15 minute units turning people and care into a commodity, instead of people who have paid into the system their whole life and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

And the staff who are carrying out the most personal tasks for our loved ones, bathing, feeding and protecting them, are among the lowest paid, most stressed and least valued.

This is a disgraceful neglect of people who have worked and contributed to our communities and now are being let down, let down, not by any of you in this hall, but by 10 Downing Street.

Let down by a government that has plunged councils across the country into a state of emergency because they have cut billions of pounds from services to elderly and disabled people.

This is a government that gives billions away in tax breaks to big business

and the richest and pays for it by cutting the services to the most vulnerable.

It is this callousness even brutality that has put local services in a state of emergency.

And I want to say a special thank you to LGA Labour Group Leader, Nick Forbes.

Nick and I are in regular contact.

By email, by phone. And yes even by text.

Though a little less than Surrey County Council's leader, David Hodge.

I don't blame Surrey Council for trying to negotiate a better deal when the government has cut £170 million from their budget.

But I do blame the sheer hypocrisy of Tory ministers cutting social care budgets for everyone while they're willing to offer mates' rates to the Conservative Council that represents both the Health Secretary and the Chancellor.

If Cumbria were to get the same 'sweetheart deal' as Surrey county council seems to have done their social care budget would be increased by more than £20m. That's the equivalent of a 15% boost and would mean £2.8m extra for the Copeland constituency.

The state of emergency in social care is a key factor fuelling the NHS crisis, waiting times are getting worse in A&E as more neglected people arrive at their doors. It's not their fault they go to A&E, they are sick and they are in need.

Once there, elderly patients are having to stay in longer because they cannot be safely discharged costing the NHS far more than adequate social care would.

9 out of 10 NHS trusts say they have 'unsafe levels' of overcrowding.

More people on waiting lists, longer waiting times at A&E.

We have a state of emergency in our social care system and the worst crisis in the history of our NHS.

But the Chancellor Philip Hammond failed to put a single penny into social care or the NHS in the Autumn Statement.

Earlier this week it was reported that 24 A&E units face closure because the government is forcing NHS Trusts to find £22 billion of what they call politely and euphemistically "efficiencies" but what we all know are cuts.

So our demand for next month's Budget could not be clearer give ALL councils the financial support they need to deliver decent social care, abandon the

corporate tax cuts and invest in our NHS and social care services.

And I make this pledge today: a Labour government under my leadership will always provide the NHS and social care with the funds they need.

We will ensure that care workers get the pay and esteem they deserve and I commend the many Labour councils that have signed up to Unison's ethical care charter.

Next week we face by-elections in Copeland and in Stoke. Both our candidates are experienced local councillors and passionate campaigners for their local services and the NHS under threat in both their communities

These by-elections are a chance to send a message to a Conservative government that puts the rich first but neglects the sick, the elderly, and those with disabilities.

In both Copeland and Stoke, voters have a chance to tell the government that they've had enough of their damaging cuts to health and social care, their disregard for human life and dignity.

In Copeland, the local council is expected to see a cut of 49% to its funding by 2020. In fact it's one of the ten hardest hit councils in the country.

West Cumberland Hospital is facing downgrading of maternity services which midwives believe will lead to mothers and babies dying.

No wonder that when Theresa May visited this week, she refused to answer questions about cuts to maternity services.

The local paper's headline the next day was "The Lady's not for talking". Well, Labour will never stop talking about defending – and improving – the services that support our most human life and death services.

And in Stoke in particular this by-election is a chance to reject the division and lies of UKIP.

We aim to defeat Ukip's politics of hate in Stoke with Labour's politics of hope and community.

UKIP are in coalition with the Conservatives on Stoke council. And we can already measure their results. The UKIP-Tory alliance is planning to axe £1 million of funding from local children's centres.

Their plans would cut over 60 jobs and put the future of six centres at risk. Local campaigners say that these cuts would leave just nine trained staff to cover the whole city.

UKIP's politics of hate must be defeated. Hatred will not save children's centres. It won't build homes. It won't create jobs and it won't fund health and social care. It won't bring our people dignity or bring our communities

together.

But it's true of the Tories too. When politicians of the right have no solutions they find a scapegoat, they try to divide and set people against each other.

Our job, as the Labour Party, isn't to find a vulnerable community to blame it is to unite people together to build a better world.

I'd like to thank all of you who've been to Stoke or Copeland to campaign – I'm off there later today – and encourage you all to do what you can in this last week.

In May, there are local elections in Scotland and Wales, county and unitary elections in England, as well as several mayoral and metro mayor contests in many city regions.

Local Government is the frontline in our battle against the Tories and their reckless austerity.

This Tory Government has willingly plunged our public services into a state of emergency.

Since 2010, councils have seen their funding cut by an average of 40%, for some in this room it is closer to 60%.

It is no wonder that local services are now in a state of emergency across the country.

Cuts to local government are a false economy which put pressure on other budgets. The new mother whose postnatal depression is picked up and dealt with by trained Sure Start staff that saves the NHS dealing with a serious case of depression.

The single parent who is able to stay in work because their child enjoys a safe and nutritious breakfast and after school club that saves the DWP in benefit payments. These and countless other cases mean council services are saving central government funds.

From bin collections to street lighting, bus services to home helps, local government touches our lives in ways that central government never can.

These services are in a state of emergency and all Theresa May can offer is: 'it's a decision for that council'. No it is not. It is a deliberate decision of central government to cut funds and cuts services that all our communities rely on.

The Tories are cutting £3 billion from education meaning 98% of our schools will receive less funding for our children. That's a £339 cut for each primary pupil and £447 for each secondary student. What chance have those children got with those services cut?

And since 2010 they've cut £400 million from youth services, resulting in

around 4,000 fewer youth workers and over 600 youth centres have closed, and that's quite apart from the 750 Sure Start centres the Tories have closed in the last six years.

This Government cut colleges and the adult skills budget, they abolished the education maintenance allowance, abolished student maintenance grants and scrapped nurses' bursaries. Where are tomorrow's nurses going to come from?

How can our country be a success if we fail to invest in our young people and block their opportunity to develop the skills they need?

Labour will restore EMA for college students, restore maintenance grants for university students and restore bursaries for those training to be nurses.

The Tories have asset-stripped our own people. Labour will invest in our people to grow our economy and develop our country.

Tory cuts have led to the closure of more than 340 libraries – the places where we learn so much about the world.

And park managers have seen their budgets cut by up to 90% – how can they maintain these parks which are for all of us, with such cuts?

Under this Conservative government homelessness has risen every year. You see it on the streets of every major city every night.

After nearly seven years, the Conservative record on housing is a disgrace.

Affordable housebuilding has fallen to the lowest level in 24 years, the number of homes being built for social rent is now at the lowest level since records began.

Between 1997 and 2010, Labour in government built two million homes, helped a million more families become home-owners.

And put in the biggest investment in social housing in a generation, bringing two million homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. And you can see the benefits and results around the country.

And it is Labour councils that are building on those achievements today:

- Birmingham Council is the biggest housing provider in the city delivering 30% of all new homes, building 240 new council homes in a year.
- Croydon Council has set up its own development company 'Brick by Brick' to build up to 1,000 new affordable and private homes. It means the profits are kept in Croydon, helping to build more additional affordable housing or a dividend return to fund council services.
- And Lancashire County Council has set up a joint venture with its pension fund and affordable housing professionals to buy 800 affordable homes which

they provide for sale and social rent across 84 local authorities.

That's local government helping to ensure the next Labour Government puts decent, affordable homes at the heart of our manifesto.

We'll reverse the Conservative cuts to housing investment and build thousands more genuinely affordable homes to rent and buy.

We'll give renters a new charter of rights, end rough sleeping, and help young people on ordinary incomes buy a home of their own. No more first time buyers told that £450,000 is a starter home.

And we'll also end the destructive ideological restrictions on local authorities' ability to build council homes for local people.

The Tories borrow to pay for the failure of their austerity.

Labour will allow you to borrow to build the council homes your communities need.

Labour councils are the best protection for any community against the devastation of Tory austerity.

But because of nearly £20 billion of cuts to council budgets since 2010 you're having to shield your people with one hand tied very tightly behind your back.

This Government boasts about the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine.

But they're just buzzwords ... spin not strategy.

They haven't devolved power and money to councils.

They've devolved austerity, devolved the cuts.

And it's not just the Tories doing that.

In Scotland, the SNP is doing just the same with a proposed budget cut of over £300 million to local councils.

They may talk the talk in Westminster, and by God they talk in Westminster, But they act like Tories in Holyrood.

For the Tories and the SNP, councils are their human shield, they've devolved austerity and responsibility.

Take social care. There was literally nothing to help solve the social care crisis in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. I sat through it, page by page, and not one word.

Instead they want YOU to increase council tax to pay for THEIR incompetence.

They passed the buck, and the bill, to you.

Councils aren't the problem.

They're providing the answers.

That's because local authorities have always been – and continue to be – in the vanguard of innovation.

Councils pioneered social security provision to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life.

They rid our towns and cities of slum housing, built council homes, parks, care homes, hospitals, museums and libraries – all the things that make our communities better and stronger.

Labour councils today are continuing that pioneering tradition.

- In Liverpool – where one in seven households live in fuel poverty – the council is setting up a new not-for-profit energy company – “the Liverpool LECCy” – to sell gas and electricity at a lower cost than other suppliers
- South Tyneside Council is helping to integrate health and social care services by building an 80 bed care home in the grounds of the District Hospital to help people suffering from dementia.
- And 89 Labour councils have successfully implemented the real Living Wage for council employees. Brent Council even offered business rate relief for companies that pay their employees the Living Wage.

These are three of 100 Innovations by Labour in Power, a great pamphlet published by the LGA Labour Group, examples of what Labour can achieve in power.

And that's why we need Labour to be in power in towns, counties and city regions and in Westminster too.

I know that Labour metro mayors in Liverpool, Manchester, the West Midlands and elsewhere will continue that legacy as drivers of economic innovation.

But I know too they'll be able to do that far more effectively with a Labour government in Westminster.

Because our humanity, our values, our care is what makes our communities a better place for everyone.

And our humanity and responsibility does not stop at our own borders. The Government's decision to renege on its commitment to bring 3,000 vulnerable child refugees is shameful.

These are children who have fled from the warzones and are currently at risk from traffickers.

Lords Dubs' amendment was accepted by the government and I am proud that Labour councils stand ready to play their role in helping children in desperate need.

There is no finer example of British values.

Our country is now completely out of balance.

Not just between the haves and have-nots.

But between London and the rest of the country.

The North-South divide in income, jobs and pay is increasing faster than ever.

And that divide is being widened by deliberate government policy.

Spending on transport is completely biased towards London.

Over the next five years this Government plans to spend £1,900 per person on transport in London.

In the North West, it will spend just under £300 per person, less than a sixth of what's being spent in capital.

Labour's mission has always been to redistribute wealth to create a fairer society.

Now we must also focus on redistributing power as well as wealth across all our nations and regions.

That's why Labour's proposal for a National Investment Bank, will be supported by a network of regional banks, publicly accountable and locally managed, with specialist knowledge of their areas.

These regional banks will help break the logjam in the British financial system, that is holding back our economy and our country.

By being closer to local people and by making decisions based on local needs they will be able to deliver the capital that government and the banks fail to do in public services, infrastructure and industrial development.

On transport, as London prepares for the opening of Crossrail and now campaigns for Crossrail 2, we will back an East-West link of even greater importance.

The corridor of northern cities stretching from Liverpool and Preston in the west to York and Hull in the east, has the economic clout, and skills, to become a powerful driver of economic growth. Don't worry Nick, it also includes Newcastle.

The North has 15 million people and its £300 billion a year economy is worth more than those of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland combined.

So as John McDonnell announced earlier this month in Liverpool, we will commit to building Crossrail for the North – an improved rail route to link the Atlantic with the North Sea.

It's pointless claiming to take back control of powers and resources from Brussels if they're only going to be hoarded in Downing Street.

Labour has a great history of devolving power. To Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and then to London where, since we last met we have a Labour mayor again, well done Sadiq.

Labour is working together to ensure that when we – together – get back into power, we devolve the powers and resources so that no one and no community is left behind.

That's the principle that is driving our industrial strategy review being led by Rebecca Long-Bailey and Chi Onwurah.

It's the driving principle behind the fiscal devolution that Teresa Pearce and Jim McMahon are looking at. And thanks Jim for all you've done since coming into parliament.

We will rebuild and transform Britain so that we generate good jobs and prosperity in every community.

That is the difference between the Tories and us.

They have plunged local services into a state of emergency because their priority is tax breaks for the richest.

We will ensure everyone pays their fair share so that no one and no community is left behind.

So let's get back out on the doorsteps and get Labour elected so that we can push back unfairness and inequality in every form as together, we rebuild and transform our country.

Thank you for all you do. Thank you for the hope, innovation and leadership you bring to your communities."

ENDS

[Weekly Road Report – West End Ward](#)



DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL – WEEKLY ROAD REPORT

REPORT FOR WEST END WARD FOR SATURDAY 18 AND SUNDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2017

Blackness Road (at Wilkie's Lane) – temporary traffic lights on Sunday 19 February for mobile platform operations.

Nethergate (West Marketgait to South Tay Street) – closed on Sunday 19 February for water supply connection works.

REPORT FOR WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2017

Perth Road (at Arnhall Drive) – temporary traffic lights for 3 weeks for gas main renewal.

Blackness Road (at Glenagnes Road) – temporary traffic lights for 2 weeks for Scottish Water mains renewal.

Shaftesbury Road (at Seymour Street) – closed on Tuesday 21 February for 3 days for Scottish Water repair work.

Hunter Street – temporary traffic lights from Tuesday 21 February for one week for Scottish Water repair.

Forthcoming Roadworks

Nethergate (West Marketgait to South Tay Street) – closed for 3 weeks from Monday 27 February for carriageway resurfacing works.

[**Greens denounce Ministers' pandering to industry lobbyists on plastic pollution**](#)



Green Party

18 February 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: 'These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress.'

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, has issued a stinging criticism of government Ministers as documents reveal the [influence of plastics industry lobbying](#) on the decision to cut UK recycling targets. The revelations come as the latest 'Great Winter Nurdle Hunt' uncovers [widespread plastic pollution](#) on Britain's beaches.

The UK government quietly reduced recycling targets for plastic waste last year, after dozens of lobby groups and plastic producers pushed for lower rates, according to documents obtained by Energydesk.

Energydesk obtained 62 of the 63 responses to a government consultation on recycling targets.

The majority of respondents to the consultation were plastic producers or industry groups. Of those, all pushed for a reduction in the targets.

Keith, a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, said:

"Plastic pollution is choking our oceans and our beaches, but the documents obtained this week demonstrate the UK Government appears more concerned with protecting the profit margins of multinational corporations and industry lobbyists than safeguarding Britain's natural environment."

"It is extremely concerning that almost three-quarters of UK beaches are blighted by the raw materials of the plastic industry. These plastic pellets pose a significant threat to our precious wildlife and damage the health of our oceans and seas."

"These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress. Far from being a party working for the many, the Conservatives prove, once again, they are the party of powerful and privileged vested interests."

"We cannot let the Government use the EU referendum as an excuse further water down essential recycling targets. The [EU Circular Economy Package](#) sets an ambitious and common EU-wide target for recycling 75% of packaging waste by 2030. Ministers must make a firm commitment to maintaining and

implementing these ambitious targets post-Brexit.”

“Plastic pollution does not respect borders nor national sovereignty. For the sake of the health of our oceans and our beaches, to protect our precious environment and our beloved wildlife, Theresa May must also commit to maintaining a close relationship with our European neighbours to combat the problem.”

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[How the world is changing](#)

The advent of Mr Trump on the world diplomatic scene is making some big changes.

Mr Trump has in many ways a very conventional US view of the world . He sees his main allies as the UK in Europe, Japan in the Far East, and Israel in the Middle East. He tells Israel he wants them to reach a settlement with the Palestinians, but he no longer insists on what that settlement might look like. He warns China on trade, and is friendly towards Taiwan. He condemns the harsh words and warlike gestures of North Korea. He is keen to tackle the persistent large trade surpluses run by China and Germany, which he sees as disrupting the world economy and fair commerce. He wants a world of bilateral relations between nations, rather than complex diplomacy between jostling regional power blocs. The US has traditionally been suspicious of international bodies taking too much power, and has often found itself in disagreement with the liberal consensus that tends to dominate in those institutions.

The biggest change he is proposing in US foreign policy is the reappraisal of the strength and helpfulness of the EU. Where Mr Obama saw the EU as a benign force, and looked to Mrs Merkel to be his best ally in return for his support for the supranational body, Mr Trump is concerned. He sees the dangers of an inadequately resourced European defence activity that weakens NATO further but still expects US military capacity to be the guarantor of the peace. He is concerned about the low level of the Euro allowing Germany to build a colossal export surplus. He sees how the current level of EU integration is creating a force against it in rising independence movements around the continent. He is doubtless not impressed that the IMF has run up large bills lending to the weaker member states of the Eurozone, when the zone overall is rich enough to be able to handle its own financing.

Woman detained for spreading bird flu rumors

A woman in central China's Hubei Province was detained for spreading rumors of a deadly bird flu outbreak, police said Saturday.

A post went viral on China's biggest social network, WeChat, Thursday saying an outbreak of H7N9 human infection had attacked eight medical workers and some family members after a villager in the suburbs of Xiantao City came down with the epidemic.

The post caused widespread panic and police launched an investigation, only to find it was sheer fabrication.

A woman surnamed Chen surrendered herself to police Thursday night, saying she had fabricated the rumor and spread it on WeChat.

She was put in detention for five days starting Friday.

China has stepped up prevention of human H7N9 avian flu which has led to 87 deaths at least nationwide since January. In addition, 269 H7N9 human infections have been reported in China this year.

The latest case was reported in southwest China's Guizhou Province on Friday. The patient, 45, was from Danzhai County in the Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture of Qiandongnan.

All close contacts were under clinical observation and no signs of infection had been detected so far, the provincial health and family planning commission said Saturday.