

## [The underinvestment in infrastructure spending in the north is totally unacceptable – Andy McDonald](#)

**Andy**

**McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Transport**, commenting on an IPPR report which shows underinvestment in transport in the north, said:

"The underinvestment in infrastructure spending in the north is totally unacceptable. We need to ensure economic growth is spread beyond just London and the South East. Having a balanced economy is good for the UK as a whole but the Government seem determined to invest in London at the expense of the rest of country.

"It's short-term thinking that means our regions are starved of investment when they have so much potential for growth, and it shines a light on the Government's self-defeating economic strategy which says that meeting the transport needs of London should come at the expense of our regions.

"Labour would make sure that the transport needs of the South-East are met whilst rebalancing the economy and making the necessary investment in transport infrastructure right across the UK, including prioritising a CrossRail for the North to improve connectivity between our Northern cities."

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## [Long-Bailey writes to Greg Clark to demand guarantee of jobs for Vauxhall workforce](#)

**Shadow**

**Business Secretary, Rebecca Long-Bailey**, writes to Greg Clark about potential sale of Vauxhall to Peugeot-PSA

The

Shadow Secretary for BEIS has today written to Greg Clark, Secretary of State

for BEIS, urging him to guarantee that jobs and terms and conditions of the Vauxhall workforce will be protected in the event of the company's sale to Peugeot-PSA.

Rebecca

Long-Bailey has also requested an Urgent Question on the matter in the House of Commons, which will be taken at 3.30 today.

**On the threat the proposed takeover poses to the UK workforce, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:**

"These reports are deeply worrying to the 4,500 workers employed at Vauxhall's Luton and Ellesmere Port plants, and to the tens of thousands of employees in its retail, support and supply chain operations. PSA's history of axing jobs in the name of rationalisation are also concerning. Britain's automotive industry has become a world-leader by developing its skilled and highly-committed workforce and becoming more productive, not by ruthlessly driving down costs."

**On the implications of the proposal for the Government's industrial strategy, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:**

"a piecemeal, ad hoc approach will see our automotive sector lurch from crisis to crisis as the uncertainties created by Brexit begin to take their toll. Waiting for car makers to go to the brink before offering them support is the very antithesis of an industrial strategy."

**On the need to give workers in the UK the same protections given to European counterparts, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:**

"failure to provide equivalent Government support to Opel's UK sites as that seen in France and Germany, and to ensure full parity of treatment between Opel's UK and French workers would be a betrayal of the UK workforce."

**Ends**

**Editors' notes**

– It has recently emerged that General Motors is discussing the sale of Opel,

which  
includes Vauxhall, to PSA Group.

– 4,500  
workers are employed at Vauxhall's Luton and Ellesmere port plants, along  
with  
tens of thousands more who are employed in the retail, support and supply  
chain  
operations.

– These  
jobs are under threat from the proposed sale, should Vauxhall cut back  
production, a particular concern given the PSA Group has a reputation for  
cutting jobs to rationalise production.

– The  
French Government owns a 14% stake in PSA and the German government is  
providing financial support to its Opel sites.

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The  
full text of the letter is as follows:

Dear  
Rt Hon Greg Clark MP,

I  
am writing to request an urgent meeting to discuss reports that General  
Motors  
may be about to sell its European business, Opel, to PSA, the owner of  
Peugeot  
and Citroen brands.

These  
reports are deeply worrying to the 4,500 workers employed at Vauxhall's Luton  
and Ellesmere Port plants, and to the tens of thousands of employees in its  
retail, support and supply chain operations. PSA's history of axing jobs in  
the  
name of rationalisation are also concerning. Britain's automotive industry  
has  
become a world-leader by developing its skilled and highly-committed  
workforce  
and becoming more productive, not by ruthlessly driving down costs.

I  
understand that you met with PSA executives on 16th February and that the  
Prime  
Minister is due to meet PSA CEO Carlos Taveres shortly. I am keen to hear in  
detail what assurances they were able to give you about their plans for  
Vauxhall, and what you and your Government are doing to ensure that PSA do  
not  
turn their backs on Opel's UK workforce.

Like

you, I welcomed Nissan's decision late last year to continue to invest in the UK, but argued at the time that all car manufacturers should be given the same

assurances. Recent developments have underlined this point. It was reported over the weekend that PSA have now been given the same guarantees, but I remain

concerned that a piecemeal, ad hoc approach will see our automotive sector lurch from crisis to crisis as the uncertainties created by Brexit begin to take their toll. Waiting for car makers to go to the brink before offering them

support is the very antithesis of an industrial strategy.

This

is particularly so given that the French Government owns a 14% stake in PSA. In

light of predictions by analysts and industry experts that French workers will

be left unscathed by any buy-out, and that job losses will fall elsewhere, including in the UK, it is hard not to worry that the British Government's hands-off approach is letting workers down. Even the German Government is providing financial support to its Opel sites, and workers in Germany are much

harder to sack than those in the UK. Under such circumstances, failure to provide equivalent Government support to Opel's UK sites as that seen in France

and Germany, and to ensure full parity of treatment between Opel's UK and French workers would be a betrayal of the UK workforce.

In

the longer run, it is clear that the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper launched last month has done little to reassure manufacturers weighing up

whether or not to stay in the UK after we leave the European Union. Urgent action is needed to encourage the reshoring of manufacturing supply chains and

secure single market access for key exporting industries. Without this, there is a real danger that many of our finest manufacturers will fall victim to new

import and export tariffs.

The

next few days will be critical in determining the future of Vauxhall in the UK.

I would therefore be most grateful if you would agree to meet me as a matter of

urgency to discuss what action you are taking to protect the jobs and terms and

conditions of Opel's UK workforce. It may also be welcome to involve those MP's

representing areas directly affected by this issue in our discussions for

example those members representing Luton and Ellesmere Port.

Yours  
sincerely,

Rebecca  
Long-Bailey

Shadow  
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

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## [Prison officers pay deal “is policy making on the hoof and shows the Tories have no plan”](#)

**Richard**

**Burgon MP, Labour’s Shadow Justice Secretary**, commenting on the pay deal for prisons officers in London and the South East, said:

“It is no surprise this announcement comes the same week as figures showing prison officers are still leaving faster than they can be recruited.

“It is policy making on the hoof and shows the Tories have no plan.

“Prison officers in the rest of the country will wonder why they don’t deserve the same increase. Prison understaffing is a national issue that needs a national response.”

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## [Consultation for robust domestic violence legislation is much needed and long overdue – Champion](#)

Sarah Champion MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, responding to the announcement of new moves to tackle domestic violence, said:

"We are pleased the Government are finally starting the consultation for robust domestic violence legislation. This is much needed and long overdue.

"Key to the success of this announcement is making sure resources are in place for policing, supporting victims & for preventing domestic violence.

"Domestic violence refuges aren't centrally funded by Government. This has led to inconsistent over quality & local provision. Everyone deserves a place of safety if they are forced to flee their home and sadly this can't currently be guaranteed."

ENDS

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## [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.

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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?

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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.

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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.

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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