



# Labour-led councils with elections in May 2016: statistical profiles

Tabulated together in the following pages are brief statistical profiles of the Labour-led English councils that are holding elections in 2016, broken down into regions.

Information is given on the population covered by each council; the gross budget – the total cost of the councils' services – taken from the 2014-15 statement of accounts (unless stated); the amount each council holds in 'unallocated' General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves; the level of earmarked but largely useable reserves for the two accounts<sup>1</sup>; and lastly the capital receipts reserves held. Figures for major repairs reserves and unapplied capital grants, also part of a council's 'useable reserves', have not been collated on this occasion.

In total there are 58 Labour-led councils with elections in 2016. These councils administer a range of services – from housing, education, adult and children's social services and libraries, to youth provision, leisure, public health, local welfare assistance, planning and regeneration – covering a population of 13.8 million. They control combined budgets of £32.7 billion, and hold around £4.5 billion in GF reserves, and £1.36bn in HRA reserves and capital receipts reserves (as qualified above).

## Substantial resources

These figures give a glimpse of the substantial resources of the 'local state' under the control of the Labour Party. There are in fact another 50 or so councils under Labour control, including the London boroughs, which do not have elections next year and which are not included in these profiles.

But the 58 listed councils alone, for example, could legally undertake sufficient 'prudential borrowing' ('unsupported' borrowing in that it is not matched by government grants) to build 100,000 council homes in the next financial year – 'Peoples QE' in action, if the political will was there.

A pooling of the General Fund reserves, combined with measures to 'capitalise' eligible GF expenditure and again borrow prudentially to support

that, could generate the resources to ensure that no Labour council would need to make cuts in order to agree a legally-compliant budget for 2016-17. Although of course, this would only be as a prelude to a national confrontation with central government for funding to sustain this into the following year.

The figures confirm, in other words, the central theme of TUSC's local elections policy platform (see <http://www.tusc.org.uk/policy>), that councils – and councillors – have a choice. A councillors' revolt could stop the Tory cuts.

There will be around 1,190 councillors elected in these councils next May, all in single-seat wards except in Rotherham and Warrington.

There are 135 councillors in these councils who declared their support for Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign, although undoubtedly there will be others who could now be persuaded to shift their position after his victory and take a stand against austerity.

Clive Heemsker,  
TUSC National Election Agent  
25th November 2015

**Note:**

1. Can a council legally use Earmarked Reserves? Some will be restricted, for example, school reserves but, as officers' guidance typically states, most Earmarked Reserves "may also be used on a short-term temporary basis for other purposes provided the funding is replaced in future years" [Source: *Liverpool council budget document, 2013-17 Medium Term Financial Strategy, Section D. Working Balances and Earmarked Reserves, paragraph 14.1, 6 March 2013*]





# Labour-led councils with elections in May 2016: statistical profiles

## Eastern

Labour-led councils with elections: 5    Number of wards: 70

### Cambridge

Labour-controlled – 14 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 126,000  
Gross council budget: £105m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £11.5m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £25.8m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £14.8m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £4.2m  
Capital receipts reserves: £22.1m

### Harlow

Labour-controlled – 12 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 85,000  
Gross council budget (2013-14): £133m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £4.7m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £9.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £4.1m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £3.8m  
Capital receipts reserves: £2.6m

### Ipswich

Labour-controlled – 18 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 133,000  
Gross council budget: £117m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £12.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £5.7m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £7.1m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £8.3m  
Capital receipts reserves: £15.5m

### Norwich

Labour-controlled – 13 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 136,000  
Gross council budget: £164m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £9.6m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £4.1m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £20.1m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £24.8m

### Stevenage

Labour-controlled – 13 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 87,000  
Gross council budget: £111m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £6.1m

Earmarked GF reserves: £2.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £13.7m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £12.4m  
Capital receipts reserves: £13.1m

## **East Midlands**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 3    Number of wards: 44**

### **Bassetlaw**

Labour-controlled – 16 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 112,000  
Gross council budget: £92m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £1.3m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £2.6m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £1.5m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £2.1m

### **Derby**

Labour-controlled – 17 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 248,000  
Gross council budget: £684m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £14.6m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £86.7m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £33.7m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0.8m  
Capital receipts reserves: £4.5m

### **Lincoln**

Labour-controlled – 11 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 97,000  
Gross council budget: £81m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £2.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £9.9m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £1m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £4.4m

## **Northern**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 7    Number of wards: 141**

### **Carlisle**

Labour-controlled – 18 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 100,000  
Gross council budget: £73m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £4.7m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £3.1m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £3.6m

### **Gateshead**

Labour-controlled – 22 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 200,000  
Gross council budget: £574m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £23.4m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £35.3m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £19.8m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £7.4m

### **Hartlepool**

Labour-controlled – 12 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 90,000  
Gross council budget: £261m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £5.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £11.3m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £1m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £43.9m  
Capital receipts reserves: £1m

### **Newcastle-upon-Tyne**

Labour-controlled – 26 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 259,000  
Gross council budget: £855m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £10.1m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £103.7m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £11.5m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £3.9m  
Capital receipts reserves: £10.5m

### **North Tyneside**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 201,000  
Gross council budget: £496m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £14.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £53.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £3.7m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £7.4m

### **South Tyneside**

Labour-controlled – 18 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 148,000  
Gross council budget: £521m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £1.7m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £32m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £15.9m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £1.9m

### **Sunderland**

Labour-controlled – 25 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 275,000  
Gross council budget: £662m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £17.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £159.1m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £8m

## **North West**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 22    Number of wards: 478**

### **Blackburn-with-Darwen**

Labour-controlled – 23 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 146,000  
Gross council budget: £438m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £6.6m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £43.5m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £0

**Bolton**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 139,000  
Gross council budget: £697m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £10.6m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £182.6m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £6.1m

**Burnley**

Labour-controlled – 16 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 87,000  
Gross council budget: £73m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £1.4m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £7.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £3.7m

**Bury**

Labour-controlled – 17 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 182,000  
Gross council budget: £552m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £13.5m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £43.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £7.1m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £3.6m

**Chorley**

Labour-controlled – 17 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 112,000  
Gross council budget: £64m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £2.3m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £5.8m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £0.5m

**Halton**

Labour-controlled – 18 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 126,000  
Gross council budget: £345m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £8.8m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £43.5m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £3.3m

**Hyndburn**

Labour-controlled – 11 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 80,000  
Gross council budget: £54m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £2.5m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £9.5m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £3.7m

**Knowsley**

Labour-controlled – 22 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 146,000  
Gross council budget: £554m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £4.9m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £61.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £0

### **Liverpool**

Labour-controlled – 30 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 466,000  
Gross council budget: £1,345m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £24.7m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £168.5m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £0

### **Manchester**

Labour-controlled – 32 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 514,000  
Gross council budget: £1,483m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £27.1m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £232m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £52m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £34.6m  
Capital receipts reserves: £37.9m

### **Oldham**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 228,000  
Gross council budget: £573m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £18.1m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £98.6m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £16.3m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £4.1m

### **Preston**

Labour-controlled – 19 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 142,000  
Gross council budget: £89m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £6.7m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £14.6m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £4.9m

### **Rochdale**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 212,000  
Gross council budget: £576m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £12.4m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £137.1m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £9.6m

### **Rossendale**

Labour-controlled – 12 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 65,000  
Gross council budget: £37m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £1



Earmarked GF reserves: £8.2m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £1.2m

### **St Helens**

Labour-controlled – 16 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 177,000  
Gross council budget: £408m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £24.3  
Earmarked GF reserves: £48.8m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £30.7m

### **Salford**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 210,000  
Gross council budget: £931m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £13.5m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £53.1m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £3.9m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £9.5m  
Capital receipts reserves: £4.4m

### **Sefton**

Labour-controlled – 23 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 273,000  
Gross council budget: £648m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £25.8m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £45.3m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £7.1m

### **Tameside**

Labour-controlled – 19 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 220,000  
Gross council budget: £517m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £17.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £175m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £0

### **Warrington**

Labour-controlled – 57 seats all-up for election (moving to four-yearly cycle)  
Population: 206,000  
Gross council budget: £432m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £1.9m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £43.2m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £3.2m

### **West Lancashire**

Labour-controlled – 19 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 112,000  
Gross council budget: £78m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £0.9m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £12.6m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0.7m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0.3m

Capital receipts reserves: £3.2m

### **Wigan**

Labour-controlled – 25 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 320,000

Gross council budget: £792m

Unallocated GF reserves: £15.3m

Earmarked GF reserves: £104.4m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £16.7m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0

Capital receipts reserves: £1.9m

### **Wirral**

Labour-controlled – 22 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 320,000

Gross council budget: £721m

Unallocated GF reserves: £18.8m

Earmarked GF reserves: £87.3m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £0

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0

Capital receipts reserves: £8.2m

## **South East**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 1    Number of wards: 16**

### **Hastings**

Labour- controlled – 16 seats (one-half) up for election

Population: 90,000

Gross council budget: £88m

Unallocated GF reserves: £0.5m

Earmarked GF reserves: £19.6m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £0

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0

Capital receipts reserves: £0.7m

## **Southern**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 4    Number of wards: 68**

### **Oxford**

Labour-controlled – 24 seats (one-half) up for election

Population: 157,000

Gross council budget: £174m

Unallocated GF reserves: £3.6m

Earmarked GF reserves: £32.7m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £4m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £5.8m

Capital receipts reserves: £11.3m

### **Reading**

Labour-controlled – 15 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 155,000

Gross council budget: £413m

Unallocated GF reserves: £8.8m

Earmarked GF reserves: £28.4m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £18.3m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £9m

Capital receipts reserves: £9.7m

### **Slough**

Labour-controlled – 13 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 145,000

Gross council budget: £346m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £8.1m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £18.8m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £24.4m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £14.1m

### **Southampton**

Labour-controlled – 16 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 237,000  
Gross council budget: £634m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £19.9m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £62.8m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £2m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £9.1m  
Capital receipts reserves: £9.1m

## **South West**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 1    Number of wards: 13**

### **Exeter**

Labour-controlled – 13 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 124,000  
Gross council budget: £96m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £3.9m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £5.9m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £7.8m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £1.2m

## **West Midlands**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 7    Number of wards: 156**

### **Birmingham**

Labour-controlled – 40 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 1,123,000  
Gross council budget: £3,008m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £137.8m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £347.5m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £4.5m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £16.3m

### **Cannock Chase**

Labour-controlled – 13 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 98,000  
Gross council budget: £67m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £1.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £11.2m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £3.6m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £3.9m  
Capital receipts reserves: £4m

### **Coventry**

Labour-controlled – 18 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 337,000  
Gross council budget: £820m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £5.1m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £79m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0

Capital receipts reserves: £0

### **Dudley**

Labour-controlled – 24 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 313,000

Gross council budget: £720m

Unallocated GF reserves: £25m

Earmarked GF reserves: £55.9m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £0.1m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0.9m

Capital receipts reserves: £8.2m

### **Nuneaton & Bedworth**

Labour-controlled – 17 seats (one-half) up for election

Population: 126,000

Gross council budget: £86m

Unallocated GF reserves: £1.5m

Earmarked GF reserves: £18.9m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £4.1m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0

Capital receipts reserves: £1.2m

### **Sandwell**

Labour-controlled – 24 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 316,000

Gross council budget: £863m

Unallocated GF reserves: £67.9m

Earmarked GF reserves: £18.5m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £34.6m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £2.9m

Capital receipts reserves: £4.4m

### **Wolverhampton**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 252,000

Gross council budget: £763m

Unallocated GF reserves: £10m

Earmarked GF reserves: £66.4m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £5m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0

Capital receipts reserves: £15.3m

## **Yorkshire**

**Labour-led councils with elections: 7    Number of wards: 174**

### **Barnsley**

Labour-controlled – 21 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 237,000

Gross council budget: £582m

Unallocated GF reserves: £10m

Earmarked GF reserves: £82.9m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £1m

Earmarked HRA reserves: £35.7m

Capital receipts reserves: £25.5m

### **Bradford**

Labour-controlled – 30 seats (one-third) up for election

Population: 528,000

Gross council budget: £1,304m

Unallocated GF reserves: £49.1m

Earmarked GF reserves: £134.9m

Unallocated HRA reserves: £0

Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £1.7m

### **Hull**

Labour-controlled – 20 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 256,000  
Gross council budget: £763m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £7.9m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £61.8m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £3m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £35.6m  
Capital receipts reserves: £9.5m

### **Kirklees**

Labour-controlled – 24 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 431,000  
Gross council budget: £988m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £38m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £97.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £35.7m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £7.7m

### **Leeds**

Labour-controlled – 33 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 766,000  
Gross council budget: £1,951m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £22.3m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £85.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £54.3m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £228.1m

### **Rotherham**

Labour-controlled – All-up elections for all 60 seats, in 20 wards  
Population: 260,000  
Gross council budget: £736m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £17.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £81.2m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £20.7m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £23.7m

### **Sheffield**

Labour-controlled – 28 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 640,000  
Gross council budget: £1,274m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £11.2m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £95.9m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £12.8m  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £2.6m  
Capital receipts reserves: £36.9m

### **Wakefield**

Labour-controlled – 21 seats (one-third) up for election  
Population: 331,000  
Gross council budget: £665m  
Unallocated GF reserves: £10m  
Earmarked GF reserves: £111.4m  
Unallocated HRA reserves: £0  
Earmarked HRA reserves: £0  
Capital receipts reserves: £0