



## TUSC survey replies – final report

# Building on Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity message

Last autumn the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition national steering committee launched a survey to find out how far local Labour councillors are preparing to back Jeremy Corbyn's anti-cuts policies in the 2018-19 council budget-setting process and, in those councils going to the polls this year, in the May 2018 local elections.

The survey questions were:

### **Question 1: Labour's budget proposals**

What are the main outlines of the council Labour Group's proposals for the 2018-19 budget? Specifically we would like to know if there are cuts to jobs and services being suggested and what they are.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

What are the details of any public consultation exercise the council is planning on its proposals? Have the local authority trade unions tabled discussions on the 2018-19 budget?

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

If the council has elections in 2018 – check out the TUSC directory of elections at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/401.pdf> – when will the local Labour Party's 2018 council election manifesto be agreed? This is the responsibility of the Labour Group in consultation with the local party's Local Campaign Forum – what is the political balance of this body and how has it changed since Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader?

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

How far advanced are Labour's local candidate selections? Where candidates have been selected have right-wing Blairites been replaced by publically identified Jeremy Corbyn supporters?

A preliminary report was produced in November. Since then there has been much media coverage of an alleged 'lurch to the left' in Labour council selection meetings. This was typified by a *Times* front-page splash in December claiming that "Corbyn supporters are ousting local councillors" in an "orchestrated purge" across Britain.

This particular red scare story was based on the results of re-selection meetings in the London borough of Haringey where supporters of a notorious social cleansing ‘redevelopment’ scheme have been replaced as candidates for next year’s council elections. The “across Britain” evidence cited by *The Times*, however, was very slim – in the one case mentioned in Leeds, for example, involving the Labour group leader, TUSC supporters in that ward reported that she was re-affirmed as a candidate the following day. This was something that didn’t make *The Times*’ columns.

On the other hand even in the establishment media a different picture sometimes emerges. In December *The Guardian*’s Blairite columnist Martin Kettle wrote that “what is most striking about Labour at the end of 2017 is that, so far, there is little evidence of a systematic attempt to purge the centrists and social democrats” (read Blairites), including for local government candidate selections for May’s council elections. So what are the facts?

That was the purpose of the TUSC survey. What is going on 28 months after Jeremy Corbyn’s 2015 Labour leadership victory, and as Labour councils prepare to set what will be their third budget since then?

### **What’s going on?**

Replies have been received from 34 Labour-controlled councils plus the Liberal Democrat-held Watford, which has attracted attention due a hotly-contested parliamentary candidate selection. They have been grouped together by regions.

With 124 Labour-led councils in Britain, this survey cannot claim to show the full picture. But it does show some things that are certain.

Firstly, and unfortunately, Labour-controlled councils are continuing to make drastic cuts to local services, jobs and conditions even under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership of the national party – over half a billion pounds this year in the councils where detailed information has been provided, adding to the misery of council service users and workers alike.

Interestingly there are some examples now of councils desperately using reserves to keep statutory services going. But, as the Leeds report says for example, these are cases of councils “slowly frittering away their reserves piecemeal”, rather than using reserves and borrowing powers to stop cuts now and take on the government for more resources in a mass campaign, as called for by TUSC (see the briefing, *Preparing a No Cuts People’s Budget*, at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/355.pdf>, and last year’s TUSC report, *How Much Reserves Have They Got?*, available online at <http://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/402.pdf>).

And that’s because of the other trend identified in the survey – the Labour right-wingers, who oppose Jeremy Corbyn’s anti-austerity ideas, are still firmly in control of council Labour Groups and have by and large been re-selected to stand again as candidates in May.

*The Times* is wrong and, on this occasion, the Blairite *Guardian* journalist is more accurate. The Blairites have not been unseated and are still in place, poised to take positions of public authority for the next four years which they will use to do everything they can to undermine Jeremy Corbyn and socialist policies. Whether the battle against them must move to the ballot box in May is the question that is now posed.

**Clive Heemskerk**  
TUSC National Election Agent  
24th January 2018

# East Midlands

## Name of council: Derby

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

In the last five years the Council has cut £116 million from its budget and is to make further cuts of £45 million by 2019; this will further damage Derby's social care services, affecting both children and adults, and will mean major cuts in programmes for transport, housing, libraries and leisure services.

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

There was an online consultation started in early November 2017 with responses required by December 13th 2017. Not sure if the trade unions have tabled any discussions.

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

### Question 4: Labour candidate selection

There are 51 councillors in Derby of which a third are up for re-election this May. The Labour council leader has declared his personal support for Corbyn, but there is no detail yet available on the content of the manifesto for this year's elections or on the results of the candidate selection process.

## Name of council: Leicester

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

The Labour Council undertakes a series of rolling reviews of various services and has been proposing cuts in all areas, most recently to welfare services, youth services (a proposed halving of the budget) and homelessness services (an unspecified reduction).

The *Leicester Mercury* (December 14, 2017) reported: "The council says it has identified £10 million of cuts it intends to make, but still needs to find a further £20 million, or even £26 million in the worst case scenario. It has described its own budget strategy as 'high risk'."

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

To date there are no details of any public consultation exercise on the proposed budget proposals. UNISON is in constant discussion with the council and are likely to press the case for a commitment for the council to pursue the 'no cuts' budget proposal that the union submitted last year.

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

### Question 4: Labour candidate selection

Leicester City has no elections this year. But one major development is that a small number of Labour councillors are now openly challenging some aspects of the budget cuts and spending priorities that have been set by the Labour Group and it seems likely that they will be standing a candidate against the incumbent Blairite city mayor in an ongoing ballot selection process (with results to be confirmed in March 2018 for the mayoral election in 2019). In December the Local Campaign Forum agreed a motion calling for the youth service cuts to be reversed.

## Name of council: Nottingham

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

Around £19.5m cuts have been initially identified with a further £5.9m to be found, totalling nearly £26m. Up to 200 jobs will go – there has been a vacancy freeze so a lot will be vacant posts. But these include cuts in frontline service posts in Children's and Adults Social Care, and Early Help services.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

Public consultation meetings have taken place, the last one on 22 January. But they are not seen as relevant and are very poorly attended.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

There are no elections in Nottingham in 2018.

## **Eastern**

### **Name of council: Watford**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

Watford is currently a Lib Dem-led council and there are no details yet of the Labour Group's proposals for the 2018-19 budget-setting meeting.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No information on this at the moment but we should hear more in the coming weeks.

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

At the moment there are around three pro-Corbyn candidates that have been selected for the borough council slate, but this may increase over the next few weeks. The mayoral elections are also due next May and Labour's selected candidate is ostensibly pro-Corbyn.

Also, there have been interesting developments between the local Constituency Labour Party (CLP) officers and the National Executive Committee (NEC) regarding the selection process for the parliamentary candidate in a Labour target seat. The original decision by the CLP officers to exclude the Unite-backed candidate Mike Hedges from the shortlist was overturned by the NEC just before Christmas.

## **London**

### **Name of council: Barking & Dagenham**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

Cuts of £72 million by 2020, a 50% cut between 2015 and 2020. The 2018-19 budget will "implement the transformational savings of £11.344m" and "additional savings of £9.7m". The council cabinet has approved it. Barnet council officer Chris Naylor was appointed as Barking & Dagenham's new chief executive in 2014 and has applied his scorched earth policy of privatisation (and upped his salary from £158,000 to £165,000), beginning with an all-out attack on the bin workers.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

A public consultation took place and is now closed. The Barking, Dagenham & Havering Trades Council, which represents the local council unions and a few other unions, opposes cuts.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No manifesto as yet. No notice when it will be issued. The Barking and Dagenham Labour Party website has not been updated since 2014. Margaret Hodge MP, who initiated the vote of no confidence in Jeremy Corbyn in 2016, represents Barking and has a strong hold on the council.

Barking Labour Party has no noticeable presence of a Momentum organisation and has not been affected by any influx of new members.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

No ward-based selection meetings have taken place to our knowledge as the ward structure does not function. The ward where we would like to stand has two cabinet members who have just approved the massive cuts mentioned above. Our councillors have not identified as Corbynistas.

### **Name of council: Camden**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No details yet

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

Every single sitting councillor who wanted to stand again has been selected to do so, in a process that started in September. The Local Campaign Forum is firmly controlled by the right-wing, for example excluding a known Corbyn-supporter with 40 years party membership from the candidates' panel.

The recent annual meeting of the Holborn & St Pancras constituency Labour Party within the borough saw the right-wing win the officers' positions by 60 votes to 48.

As the local paper, the Camden New Journal put it recently, "a sound body of trusted candidates who tend to be, at least, suspicious of Corbyn politics" have been selected and "next year the new Labour council will probably remain safely with the old guard".

### **Name of council: Ealing**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The council made 'first strand' cuts of £4.5m in November and in January agreed a further £6m package for 2018/19. It includes 'savings' from fostering and adoption services, waste disposal, and public contact staff (to move to a 'digital contact council'). As well as cuts, the council is also increasing fees and charges for council services.

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

No details.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

No details.

### **Name of council: Hackney**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The budget cut for next year is approximately £13 million, with big job cuts likely to be avoided in favour of further 'salami slicing'.

The council has just done a consultation however to increase the amount of Council Tax paid by benefit claimants to 20% of the total charge. This has caused a certain furore in the local Labour Party membership with Hackney South Constituency Labour Party voting by 55 to five against the proposal. However the directly-elected Labour Mayor still seems to be in favour even before any published analysis of the consultation has taken place.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

The council unions have not tabled formal discussions on the budget although the Mayor has met with the branch secretaries of the respective unions on other issues. The door should still be open for this to happen.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

They have recently held a consultation meeting open to all Labour Party members in the borough and approximately 120 attended over two days, but with every indication being that the Labour Group will still carry on with its right-wing policies and ignore the members' input. The manifesto might not be published until the New Year.

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

All the selections as far as we know were completed by the end of September. Of the current 50 councillors nine have stood down for a variety of reasons. We are not sure of the political complexion of all the new candidates but the balance is more likely to be on the right rather than pro-Corbyn, which would not change the current overall balance of the Labour Group to the right.

## **Name of council: Haringey**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No details yet

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

The dominating issue within the Labour Party is the proposal to redevelop the Tottenham area of the borough through the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) 'partnership' with a private development corporation, Lendlease, without the say of the tenants, residents and small businesses affected.

Significantly, after Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party conference speech pledge to insist on compulsory ballots before such developments can proceed, it was the lead councillor for regeneration in Haringey who was the first Labour councillor to publically reject the policy. Possibly more than anywhere else in Britain the Blairite councillors were under real threat with a majority of pro-HDV councillors deselected, although the council leader Claire Kober was reselected to stand.

Haringey is likely to be the first 'Corbyn council', although some of the sitting councillors who oppose HDV who were reselected to stand have a record of voting for cuts.

## **Name of council: Lambeth**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

No details.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

The right used their control of the Lambeth Local Campaigns Forum (LCF) to block anyone from the left even being considered by wards as a candidate. One prospective candidate, for example, was blocked for backing a petition from Lambeth UNISON in support of the occupation of a local library. Consequently, while some wards may well have selected Jeremy Corbyn supporters if they had been given the chance, the left never got that far in the process.

## **Name of council: Lewisham**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No details yet

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

There is no overall picture of the results of the ward councillors' selections still but last year the borough party membership voted to select a new candidate for the directly-elected Mayor, to replace the right-wing incumbent Sir Steve Bullock, who is retiring.

The winner was the Steve Bullock-supported councillor Damien Egan, who defeated the Corbyn supporter Paul Bell (a councillor in the former Socialist Party-held ward of Telegraph Hill). Egan does not appear on the list of councillors who backed Owen Smith's leadership campaign in the 2016 coup – presumably because, having supported the open Blairite candidate Liz Kendall in the 2015 leadership election, Owen Smith was too left wing!

What is clear is that he will not provide an alternative to the austerity policies that have been pursued in a Labour-dominated council with just one (Green Party) opposition councillor.

## **Name of council: Newham**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

Between 2010 and 2015 the council cut spending by £106m. The 2016/2017 budget included £50m in cuts – including £1.8m from bin-workers' pay – but now, in an election year, while the council's Medium Term Budget Strategy to 2019/20 still proposes 'savings' of £18.8m, it will also use reserves as "one-off resources". In the past councillors have denounced the idea of using reserves to stop the cuts, for example in the bin workers' dispute.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

For the last few years there has been a consultation online and in local libraries where people can complete the 'Budget Challenge', a survey to find out which services there is the least opposition to being cut.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

There isn't yet a public manifesto for 2018. In the last elections in 2014 there were still discussions on the manifesto as late as March.

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

Candidate selections are ongoing. Nine councillors supported Owen Smith in the last Labour leadership election. In relation to the ballot to be Labour's candidate for the directly-elected Mayor the freeze date for voting is March 2016, meaning that no one who has joined in the last two years can help unseat the current Mayor, Robin Wales. To be a council candidate in May 2018 you have to have been a member since before January 2016.

Academies are a huge issue in Newham right now, with a wave of strike action. Some councillors are supportive of the campaign against academies, with three visiting picket lines at a school opposing academisation.

To contrast that, however, at a recent CLP meeting, where a motion went forward to support the strike action by staff and called for schools to remain in local authority control, the councillors present voted in favour of academies.

## **Name of council: Southwark**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The council are half-way through a three-year cuts programme of £47m that started in 2016/17. For this year the share of that original cut was to be £12m but there is a further gap of £5.6 million. Speculation in Southwark News is that further cuts will take place in social care and children's care.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

No details.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

Not complete details but 23 out of 27 known Blairite councillors have been reselected and will be the candidates in their wards in May.

## **Name of council: Tower Hamlets**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

No specific proposal for 2018-19 has been released publically. However a Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-2021 was released on 18th September. It proposed £52 million of "savings" over the course of 2018 to 2020.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

The Budget Scrutiny Committee meets on 15th & 24th January 2018. There will be a further meeting on 5th February if further changes are passed at a Cabinet meeting on 30th January. The first full council meeting to consider the budget will take place on 21st February. The final council meeting on the budget will take place on 1st March.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No election manifesto is available publically yet. A series of consultations with branch meetings took place in September and October.

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

The current directly-elected Mayor John Biggs, a long-term Labour right-winger, was re-selected in 2017 as Labour's candidate for May's mayoral election.

From October the selection process for ward councillor candidates got underway. All the sitting councillors who wanted to stand have been re-nominated. Of the non-sitting councillors selected so far one is a leading local member of Momentum but there may be others on the left who have been selected.

## **Name of council: Waltham Forest**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The council leadership has told unions that it is "on track" with its 'Medium Term Financial Strategy', which it will see through until 2020. Currently in consultation are the closure of the Dementia Support Service and the closure of Trumpington Road Adult Care Centre. There is the fear that in schools 500 posts could go.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

Proposals on the full budget have not been opened for consultation. It was a brief item on the quarterly meeting between unions and council leaders. But while the cuts are generally opposed by the unions, as yet there have been no real moves against them.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

There are no details available of the process for producing a local 2018 manifesto.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

Most of the key selection processes took place in Autumn 2017. Labour won 44 seats to 16 for the Tories in 2016, although one Labour councillor has since left to become an independent. Some left-wingers, notably the Rev Stephen Saxby, were excluded from the panel even before selection meetings, although Momentum has claimed four successes in getting Corbynite candidates selected to stand.

The campaign against market regeneration and others against development plans which will build big tower blocks with flats to be put on the market at £350k is having an effect on the local Labour Parties. WF is a borough where the median wage in 2016 was £30,900, almost £3,000 below the London median. Two branch Labour Parties in Walthamstow have opposed the plan.

## **North West**

### **Name of council: Manchester**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The Labour group set a three-year budget in February 2017 of £30m cuts until 2020. This included:

- Increase council tax by 4.99% each year
- Cut the amount of Council Tax Support including abolishing the family premium for new applicants and limiting children's allowance to two children.
- £12m 'savings' through the integration of Health & Social care – no details have been provided but the main aim is to "re-commission" services.
- £180,000 cuts to Sure Starts and children's centres
- Cutting school crossing patrols (saving £220,000)
- Increase charges on bereavement services to "competitive rates" raising an extra £60,000 a year
- Job cuts in Revenue & Benefits totalling £448,000

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

There was an online budget consultation between December 2016 and February 2017. No concrete proposals were consulted on, it was about agreeing (or not) with where "priorities" should be. No details are available of any additional consultation for 2018-19.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

The council leader Richard Leese has circulated headline points for the 2018 manifesto, with a deadline for policy proposals to be submitted to him, as the co-ordinator of the process, by January 31st, with the manifesto to be finalised by March 2018. We don't have any information on the overall political balance of the Local Campaign Forum.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

Information on this is not yet available in most cases but we have had snippets from some wards, with most selection meetings taking place in October/November. With boundary changes in Manchester, all 96 seats are up for election in May. We know of two Corbyn supporters who have been selected so far,

### **Name of council: Salford**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

There are no details available yet on the 2018-19 budget other than there are plans for £14m cuts (as part of making £42m cuts by 2020). The 2017-18 budget aimed to make £16m of

cuts but the council has not been able to implement them all so it is likely that the 2018-19 budget will contain higher than the current £14m worth of cuts plans.

This year there has been the closure of Salford's only residential home for disabled children and cuts to regulatory services – both major issues which the main union, Unison, has been fighting and are potentially balloting for strike action over. Many other services are still “under review” as agreed in the 2017-18 budget.

**Question 2: The council's consultation process**

No details on consultations at the moment. Unison will be proposing an alternative ‘no cuts’ budget in 2018 as it did in 2017.

**Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No information on a local manifesto and when it will be agreed. We don't have any information on the political balance of the LCF.

**Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

Information is not available yet for most wards but we know of one right-wing councillor who has been de-selected and replaced by a Corbyn supporter. Selection meetings are on-going.

## **Northern**

**Name of councils:** Darlington, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland

**Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

All of the above councils have four year plans. They have all since 2010 have had their budgets slashed by about 50%. The cuts to the big high profile services have been made up front and now the councils, while still facing cuts, have strategies in place which require salami style cuts and increases in council tax and use of reserves to stand still.

Darlington has made the deepest cuts closing arts services and libraries, and generally reducing all levels of services; the authority is a skeleton with over 700 staff made redundant. In contrast Stockton which has had a traditionally high council tax and large reserves has used these to mitigate the cuts.

**Question 2: The council's consultation process**

All councils are initiating consultations with info on-line. Because the main cuts were made up front public interest in these consultations is now almost non-existent. There is great cynicism about these Labour councils from the public. The trade unions in these authorities are battered and diminished and are no longer putting up any fight.

**Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

**Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

There are no elections in 2018. All of the councils are right wing and have diligently carried out the cuts. It is rumoured that in Darlington 14 or more councillors will step down in 2019. Darlington has the best organised Corbyn supporters. However in 2017 there were two by-elections where Corbyn supporters were selected but the current party machine organised their campaigns, making sure they were indistinguishable from a usual campaign.

# Southern

## Name of council: Oxford

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

The Oxford City Council budget report has "projected £12 million further efficiencies and income growth over the next four years", in other words cuts and increased fees and service charges in Leisure, Garden Waste, Pest Control, Burial services, Parking and Garages. The Oxford Local Authority Trading Company is to start in April with efficiencies targeted.

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

There are no meetings scheduled for budget consultation.

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

No election manifesto has been produced for 2018.

### Question 4: Labour candidate selection

One-half of the council seats are up for election this year but we have no details yet on the candidates selected.

## Name of council: Reading

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

Proposing budget cuts of £17.6 million. Including adult social care, children's services and education. The council has not provided information on job cuts at this stage.

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

There are no meetings scheduled for budget consultation. No information on union consultation.

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

No election manifesto has been produced for 2018.

### Question 4: Labour candidate selection

No news on candidate selection for 2018 elections.

## Name of council: Slough

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

Slough Borough Council is proposing cuts of £5.27 million to the 2018/19 budget, including cuts to adult social care.

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

An online consultation is taking place over changes to adult social care provision.

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

No election manifesto has been produced for 2018.

### Question 4: Labour candidate selection

No information on candidate selection.

## Name of council: Southampton

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

Southampton passed a two-year budget in February 2017 which has seen cuts to bin services, introduction of two-week collections, and cuts to housing. The twenty schools that were in

deficit have now been reduced to 13 through schools being pushed to make cuts and the council refusing to allow them 'licensed deficits' to avoid doing so, despite a call from the National Education Union (NEU) and local meetings and marches on the issue.

Cuts to adult care include the Kentish Road Respite Centre, where parents have mounted a vibrant campaign that has forced the council to suspend the original closure date. The council cabinet is still proposing closure but the scrutiny panel rejected their proposal under pressure from the campaign and anti-cuts councillor Keith Morrell. Parents have accused the council of bullying and intimidation to get families to agree to new care packages.

Capita have been under instructions from the Labour council to pressure social workers into cutting care packages to the elderly and disabled, offering £200 'bonuses' for each package cut.

We are not sure yet what the council will do in February 2018. Other proposals it is currently consulting on are plans to set up a Local Authority Trading Company, which may involve further privatisation of services.

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

There are no consultation proposals from the council. The council is in discussions with the unions over cuts in union facilities time.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

The Southampton Labour Party AGM in November saw the left win a majority on its executive committee. But there is no information yet on how this may relate to the drawing up of the 2018 local manifesto.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

Candidates have been selected and, of the 16 seats up for election next year, two Corbyn supporters will stand in 'Tory' wards where there are no current Labour councillors.

## **South West**

**Name of council:** Bristol

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The directly-elected Labour mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, and his Labour-led cabinet are proposing £25m worth of cuts for 2018-19, following the £33m made in 2017-18. While the mayor organised an anti-cuts demonstration in September 2017 he has continued to implement cuts to local services, this coming year including the closure of libraries and public toilets and cuts to day centres and school crossings staff.

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

The public consultation on the cuts has been widely criticised, with 200 members of the retired members' branch of Unite signing an open letter of 'no confidence' in the mayor. The TUSC mayoral candidate in the 2016 elections has been invited in his capacity as a spokesperson for the Bristol and District Anti-Cuts Alliance to speak at a number of Labour Party meetings on the alternative to cuts and in late 2017 the Bristol Labour Party Local Campaign Forum adopted a resolution calling on the Labour council to suspend its cuts to Bristol's services "by using reserves or their borrowing powers".

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

There are no elections in Bristol in 2018.

# Wales

## Name of council: Cardiff

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

The council Labour Group is proposing £22 million worth of cuts for 2018-19, on top of £120 million made already. This year's plans are part of a total of £80 million planned for the next three years. There is no intention by the group of taking a different road to obediently making all cuts the Tories demand. It's like Jeremy Corbyn never happened.

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

Public consultation is likely to begin in a couple of months. Trade unions are involved but have been ignored in the past, with leisure services privatised/outsourced despite vehement opposition from Unison, which has previously organised strike action against sacking the entire workforce so they could be re-employed on contracts short one hour.

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

### Question 4: Labour candidate selections

There are no elections in Cardiff in 2018.

## Name of council: Swansea

### Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals

Swansea council is proposing £22 million cuts for next year, following £60m cuts over the past three years. Total projected cuts for the next three year period are £85m including a 15% cut in education, 15% cut in Child & Families Social Care, 20% cut in Adults Social Care, 50% cut in Place, 50% cut in Corporate Services. There are 48 more full-time equivalents jobs targeted next year with 'significant' job losses in future years.

The budget proposals are clear on the implications of these cuts as outlined in these paragraphs of the Council's report:

10.2 *'A probable overall cut in spend of 20%–30% (more in some areas) over the next few years cannot take place without a fundamental review of the future purpose and shape of the Council to 2018 and beyond'...*

10.3 *'Consequently, the current debate with residents and partners, as well as inside the Council, about the Core Purpose of the Council, what residents and communities can do for themselves and the Future Shape of the Council is fundamental'.*

Effectively, council services, management, accountability and democratic control of councillors will be finished!

### Question 2: The council's consultation process

Another sham consultation process is underway with a participation level of less than 1% expected as in previous years. It was only Socialist Party members who attended and questioned the Labour Cabinet Budget Meeting on its proposals in December with no attendance or participation from either local government trade unions or opposition councillors. The Labour Council Leader commented that we were the 'unofficial opposition' to their proposed cuts!

### Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto

### Question 4: Labour candidate selection

There are no council elections in Swansea this year.

# West Midlands

**Name of council:** Coventry

## **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The budget plans for 2018/19 are being presented as 'no further cuts this year'. This isn't true and is in any case based on the effects of previous years' cuts proposals rolling forward into the coming year, with the pre-budget report explaining that "by 2019/20 the total loss (of government grant) will amount to £119m per annum". The plan to run down library services will continue to roll out. And charges have begun for transport to school of severely disabled children aged 16 and over – it is £600 for some, where it was previously free.

There will be a 4.9% increase in Council Tax, 3% of that being for adult social care as allowed by the government.

## **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

The only public consultation appears to be an online survey over six weeks which just asks for your thoughts and how else you think the council could save money!

## **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

We are unaware of any 'manifesto' being produced. In Coventry the Labour Group and the Local Campaign Forum are essentially one and the same thing, run by the same individuals. Neither the Labour Group nor the LCF has changed in any identifiable way since Corbyn's election. They run a very tight ship around here!

## **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

The candidate selections are completed now with, by all accounts, right-wing candidates having been selected or re-selected in 16 or 17 of the 18 wards across the city. Very active measures were taken to keep left-wingers either off the 'panel' of potential candidates or just not selected.

# Yorkshire

**Name of council:** Bradford

## **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

Council tax is to increase by 5.99%, the council plans on making £7.1m cuts in the 2018/19 budget and £23.6m in 2019/20. £1m is to be cut from street cleaning, and £950,000 from libraries, which has already seen many local libraries closed or run by volunteers. £260,000 is due to be cut from museums and galleries. £8m is due to be taken from the adult social care budget every year.

On top of this, the council is currently consulting on 'reorganisation' of children's services including cuts to children's centres. A Unite rep prominent in opposing these cuts has been suspended by the council.

## **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

The council is running an online consultation until the 28 January.

## **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

We have no information on the composition of the Local Campaign Forum or the 2018 local manifesto.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

There has been a Momentum supporter selected for Shipley council ward, where all three seats have been held by the Green Party since the last ward boundary changes in 2004, but this is the only left selection victory we are aware of at present.

### **Name of council: Doncaster**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

Another £16.9 million cuts on top of £267 million made since 2010. This includes 153 full-time equivalent job losses over next the three years.

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

No details.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

There are no elections in Doncaster in 2018, the Labour-controlled council having moved from annual elections for a third of the seats to a four-yearly full council election cycle in 2017, 'saving money' by curbing democracy.

### **Name of council: Kingston-upon-Hull**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

This year there are not anticipated to be any new major cuts but this is because there were huge cuts in the last two years. A cynic would argue that the timing of the cuts has something to do with the fact that all of the council seats are up for election in May!

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

There is no formal consultation process. We will find out via the industrial relations machinery and the council trade unions.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

Not sure on this. The Local Campaign Forum is more left than the Labour Group leadership.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

Labour has struggled to find candidates for all of the seats in Hull. A few very right-wing councillors are stepping down but only one was deselected, the sitting cabinet member who had overseen the privatisation of Leisure services (whose workers are GMB union members). This is an interesting example because the GMB consciously mobilised its membership to deselect him. However, he then got selected for a Labour seat in another ward.

The balance of the council is likely to be marginally more to the left, but only marginally. The Hull rebel councillors Dean Kirk and Gill Kennett (who were expelled from Labour for breaking the Labour whip and who moved an anti-cuts budget in 2015 in collaboration with TUSC) have been selected in winnable seats. But generally the left are using Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell's 2015 statement about Labour councils 'not breaking the law' and 'passing balanced budgets' to justify retreat. In most wards the candidates are a mixture of right and left, which reflects the relative lack of progress of the left in Hull.

### **Name of council: Kirklees**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

Kirklees council intends to cut a total of £24.451m from its budget for 2018/19. This includes £1.9m cuts to library services, many of which are already community run, so likely to include

closing down libraries and selling off buildings. Also includes automation of council services through self-service machines rather than council staff, so likely to include redundancies.

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

Consultation is now open on the library services until April. Models proposed include private companies running library services alongside council and retaining ownership and control, outsourcing to social enterprises or private companies – if private companies, then they would retain any profit, starting a Public Service Mutual, similar to a co-operative and may include employee ownership, a Local Authority Trading Company ie a company wholly owned by the council and profits can be obtained by offering services outside the remit of normal library services, or for the library services to remain under full council control and ownership.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

The manifesto has largely been agreed already. There is turmoil in the Labour Group as the leader is standing down but the Local Campaign Forum is dominated by Blairites. The left are starting to get organised but not in time for the elections and will not be putting forward anything different at the election.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

The selection meetings are complete and campaigns have already begun. The leaflets are quite bland. There are four constituencies which cover the Kirklees area. The Corbynites have taken control of Colne Valley but the others are still in flux, although with the left in the ascendancy. There will be six or seven Corbynites standing in the locals this year and TUSC will obviously not stand against any of them. We are in close contact with them.

### **Name of council: Leeds**

#### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The council's initial budget proposal suggests increasing council tax by 4.99%, but leaving a shortfall of £38.24m after that, to be met by increased car parking charges in the city centre, 'reviews' of adult social car packages, increased turning-off of street lighting and cuts to the numbers of council parking wardens. The budget projects 53 full-time equivalent redundancies (after thousands of job losses over the previous years). There are also increasing numbers of consultations done on cuts outside the budget-setting process, such as the proposed 4% rise in bereavement service fees due to be implemented in February 2018.

The council is additionally slowly frittering away its general reserves piecemeal, planning on spending £4m to bridge some of this funding this year, as opposed to using these in any sort of strategy to challenge the cuts.

Also interestingly, Leeds council was about to award Carillion a £14m contract, having selected them as preferred bidder, for the construction of the East Leeds Orbital Road.

#### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

Unison passed a motion which has since been agreed by Leeds Trades Council to call a meeting around challenging local austerity, which hopefully will take place before the council budget in February.

#### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

The left took over the Local Campaign Forum at its AGM this year – but we have no information yet as to what the Labour Group's manifesto will say.

#### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

The selections haven't fully taken place with all 99 seats on the council up for election this year, due to ward boundary changes. So far only Labour-held wards and target wards have been selected (apart from Roundhay where the selection process was halted).

There was an attempt to deselect the council leader Judith Blake in Middleton Park ward, which was reported in *The Times*. After it went to an open selection contest between Blake, and two left candidates, one left candidate withdrew on health grounds and the other faced a campaign of slander against them as well as Momentum withdrawing their support, which unfortunately led to the left challenger withdrawing from the contest.

The elections are all up so could have been an opportunity for a thorough-going change on the council, But while Momentum have managed to get 13 candidates they are backing selected so far, only one of these was through a de-selection of another councillor, and five of these are in seats that weren't held by Labour at the last election. It is also counter-balanced by four councillors resigning from the Labour Group (effectively pushed out) who had challenged the council over the closure of a specialist dementia centre, the Green late last year, amongst other things.

All four councillors who signed the open letter in support of Owen Smith's leadership coup attempt have been reselected to stand.

## **Name of council: Rotherham**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

The Labour Group is proposing £15 million of cuts on top of the £162 million cuts it has implemented since 2010.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

No details.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

There are no elections in Rotherham in 2018, with the council having moved from annual elections for a third of the seats to a four-yearly full council election cycle in 2016.

## **Name of council: Sheffield**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

£30 million cuts for 2018-19 budget (no details announced yet), plus £21.2 million projected overspend on 2017-18 budget.

The council want £800,000 per annum cuts in the Amey PFI contract so Amey is proposing to cut jobs from 122 staff to 107 on street cleansing with a lesser service provided, and from 42 to 18 on grounds maintenance, plus cuts in terms and conditions. The unions are conducting a consultative ballot for industrial action.

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

As far as we are aware there is only an on-line consultation, which ends on January 19th. The council unions have not discussed the budget as such but are consulting members over proposed cuts in terms and conditions of Sheffield City Council staff.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

We don't know when Labour's manifesto will be agreed. There was a 'consultation' meeting called by the Labour Group open to Labour Party members in December which TUSC leafleted with No Cuts budget proposals. It seems that the Local Campaign Forum is still dominated by the right.

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selection**

It seems that all Labour candidates selected now and we know of eight self-declared Corbyn supporters being selected. One Corbyn supporter has been selected in place of a sitting right-wing councillor; there were two sitting Corbyn councillors who have been selected again; and

the other five Corbyn candidates have been selected in wards not currently Labour (ie Liberal Democrat-held, Green or UKIP).

Additional information: TUSC supporters initiated three No Cuts budget public meetings in 2017, in February before the 2017-18 council budget-setting meeting (attendance 34), in October (36 attended) and December (28), and will be holding a public meeting in February to adopt a No Cuts budget proposal for 2018-19.

## **Name of council: Wakefield**

### **Question 1: Labour's initial budget proposals**

### **Question 2: The council's consultation process**

Budget details have not been published yet, even though the budget-setting meeting is due on February 28th. So there are also no details on public consultations.

### **Question 3: The local Labour Party's 2018 local election manifesto**

No details yet

### **Question 4: Labour candidate selections**

One candidate has pledged not to vote for cuts but all the other candidates selected so far have not agreed to make such a pledge. At a recent district-wide Labour Party meeting the council leader was questioned by a Momentum supporter why the council is continuing to impose the cuts. The response was the same old refrain that the council will not implement an 'illegal budget that would risk councillors being imprisoned'. No change then in Wakefield.