



What TUSC stands for

The core policy positions of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

THE WORKING class and peoples of Britain are facing a ruling class offensive against public services, incomes, living standards and trade union rights. Not content with the banks receiving the biggest bail-out in the history of British capitalism, big business aims to make workers and their families pay to serve the interests, first and foremost, of the City of London's financial institutions.

It is also an offensive which has support across all the establishment parties. That is why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition will contest elections, to show that there is a clear left-wing alternative to policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, militarism and environmental degradation.

We recognise that there will be Labour and non-Labour candidates who agree with our policies, who share our socialist aspirations, and who will be supported by left and labour movement organisations participating in our coalition.

We also recognise that there are different strategic views about the way forward for the left in Britain, whether the Labour Party can be reclaimed by the labour movement, or whether a new workers' party needs to be established.

But our coalition is united on the need for mass resistance to the ruling class offensive, and for an alternative programme of left-wing policies to help inspire and direct such resistance:

Public ownership, not private profit

- Stop all privatisation, including the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Bring privatised public services and utilities back into public ownership under democratic control.
- Keep Royal Mail as a publicly-owned service, not a privatised cash cow.

No cuts - for quality public services

- Take rail back into public ownership and build an integrated, low-pollution public transport system.
- For a high-quality, free National Health Service under democratic public ownership and control.
- Stop council estate sell-offs and build eco-friendly, affordable public housing.
- Good, free education for all, under democratic local authority control; student grants not fees.

Jobs, not handouts to bankers and billionaires

- Bring banks and finance institutions into genuine public ownership under democratic control, instead of giving huge handouts to the very capitalists who caused the crisis.
- Tax the rich. For progressive tax on rich corporations and individuals, with a crackdown on tax avoidance.
- For massive investment in environmental projects.

Employment and trade union rights

- Repeal the anti-trade union laws.
- A minimum wage set at half average adult male earnings, with no exemptions.
- Invest to create and protect jobs, including for young people.
- Solidarity with workers taking action to defend jobs, conditions, pensions, public services and trade unions. Reinstating full trade union rights to prison officers.

Protect our environment - stop global warming

- Deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions - otherwise climate change, caused by capitalism, will destroy us.

- Invest in publicly-owned and controlled renewable energy.
- Move to sustainable, low-pollution industry and farming - stop the pollution that is destroying our environment.
- Recognise that many of our planet's resources are limited and that capitalism fritters them away for profit.
- Produce for need, not profit, and design goods for reuse and recycling.

Decent pensions and benefits

- Restore the pre-Thatcher real value of pensions. Reinstating the link with average earnings.
- Protect entitlement to benefits; for living benefits; end child poverty.

Democracy, diversity and justice

- Welcome diversity and oppose racism, fascism and discrimination. Defend the right to asylum.
- Ensure women have genuinely equal rights and pay.
- Defend our liberties and make police and security democratically accountable.

Solidarity not war

- Bring home all British troops from Afghanistan immediately - no more wars for resources.
- No more spending on a new generation of nuclear weapons, huge aircraft carriers or irrelevant eurofighters - convert arms spending into socially useful products and services.
- An independent foreign policy, based on international solidarity - no more being a US poodle, no moves towards a capitalist, militarist United States of Europe, no Lisbon Treaty.

Socialism

- For a democratic socialist society run in the interests of people not millionaires. For bringing into democratic public ownership the major companies and banks that dominate the economy, so that production and services can be planned to meet the needs of all and to protect the environment.



No cuts! Defend jobs & services

...but what do we do at the ballot box?

THE 'worst in a generation' cuts introduced by the Con-Dem government have at least clarified one thing for millions of people across Britain - the Liberal Democrats are no alternative to the establishment party consensus!

But as the different strands of the anti-cuts resistance start to grow and come together - trade unionists fighting for public services, campaigners defending their communities, students demonstrating for a future - one question remains unanswered: what do we do to fight the cuts when it comes to the ballot box?

Con-Dems continue New Labour policies

THERE'S NO escaping the fact that many of the Con-Dem policies have been made possible by the groundwork laid by thirteen years of New Labour government. It was Tony Blair and Gordon Brown who brought in tuition fees, which the Con-Dems are now taking sky high. It was New Labour that introduced the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for private sector tenants, which didn't meet full housing costs, and the rule that under-25s would only get a 'single-room' LHA rate.

Academies were Tony Blair's schools policy 'flagship', which the Con-Dems are now accelerating. It was the New Labour government that set up the structures for the 'marketisation' of the NHS, which the Con-Dems are now building on. The Con-Dems are turning the screws - but the framework was put in place by New Labour.

Of course, there are some Labour politicians - a small minority - who genuinely oppose the Con-Dems cuts and the New Labour policies which paved the way for them. But most of them, while they criticise this or that cut, haven't changed: its only 'some of the cuts' they object to, and the pace at

which they are being introduced. They are not the answer at election time.

The TUSC challenge in May's elections

TUSC, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, was set-up to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists who wanted to resist the pro-austerity consensus of the establishment parties to stand candidates in the 2010 general election. By registering TUSC with the electoral commission, candidates were able to appear on the ballot paper as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition rather than as 'Independent', which they would otherwise have to do under electoral law.

Now TUSC is planning to stand candidates in the elections for local councils that will take place next May in every area of England bar London. TUSC is also involved in discussions to organise an election challenge for the Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly elections in May (there are no local elections in Scotland and Wales in 2011).

A draft policy platform has been proposed for the local elections (see inside), which starts from the basis that councillors can refuse to pass on the cuts. Local groups, trade unionists and anti-cuts campaigners who want to stand candidates under the TUSC banner in May are invited to discuss the platform and come to a conference in January to finalise it.

We don't just have to make a 'protest vote' in May. We can vote for candidates who reject the idea that we should pay for the bankers' crisis. We can vote for candidates who would actually stop cuts to local jobs, benefits and services. But only if everybody who wants to fight the cuts gets involved!

We need councillors who will fight the cuts!

Conference to discuss the 2011 council elections

London, Saturday 22nd January
3-30pm to 6pm

Conference details, registration etc at
www.tusc.org.uk



Stand up to the Con-Dem government

For councillors who refuse to implement the cuts!

The TUSC steering committee has agreed the policy platform, outlined below, on which it is proposing to contest the elections to local councils that will take place next May in every area of England bar London.

The local elections policy platform is a draft platform, which will now be opened up for discussion in trade union branches and anti-cuts campaigns before it is finalised at the conference in January. The aim is that it will then form

the basis on which any prospective council candidate who wishes to can stand under the TUSC name in May's elections.

The draft local elections policy platform is a supplement to the core policy statement (see back page) that TUSC candidates endorsed when they stood in the general election in May 2010, which still stands as the basic policy position of the TUSC coalition.

TUSC's draft platform for the 2011 local elections

THE LOCAL council elections in May 2011 will be the first opportunity voters will have in England to register public opposition at the ballot box to the Con-Dem government's unparalleled attack on our public services.

But the elections are not just a chance to make a one-day 'protest vote'. They are also an opportunity to elect councillors who can actually stop many of the cuts from being implemented locally.

Over the years, it is true, local councils have been stripped of many of their powers over different services. Margaret Thatcher, who began this process, famously said, "I must take more power to the centre to stop socialism" - in other words, that public services that 'crowded out' the private sector should be curbed or, where they exist, should be opened up to private companies to make profits from public needs. It is a matter of record that the New Labour government carried on with this approach throughout its 13 years in office - the turnover of private companies running public services reached over £80 billion in 2008, for example, 126% higher than 1995-96 under the previous Tory government.

But councils still have enormous powers and responsibilities, controlling budgets totalling billions of pounds, spent on services from housing to schools, youth clubs, libraries, adult social care, crime reduction, sports centres, highways maintenance and refuse collection, to name but a few. They have legal powers, over some non-council provided services for example, including many of those now privatised, that they can exercise for our benefit.

What councillors do, therefore, can still affect the quality of our daily lives. They certainly don't have to accept every dictate from central government to cut or privatise our services. They have a choice. Even a minority group on a council, or a single councillor, can make a difference, by using their position as democratically elected local representatives to appeal to and help organise community campaigns and trade unionists to fight.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an alliance

which includes individual trade unionists, community campaigners and different political parties. Yet, while we each have our own general policies and programme, all our candidates are committed to using every opportunity open to councillors - from public campaigning to presenting policy motions at council meetings - to do everything possible to protect and improve our public services. Voting for TUSC councillors will make a difference.

All TUSC councillors will:

- Oppose all cuts to council jobs and services - we reject the claim that 'some cuts' are necessary to our services.
- Reject above inflation increases in council tax, rent and service charges to compensate for government cuts.
- Vote against the privatisation of council services, or the transfer of council services to 'social enterprises' or 'arms-length' management organisations, which are first steps to privatisation.
- Use all the legal powers available to councils, including powers to refer local NHS decisions, initiate referenda and organise public commissions and consultations, to oppose both the cuts and government policies which centrally impose the transfer of public services to private bodies.
- When faced with government cuts to council funding, councils should refuse to implement the cuts. We will support councils which in the first instance use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers to avoid passing them on - while arguing that the best way to mobilise the mass campaign that is necessary to defeat the cuts is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demands that the government makes up the shortfall.



What is TUSC?

TUSC was set-up in early 2010 to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to stand candidates in the 2010 general election. By registering TUSC with the electoral commission, candidates were able to appear on the ballot paper as Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition rather than as 'Independent', which they would otherwise have to do under electoral law.

TUSC is a coalition with a steering committee which includes, in a personal capacity, the RMT general secretary Bob Crow, and fellow executive member Craig Johnston; the assistant general secretary of the PCS civil servants union, Chris Baugh, and the union's vice-president, John McNally; the vice-president of the National Union of Teachers, Nina Franklin; and the recently retired general secretary of the Prison Officers Association, Brian Caton. The Socialist Party and the SWP are also represented on the committee.

Local groups, trade unionists and anti-cuts campaigns who want to stand candidates under the TUSC banner have autonomy to run their own campaigns, although all TUSC candidates will be expected to endorse the local elections policy platform when it is finalised at the conference in January. There is also an autonomous Scottish TUSC steering committee.

This structure is only an interim arrangement and discussions will continue to take place on the best way to organise the TUSC coalition as it develops in the future. But by providing a means for fighting trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to work together in an electoral coalition, TUSC is already playing an important part in building an alternative to the pro-market, pro-cuts establishment parties.

Sponsor the TUSC local election challenge

- I wish to add my support to the TUSC election challenge
- We would like a TUSC speaker at our trade union branch/local anti-cuts campaign

Name

Address

Post code

E-mail

Phone number

Trade union (and position if any)

I/we would like to donate £ to TUSC (cheques payable to Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition and sent to the address below)

TUSC, 17 Colebert House, Colebert Avenue, London E1 4JP or e-mail electioncoalition@btinternet.com

Bob Crow General secretary of the RMT transport workers' union personal capacity



"TORY, Lib Dem, Labour are all the same under their suits. They all support cuts, privatisations and anti-union laws. The political debate now is all about how to cut public spending and when. Brown and Blair just masqueraded as Labour and then put the knife into the unions. That is why I am pleased to be part of TUSC."

Roger Bannister National executive member of the UNISON public sector union personal capacity



"THE CHAIR of the Local Government Association estimates that councils will cut 100,000 jobs, and the services they provide, in the next four years - one in ten of the workforce. Its not enough for councillors to say, that's 'regrettable'. They can, and TUSC candidates will, say no cuts in jobs and services."