



Organising for a People's Budget Campaign Pack

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Additional resources

A document produced by the TUSC All-Britain Steering Committee, *Preparing a No Cuts People's Budget: Notes, correspondence, alternative budget proposals and other material from previous campaigns (2021 update)*, available as a PDF at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/450.pdf>

A series of TUSC reports under the heading, *How Much Reserves Have They Got?*, providing brief statistical profiles of councils that have Labour-led administrations, showing the substantial resources that could be mobilised by Labour councillors – if only they were prepared to fight. The latest report will be published in autumn 2021.

The TUSC directory of the local elections taking place in May 2022, when over 6,500 council seats will be contested in England, Scotland and Wales. Available at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/448.pdf>

A how-to manual to contesting local elections, *A Guide for TUSC Candidates and Agents*. Check out the TUSC website resources page for the 2022 edition, to be published in autumn 2021.

Meanwhile, the guide for last year's contests can be found at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/432.pdf>

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Organising for a People's Budget Campaign Pack Introduction

What can councils do in the face of government cuts to funding for local public services? Actually, they can do a lot.

Councils in England, for example, are responsible for over one fifth of all public spending, with responsibilities for housing, adult social care, education support, transport, recycling and waste collection, libraries and many other services. That's a powerful starting point from which to organise a fightback against relentless Tory austerity.

Covid has revealed both the drastic situation our local public services are in – with councils massively underfunded by central government – but also some of the many things local authorities have the power to do to improve our lives. In the first lockdown, for example, councils acted against homelessness in their local areas through the Everybody In scheme. Many councils stepped in during autumn half term to continue free school meals. But they could go so much further.

Most current councillors however, including unfortunately the majority of Labour's 7,000 or so local representatives, would say they cannot use their legal authority to act without first getting funding from the government. But that's the wrong way round. TUSC argues that councils should first spend what's needed – and then demand the money back from the government.

The multiple U-turns made by Johnson and his chancellor during the pandemic, spending billions when public pressure was on them, show that if just a handful of councils used the powers they have to refuse to implement any more cuts and spend what is necessary instead, the Tories could be made to pay up.

A glimpse of what is possible

Early in 2021 the TUSC steering committee published a report examining the policy pledges made in Labour's 2019 general election manifesto under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, which councils have the legal powers to implement today if they had the political will to do so (see <https://www.tusc.org.uk/17462/01-02-2021/new-tusc-report-could-councils-implement-labours-2019-pledges>).

The report identifies 46 separate policies promised by Labour in 2019 which councils could carry out now – immediately – that would transform peoples' lives. These range from breakfast clubs and free school meals for all primary school pupils; local replacements for the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 16-18 year olds in education; free bus travel for under-25s; a council house

building programme; rent controls for licensed landlords; the end of '15-minute maximum' home care visits; to a mass home insulation energy efficiency programme to fight climate change.

Even just a selection of these policies could form the basis of a People's Budget to present to a local council.

But inviting local trade union branches, campaign groups, community organisations, student groups and others to contribute would undoubtedly come up with more ideas – and lay the basis for a campaign for the local council to implement them now, using their reserves and borrowing powers to temporarily finance them while launching a mass campaign locally and nationally for permanent funding from central government.

How councils could use their powers to temporarily maintain a 'balanced budget' while fighting for proper resources from the government has been explained in previous TUSC documents, including the newly updated briefing document, *Preparing a No Cuts People's Budget*, available from the TUSC website at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/17547/11-08-2021/new-edition-of-the-preparing-a-no-cuts-peoples-budget-briefing-launched>.

But what is most needed is a will to fight – or to stand aside for those who have got the determination to do so. And that's where a TUSC local People's Budget campaign comes in.

What steps can groups take?

Local TUSC groups should look to meet and lay out plans to host a People's Budget conference before the end of 2021, to draw together the local set of demands and campaign issues to take to the council ahead of their 2022-23 budget-setting meeting, which will take place in January or February 2022.

After deciding on a date for the People's Budget conference, a plan of action should be discussed and drawn up to build for it, by contacting trade union branches, campaign groups, community groups, residents associations and so on to take part – co-hosting if they wish – but certainly inviting them to contribute with their ideas and proposals for what is needed in the local area.

The council unions will themselves be examining the council's initial proposals for the 2022-23 budget while many community groups with full or part-funding from the local council – or users of council-funded facilities or services – will be discussing their own finances and plans in the autumn period as councils start their budget consultations.

Enclosed here is initial campaign guidance and model material for you and your local TUSC group to get cracking.

And election planning too

People's Budget campaigns can play an important role everywhere in organising a local fightback to the efforts the pro-capitalist politicians will make to pass the costs of the Covid pandemic onto the shoulders of working class people. But in areas with local council elections next year they could be central in laying the foundations to pull together the broadest possible anti-austerity electoral challenge – a powerful means of building the pressure on austerity establishment politicians.

But that means election planning too, appealing for candidates early on, getting an election agent (or agents) in place and so on. Check out the TUSC website resources page for the *Guide for TUSC Candidates and Agents* for advice on this aspect of the campaign.



Organising for a People's Budget

What ideas could you bring to put into a People's Budget?

Drawing up a local People's Budget can sound daunting – but it doesn't have to be. Getting across the idea that council budgets should start from what local communities need – not what central government austerity policies demand – can begin with just one local campaign. In fact, all the alternative budget proposals presented by TUSC-supporting councillors in previous campaigns, explained in more detail in the TUSC *Preparing A No Cuts People's Budget* briefing document, started in this way. A local People's Budget can be as broad or as specific as local campaigners want.

Here we have listed some simple policies that any council could implement instantly for several key areas followed by a few ideas to help get those taking part in the People's Budget event to think about potential ideas and proposals.

It is far from the finished product and many important issues that are of particular concern to your organisation and its members may be missing – that's why we want you to take part and bring your proposals!

Housing

Build council homes now! By using councils' borrowing powers for capital spending to build council homes, while campaigning for the government to divert its subsidies for private developers to finance a mass programme of public housing.

Use councils' powers to compulsorily register private landlords and set-up council run lettings agencies, as the means to tackle repair standards, high rents, over occupancy, extortionate letting fees etc for private rented homes.

Restore full council tax benefits, to be funded from council reserves not council tax rises, and campaigns for the government to reimburse councils that do so.

Councils could make sure those suffering on the streets were given immediate decent and comfortable accommodation and support to transform their lives.

Councillors on local fire authorities could enforce tomorrow policies on cladding and fire safety to ensure safety of local people.

Councils could act immediately on cladding and fire safety – by doing the work and billing the government. They could seize the buildings of private and housing association landlords which do not also act immediately.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- How many people/families are on the local council/social housing waiting list?
- Is there a local HMO crisis in the area?
- How has student housing affected the local area and dodgy landlords affected students themselves?
- Has the council been increasing council tax in recent years?
- How many people are living homeless or living rough?
- What cuts to housing in the council budget and to grants to local charities and housing organisations has there been?

Education and children

Reinstate childcare provision in Sure Start centres where this has been cut and reopen all the centres closed since 2010.

Bring in free school meals for every school pupil, including during holidays.

Introduce local replacements for the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for all 16-18 year-olds who stay on in education.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- How many local education authority schools have been lost to academies?
- Has there been any closures of schools?
- How many nurseries and Sure Start centres have been lost?

Jobs, pay and conditions

Councils could immediately ensure a year-on-year above inflation pay rise to begin to restore lost pay as promised. They could ensure that any work undertaken by or for the council is done by workers paid at least £12-15 per hour and could immediately reduce the working week for their workforces with no loss of pay.

All councils could Introduce a high-quality apprenticeship scheme with trade union rates of pay, proper training, and a guaranteed job at the end.

They could end the use of zero-hour contracts by the council and by any company undertaking work for them. They could provide facilities and public support for trade unions fighting in their local authority area for such standards in the private sector and have powers to exclude firms that have participated in blacklisting from tendering for public contracts.

For care workers councils could Implement the UNISON trade union's ethical care charter to end '15-minute maximum' visiting slots, zero-hour contracts, and unpaid travel time to support workers and make sure those in need get the care they need.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- How many jobs have been lost either through compulsory and voluntary redundancy in the council since 2010?
- What agencies and contractors do the council currently use?

- What are the current pay bands and hourly pay for those on flexible contracts across the council?

Services

Councils could immediately end outsourcing and return all outsourced and privatised services to council control, restoring them to an even better standard of service than before.

All closed libraries, schools and care homes and other key services and community assets could be reopened and fully funded and updated to meet the needs of local people. And PFI contracts could be scrapped immediately.

Councils could act now to provide the very best support and facilities to help all those less abled be part of society and their community by investing what is necessary in disabled services and support.

Reverse all cuts to domestic violence support services and women's refugees and cuts to street lighting.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- What cuts and closures have there been to libraries in the last eleven years?
- What cuts have there been to services for the disabled?
- What cuts have there been to the local fire service?
- What additional responsibilities have been placed on firefighters to make up for cuts elsewhere? For example, elderly visits, ambulance/police response etc
- How many if any buildings are currently in need of replacement of deadly cladding?
- What cuts to women's support services and grants to local women's domestic violence charities and support organisations have taken place?

Health and social care

Social care in local authorities could be transformed if they adopted and put into place the foundations of a National Care Service of community-based, person-centred support, underpinned by the principles of ethical care and independent living. With free personal care, beginning with investments to ensure that older people have their personal care needs met, with the ambition to extend this provision to all working-age adults.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- What cuts have there been to local care services?
- What attacks have there been to local care workers?
- How many people in the local area currently use and or in need of social care services
- What positions and roles do local Cllrs currently hold on behalf of the council on local NHS/hospital boards?

Youth facilities

Councils could re-open closed youth centres and restore lost youth services, starting now to put into place the foundations of a genuine national youth service.

Every council could stop the sell-off of playing fields and sports facilities to developers and private leisure companies, and invest in sports and recreation facilities and services.

Empty high street shops, for example, could be taken over and transformed into sports facilities and spaces for all sections of society.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- What has been cuts and closed in terms of youth services and facilities?
- What facilities are currently in desperate need of renovation/repair?
- What wasted land or buildings could be transformed into social useful facilities for sports, arts and other recreation?
- Are there any areas eg city centre where young people are regularly hassled eg for skateboarding or playing football?

Climate emergency

Local authorities have powers to intervene in the provision of bus and transport services, which can be used to ensure they are run in the interests of local people, to boost the use of public transport. They can introduce free bus travel schemes for under-25s now.

Councils could start now a mass home insulation energy efficiency programme. They could restore spending on street and drain cleaning and bring back standards and governance to ensure quality of work long-term.

They could call in all development projects in order to review environmental impacts – for example, impact on infrastructure, concreting over green space (as well as the quantity and quality of social housing etc).

Councils could draw up a detailed local risk assessment and plan to combat flooding risks taking the necessary action and works needed to protect services and communities both short and long term.

In drawing up local Climate Emergency plans councils could set targets based on the carbon footprint not just of council-run services but capturing total emissions for the local area, giving a real picture of what needs to be done to tackle the climate crisis.

Further possible ideas for People's Budget proposals from you

- What cuts have there been to local bus routes that affect you?
- Are there plans for any local low emissions zones and what would their impact be?
- What cuts have there been to local waste and recycling services in the council and attacks to workers in the service?



Organising for a People's Budget

Getting a local campaign going and a model conference agenda

TUSC groups and supporters in local areas should look to meet over the summer or early autumn to begin to lay out plans to host a People's Budget conference before the end of 2021, to draw together the local set of demands and campaign issues to take to the council ahead of their 2022-23 budget-setting meeting, which will take place in January or February 2022.

After deciding on a date for the People's Budget conference, a plan of action should be discussed and drawn up to build for it.

Draw up a list of trade union branches, campaign groups, community groups, residents associations, students unions, student societies etc and so on to take part and ask about co-hosting but certainly to invite them to contribute with their ideas and proposals for what is needed in the local area – see model letters in this pack.

Your local council website with a bit of digging or through a simple request to the council, should have a file with all the organisations that receive funding or grants and the amounts. (Most will have been cut over recent years!). Try and track this down and go through to see what relevant organisations may be good to contact as well to be involved.

Use the model letters/emails in the pack to send out with local details and attached document aides suggested – what councils could implement now etc.

Think about convening an organising meeting in September to invite those interested to discuss the format and structure of the conference and a plan to put forward following the conference for anyone wanting to be more involved.

You could produce an initial 'core People's Budget of demands' for your local area – using the 'some ideas' document in the campaign pack and the TUSC local elections core policy document from May 2021 as a useful basis to work off. This could act as a starting point that could be added to and amended from your local conference to aid the process.

For the conference itself

The aim should be to make sure that the day is well planned and structured but also that it is not restrictive in any way! The goal is to encourage as much participation as possible!

Discuss at a pre-planning meeting a possible draft model foundation local People's Budget using the model guides and TUSC minimum programme as a basis so that the conference has something to work off or at least a set of core policies and demands.

Try and discuss with local TUSC supporters and in the local TUSC group your own proposals to bring to the conference as well.

Think about potential petitions or campaigns that could arise out of the conference ahead of the council's official budget-setting meeting – use the petition guide in the pack!

Use the model example agenda if it helps – but feel free to alter the format and structure based on feedback/discussions with other local organisations taking part.

Maybe have a limit of two proposals per section from groups and two proposals from individuals – but discuss things like this locally and with those who want to be involved.

Model example of a local People's Budget conference agenda

1. Opening remarks from organisers and any invited speakers. This might be the point to explain the powers of the local government and how councils can resist austerity, as explained in the TUSC *Preparing a No Cuts People's Budget* briefing document.
2. A run through how the conference will work by chair (make sure a proposal for this is sent out to all those taking part with plenty of time for input beforehand).
 - Each section could be opened by a speaker who works, uses, has experience in that area to summarise the situation in the local area before hearing motions/proposals
 - Aim to keep to five minutes
 - Have a vote after each motion or all together at the end?
3. Housing
4. Education and children
5. Jobs, pay and conditions
6. Services
7. Health and social care
8. Youth facilities
9. Climate emergency
10. Other
11. Voting
12. Summary of the day and proposals for the next steps with what to do with the People's Budget created from today



Organising for a People's Budget

Letter of invitation: To campaign for a council budget that meets our needs

Dear friend

As you read this, your council will be beginning to draw up plans for next year's budget and no doubt once again they will be seeking to implement more cuts to jobs, wages, conditions, and local public services.

We are writing to you on behalf of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in our area to invite you to take part in a People's Budget conference to bring together trade unions, community groups, campaigns and others to start a discussion on developing and fighting for an alternative budget for this area – one that seeks to provide what our community desperately needs.

Covid has revealed both the drastic situation our local public services are in – with councils massively underfunded by central government – but also some of the many things local authorities have the power to do to improve our lives. In the first lockdown, for example, councils acted against homelessness and many councils stepped in during autumn half term to continue free school meals.

But they could go so much further. The government has made deep cuts to councils but they still account for over one fifth of all public spending, with responsibilities for many key services. That's a powerful position from which to organise a fightback. Councils should first spend what's needed – and then demand the money back from the government.

The multiple U-turns made by Boris Johnson and his chancellor, spending billions when public pressure has been put on them, show that if just a handful of councils used the powers they have to refuse to implement any more cuts and spend what is necessary instead, the Tories could be made to pay up.

A local People's Budget could set a different agenda, based on what our community actually needs not what the government says we should settle for.

Such a process we hope can draw together a local set of demands and campaign issues to take to the council ahead of their 2022-23 budget-setting meeting, which will take place in January or February 2022.

We want you to take part and bring your ideas and proposals based on your organisation and its members' experiences of what is needed in our area!

To give you an idea of just a few of the things we are talking about see attached a brief document – *What Ideas Could You Bring To Put Into A People's Budget?* – detailing some basic ideas which councils have the legal powers to implement today that could help transform our communities and the lives of local people.

We have also followed these ideas with some questions for you to think about and maybe include in any proposals you want to bring to the Peoples Budget conference if you hopefully choose to take part.

Even just a selection of these policies could form the basis of a People's Budget to present to the local council. But we want trade union branches, campaign groups, community organisations, student groups and others to contribute!

Undoubtedly more ideas will come out from the conference – and lay the basis for a campaign for the local council to implement them now, using their reserves and borrowing powers to temporarily finance them while launching a mass campaign locally and nationally for permanent funding from the central government.

If you would like to discuss taking part, or want any more information on the powers and resources councils have to improve our lives if they were prepared to use them, please don't hesitate to reply.



Organising for a People's Budget

**Letter of invitation
to trade unions:
To campaign for a council
budget that meets our needs**

Dear friend

As you read this, your council will be beginning to draw up plans for next year's budget and no doubt once again they will be seeking to implement more cuts to jobs, wages, conditions, and local public services.

We are writing to you on behalf of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in our area to invite you to take part in a People's Budget conference to bring together trade unions, community groups, campaigns and others to start a discussion on developing and fighting for an alternative budget for this area – one that seeks to provide what our community desperately needs.

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Such a process we hope can draw together a local set of demands and campaign issues to take to the council ahead of their 2022-23 budget-setting meeting, which will take place in January or February 2022.

We want you to take part and bring your ideas and proposals based on your organisation and its members' experiences of what is needed in our area!

We want to hear what your members think is needed! Whether that's directly related to the industries and areas of work your members work in, or wider community issues like housing, care, youth and children's services etc.

How many jobs have been lost amongst your membership?

What issues and problems do your members raise or report?

What things do your members think are needed to improve the lives of ordinary people in this area?

To give you an idea of just a few of the things we are talking about see attached a brief document – *What Ideas Could You Bring To Put Into A People's Budget?* – detailing some basic ideas which councils have the legal powers to implement today that could help transform our communities and the lives of local people.

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Even just a selection of these policies could form the basis of a People's Budget to present to the local council. But we want trade union branches, campaign groups, community organisations, student groups and others to contribute!

Undoubtedly more ideas will come out from the conference – and lay the basis for a campaign for the local council to implement them now, using their reserves and borrowing powers to temporarily finance them while launching a mass campaign locally and nationally for permanent funding from the central government.

If you would like to discuss taking part, or want any more information on the powers and resources councils have to improve our lives if they were prepared to use them, please don't hesitate to reply.



Organising for a People's Budget

**Letter of invitation
to community
organisations:
To campaign for a council
budget that meets our needs**

Dear friend

As you read this, your council will be beginning to draw up plans for next year's budget and no doubt once again they will be seeking to implement more cuts to jobs, wages, conditions, and local public services.

We are writing to you on behalf of the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in our area to invite you to take part in a People's Budget conference to bring together trade unions, community groups, campaigns and others to start a discussion on developing and fighting for an alternative budget for this area – one that seeks to provide what our community desperately needs.

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We want you to take part and bring your ideas and proposals based on your organisation and its members' experiences of what is needed in our area!

We want to hear what your members think is needed in this area, whether that's directly related to your community group and local area or wider issues across the whole council area like housing, care, youth and children's services etc.

Have you lost any grant or funding money in recent years?

What services or community assets have been closed or taken over in recent years?

What do you think our community needs?

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Even just a selection of these policies could form the basis of a People's Budget to present to the local council. But we want trade union branches, campaign groups, community organisations, student groups and others to contribute!

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Organising for a People's Budget

**Letter of invitation
to student
organisations:
To campaign for a council
budget that meets our needs**

Dear friend

As you read this, the council in this area will be beginning to draw up plans for next year's budget. And no doubt once again they will be seeking to implement more cuts to jobs, wages, conditions, and local public services – with an impact on everyone in the local area, including our student population.

We are writing to you on behalf of the local Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) to invite you to take part in a People's Budget conference to bring together trade unions, community groups, campaigns and others to start a discussion on developing and fighting for an alternative budget for this area – one that seeks to provide what our community desperately needs.

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We want you to take part and bring your ideas and proposals based on your organisation and its members' experiences of what is needed in our area!

We want to hear what you think is needed for students in this area!

Have there been cuts to bus services, for example?

Do you think that the council should be taking action against rogue landlords?

Is there an issue of safety for students like street lighting that the council have cut over the years which you would like to see reversed?

Is the council using its powers to combat climate change, like using green energy for its premises, installing electric charging points, or implementing a mass home insulation energy efficiency programme?

Whatever you think the issues are, we want to know!

To give you an idea of just a few of the things we are talking about see attached a brief document – *What Ideas Could You Bring To Put Into A People's Budget?* – detailing some basic ideas which councils have the legal powers to implement today that could help transform our communities and the lives of local people.

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Organising for a People's Budget

**Letter of invitation to
Labour councillors:
To discuss how we can
stand up to the Tories'
council cuts agenda**

Dear Councillor,

We are writing to you as a Labour Party councillor to try and arrange a convenient time for you to meet a delegation of local trade unionists and anti-austerity activists to discuss how we can build the resistance to the continued Tory onslaught on local government.

As we write the council leadership will be beginning to draw up plans for next year's budget and the pre-budget consultation period, and no doubt once again will be arguing that more cuts to jobs, wages, conditions and services are necessary. We are coordinating a People's Budget conference to bring together trade unions, community groups and all others affected to resist such cuts and develop an alternative budget for this area – one that seeks to provide what is needed by our local community.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), co-founded by the late Bob Crow and recently relaunched, is determined that working class people should not pay for a crisis that we did not cause, and we are keen to work together with Labour representatives who take the same stance. We welcomed Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party and suspended our own electoral activity in the 2017 and 2019 general elections in order to support his opposition to cuts and privatisation and fight for change.

Councils on the frontline

We know that the Tories have made deep cuts to councils but they still account for over one fifth of all public spending, with responsibilities for many key services. That's a powerful position from which to organise a fightback. Our view is that councils should first spend what's needed – and then demand the money back from the government.

Covid has revealed both the drastic situation our local public services are in but also some of the many things local authorities have the power to do to improve our lives. In the first lockdown, for example, councils acted against homelessness and many councils stepped in during autumn half term to continue free school meals.

But they could go so much further. The multiple U-turns made by Boris Johnson and his chancellor, spending billions when public pressure has been put on them, show that if just a handful of councils used the powers they have to refuse to implement any more cuts and spend what is necessary instead, the Tories could be made to pay up.

No cuts budgets

In recent years TUSC has worked with councillors in Southampton, Hull, Leicester, Warrington and elsewhere to try and get legally compliant no cuts budgets passed at annual budget-making meetings. Some of these alternative budget proposals are explained in our briefing document, *Preparing A No Cuts People's Budget*, available on the TUSC website at <https://www.tusc.org.uk/txt/450.pdf>, the contents of which we would be happy to discuss with you.

Based on the use of reserves and councils' borrowing powers, they were designed in each case to buy time for the council to organise a broad public campaign to compel the government to restore its funding, and to link up with other councils in a national campaign. A local People's Budget could be the start of such a campaign in our area, setting a different agenda for what a council budget should be – based on what the community needs not government demands for austerity.

We hope through this process to draw together a local set of demands and campaign issues to take to the council ahead of their 2022-23 budget-setting meeting and we would very much welcome any input you could make to this.

Labour's 2019 pledges

We are writing to local trade union branches, community groups and campaigns to take part and bring their ideas and proposals based on the experiences of the organisation and their members of what is needed in our area.

To give you an idea of just some of the ideas we are talking about, earlier this year the TUSC All-Britain Steering Committee published a report examining the policy pledges made in Labour's 2019 general election manifesto under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, which councils have the legal powers to implement today if they had the political will to do so (see <https://www.tusc.org.uk/17462/01-02-2021/new-tusc-report-could-councils-implement-labours-2019-pledges>).

From this we have drawn a brief document (*What ideas could you bring to put into a People's Budget?*, attached) detailing some basic ideas which councils have the legal powers to implement today that could help transform our communities which we have sent with invites to the conference.

Even just a selection of these policies could form the basis of a local People's Budget. But we want trade union branches, campaign groups, community organisations, student groups and others to contribute!

Undoubtedly more ideas will come out from the conference – and lay the basis for a campaign for the council to implement them now, using their reserves and borrowing powers to temporarily finance them, while launching a mass campaign locally and nationally for permanent funding from central government.

This is why we would like to have, initially, a face-to-face meeting with you to discuss what joint action against the Tories' agenda is possible and whether you would like to take part in the conference.



Organising for a People's Budget

Short guide and tips on making a petition to use in council campaigns

All councils will accept petitions from residents. Most will accept either paper or e-petitions. Many councils will host the e-petitions on their own website, providing the petition's text follows their local guidelines. Check for the details on your own council's website.

Rules for signatures on paper petitions vary – most councils will require a name in capital letters, a house number, street and postcode, and the signature. There will probably be a template on the council website to show the layout the council prefers or requires.

Councils have different rules about what happens to petitions. They may have a minimum number of required signatures (perhaps six) before a petition is accepted. Greater numbers might qualify the petition for a different response.

For example, a petition on a defined issue (opposing a specific council proposal) may require the council to respond in a report following consultation. It may be considered as an item at a Council Cabinet or committee meeting, and allow the lead petitioner a few minutes to address the meeting. Large petitions (perhaps 500 to 15,000 signatures) may require the council to debate the issue at a full, public, council meeting. Again, perhaps with the lead petitioner having speaking rights.

You will need to check the petition rules for your own local authority to see what is possible.

Running a paper and an e-petition together and using a Facebook page to publicise can help grow more signatures. A paper petition allows a short conversation with the person signing, who may turn out to be someone who would support a campaign in other ways. An e-petition using social media may quickly reach a large audience.

If you put website addresses on your leaflets, say of a council website hosting your petition, don't forget to use services (such as www.bit.ly) to shorten the address to something manageable and memorable. Also, QR codes can be useful as they allow people to scan the code with a smartphone and be taken straight to a specific address.